

A decorative border of watercolor flowers and greenery surrounds the central text. The flowers are in shades of pink, red, and orange, with dark centers. The greenery includes various leaves and small round buds.

BECOMING

Mrs. Betterhalf

HOLLY FURTICK

BECOMING

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What if I told you that you could have a stronger marriage, a happier marriage, without your husband ever changing a thing? You are probably thinking, yeah right.

You are about to embark on a journey. A journey to becoming the wife you always wanted to be. This journey will not be easy. In fact, it is going to require a lot of work on your part.

I need to be clear with you. This study is not a marriage study. It is a wife study. Does your spouse have things he needs to change in order to become a better husband? Of course!

So often I face my marriage with my finger pointed at him. If only he would be more attentive to me. If only he would be more affectionate. If only he would see how hard I am working. If only he would pitch in. The list can go on and on.

But this study is not about what he needs to change. It is about what you need to change. Because, you see, real change comes when I realize that the only person I can change is me.

Are you ready to dig in? It's gonna be hard but the results are gonna be well worth it.

Let me encourage you to do the work. Answer every question. Listen to every sermon. Don't miss your group! Just like everything in life, you will get out of this study as much as you put into it. The harder you press in, the more honest you are, the more you press beneath the surface, the more change you will see in your own life and in your marriage.

I am praying for you. I am praying for broken marriages to be restored, struggling marriages to be strengthened, and strong marriages to be even stronger.

Let's get started!

Holly Jurtick



Notes





Notes

Give
What
you Want

WEEK 1

Read

I am so excited you have chosen to embark on this journey, Becoming Mrs. Betterhalf. The fact that you're reading this means you desire to have a stronger marriage.

God has a purpose and a plan for us as wives. In my video teaching this week, I introduced Philippians 2, the passage of scripture we are centering this study around. Together, we explored the six ideas to focus on in your marriage:

THE GOAL IS BECOMING ONE.

Do everything with the end result in mind.

HUMILITY IS UNNATURAL.

Learn to value others above yourself.

MY JOB IS TO BE LIKE CHRIST.

Follow the example Jesus has set.

GOD'S JOB IS EVERYTHING ELSE.

Trust God will work in the heart of your spouse.

CHANGE FROM THE INSIDE OUT.

Remember God is working inside of you!

THERE'S NOTHING MORE ATTRACTIVE THAN GRATITUDE.

Be a shining star.

Which of these six ideas are the hardest one for you to put into practice? I think for me it is Let God be God. I struggle with thinking God needs my help when it comes to my husband.

I know some of you are like me too. And you are still grasping the fact that this is not a study about making your spouse a better husband. We have all been tackling that project and would love to finally complete it.

But this is a study about you. What about you? Am I suggesting you just become a doormat? A woman who waits on her husband hand and foot? A woman who never speaks her mind? A woman who sacrifices her entire life for the dreams and aspirations of her husband?

Of course not. But I am suggesting you step into the God-ordained position to which you have been appointed. I am suggesting it is time for you to try doing this wife thing God's way. Over the next eight weeks we are going to focus on some specific areas in marriage where we all have room for improvement. And we are going to spend time highlighting ways we are already doing well in these areas.

I believe it is just as important to identify the healthy patterns in our marriages as it is to identify the unhealthy patterns. Think about it like cleaning out your closet. What items do you find that you need to keep and use? What items do you need to get rid of? That is the essence of this study.

I once read this principle about showing generosity toward others. The idea was to give others what you need. It really stuck with me. For this week, I want to ask you to try something really simple: Give what you want.

What do you want in your marriage... your husband to be more attentive, more appreciative, more helpful, more thoughtful, more loving, more patient?

Give him that thing. That's your assignment this week.

Spend this week giving more than you receive, focusing on his needs — what you can do for him and give to him without any strings attached.

Look at Jesus' words in Luke 6:38,

LUKE 6:38

Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

Do we give so we can get? Of course not. But when we give from a pure heart, we receive more than we could ever imagine. Jesus also said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35)

Now I don't want to disappoint you. The purpose of this exercise is not, "If I am more helpful to my husband, he will be more helpful to me." If that is

your goal, you have missed the point. I am trying to get you to take the first step. To stop looking at your marriage like a give-and-take situation and start looking at it as a give-because-I-love-you situation.

It is human nature to withhold when you feel like your partner is holding back. But it is not God's nature.

Look back at what Paul tells us was Jesus' nature in Philippians 2:6-8,

PHILIPPIANS 2:6-8

Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

Jesus humbled himself to the point of death. Jesus gave his life so we could live. That is real love.

Real love gives. I know you love your husband. Are you ready to give unconditionally this week? Are you ready to be like Jesus?

Let's dig in a little further!

is there any encouragement from
belonging to Christ? Any comfort
from his love? Any fellowship
together in the spirit? Are your
hearts tender + compassionate? Then
make me truly happy by agreeing
wholeheartedly with each other,
loving one another, and working
together with one mind + purpose.

PHILIPPIANS 2:1-2

Review

Review your notes to answer a few questions from this week's video teaching. To watch the teaching again, go to week 1 at www.BecomingMrsBetterhalf.com.

.....



Of the six ideas from Philippians 2:1-15, which one do you feel is the hardest for you to practice? Why?

Of the five actions suggested to get the most out of this study, which one of these actions will be hardest for you and why?

Reflect



In this week's teaching we talked about becoming students of the men we love. Describe your husband. Here are a few ideas to get you started: what does he like to eat, what sports does he like, what upsets him, what energizes him, what annoys him, what kind of music does he like, what hobbies does he have?



What are some things you wish your husband would give to you?



List some practical ways you can you 'give what you want' to him this week?

Write a prayer asking the Lord to open your eyes to your husband's needs and ask the Lord to show you what you can give to him this week.

Respond

PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself

by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

What did Jesus give?

After Jesus gave, what did God give?

According to Philippians 2, what is God asking you to give?

LUKE 6:38

Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

How does Luke 6:38 reflect Philippians 2:1-11?

Reflect

Write a prayer thanking God for all the things He has given you, and asking Him to help you give unconditionally to your husband.



Earlier I mentioned identifying healthy and unhealthy patterns is similar to cleaning out a closet, what healthy patterns have you established as a wife?

What are some unhealthy patterns you realize you have?

Reinforce

Get a password from your group leader and go to www.BecomingMrsBetterhalf.com, week 1 to watch "The Problem is the Pattern," by Pastor Steven (from January 2015 Power of Same series).

.....

Use this space to take notes as you listen then answer the question below.

What is one thing from the sermon you can apply to your marriage?



Recite

Memorize Philippians 2:1-2

Use the space below to write out this week's scripture. Underline the goal for your marriage that can be found in the verses.



Request

This is your husband's opportunity to voice his opinion without being penalized. Tear out the perforated card from the back of your book labeled week 1. Give it to your husband and ask him to verbalize or write down his answer to the following question.

.....

This week we are talking about giving unconditionally to our husbands.
What are three tangible things I can give to you or do for you each day?

What was your husband's response to this week's question?



How do you feel about his response?

What adjustments do you need to make?

NO MATTER WHAT
GIVE ONE
anointed
HEALTHY PATTERNS
CONSIDER
goal
HUMBLE
GRATEFUL
HEART
MY PLACE
focus
HUMILITY
SAME LOVE
FIGHT ONE MIND
ONE IN SPIRIT
clean closet
LOVE
VALUE
GOD'S WAY BE JESUS
GIVE WHAT YOU WANT



Renew

Throughout the course of this study, you will be compiling a list of renewed promises. Use the words to the left to write an action sentence (25 words or less) based on the topic for this week.

Recount

Write a note or send a text to your husband telling him one thing you love about him.

Resources

To learn more about becoming the best form of yourself read, *The Me I Want to Be* by John Ortberg.



Notes



Notes

A background image of pink cherry blossoms on dark, thin branches. The blossoms are in various stages of bloom, with some showing distinct petals and centers. The branches are dark and intricate, creating a delicate pattern against the light background. The overall tone is soft and natural.

Just
do it

WEEK 2

Read

When I sat down to put this study together, I wanted to begin with the idea that Christian women today do not need more information, they need more application. We have more information at our fingertips than any other women in history, yet our marriages still struggle just as much, if not more.

In my video teaching this week, we took a closer look at Ephesians 5:33: “However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.”

We talked about showing our husbands respect in the following areas:

HIS OPINION.

Supporting the decisions he makes.

HIS COMPETENCY.

Affirming his efforts at work, at home, as a husband, and a father.

HIS SPACE.

Honoring his time, his thoughts, and his stuff.

We also talked about encouraging our husbands in the following ways:

VERBALLY AFFIRMING HIM DAILY.

Tell him you are proud of him.

ACKNOWLEDGING WHAT HE DOES.

Notice and thank him for the big and small.

MAKING HIM FEEL WANTED.

Express your desire to be with him.

CHEERING HIM ON.

Encourage him for his efforts and decisions.

When it comes to showing respect and giving encouragement, the missing piece is not for me to teach you more about the biblical command for you to respect your husband, or to give you more information about your husband's need for your encouragement.

The missing piece is for you to do what you know to do.

James 1:23-25 tells us,

JAMES 1:23-25 (NLT)

For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you hear, then God will bless you for doing it.

Do you want God to bless your marriage? Do something about it.

This week, we are going to turn on our “respect radar” and turn up our “encouragement meter.” We are going to go beyond the surface of our words and look at our actions, our patterns, and our non-verbal cues.

You see, your husband does not merely feel respected and/or receive encouragement only by what you say. Words are a good place to start. Your husband needs to hear: I believe in you, I agree with you, you made the right call, you've got what it takes, you're great at that. However, if you say one thing and do another, your actions will discount your words.

Let me illustrate. If you say, “Honey, I appreciate how hard you work,” but then pout when he has to go on a business trip, you aren’t acting like you appreciate how hard he works. Or if you say, “Babe, I value your opinion,” but you never actually carry out any of his suggestions, you aren’t communicating that you value his opinion.

If you have fallen into the habit of picking on your husband for his faults, rolling your eyes when he says he’ll do something, or making big decisions without his input, you are saying, “I don’t respect you, and I don’t believe in you.”

Now maybe you’re thinking, “He hasn’t earned my respect, and he hasn’t proven that I should believe in him.” We live in a world where respect must be earned, and in most cases, that is true.

Except for the case of marriage. God’s command to couples is clear. In Ephesians 5:33 Paul tells us,

EPHESIANS 5:33

*However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself,
and the wife must respect her husband.*

Here’s something to think about: should you have to earn your husband’s love? Of course not. Why then are you making him earn your respect?

As wives, we have the power to call out greatness or magnify weakness in our husbands. We have the power to make our man feel like Superman or Superfailure. We have the power to breathe life into them or beat them to death with our words.

There are 4 ways you communicate respect to your husband.

Your words. What you say and what you don't say

Your actions. What you do to tangibly support him in his work and at home

Your attitude. How you emotionally respond to his words and actions

Your body language. How you physically respond to his words and actions

Are you ready to look in the mirror and do something about what you see? That's the task this week. We are going to identify areas where we are not communicating respect, and areas where we can give our husbands encouragement.

We are going to look hard, and then we are going to change what we see. It will not be easy. Change is never easy, especially if you have been married for a long time. But the journey to becoming the wife you want to be, the journey to becoming Mrs. Betterhalf, requires change. In the words of the apostle James: just do it.

Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.

PHILIPPIANS 2:3-4





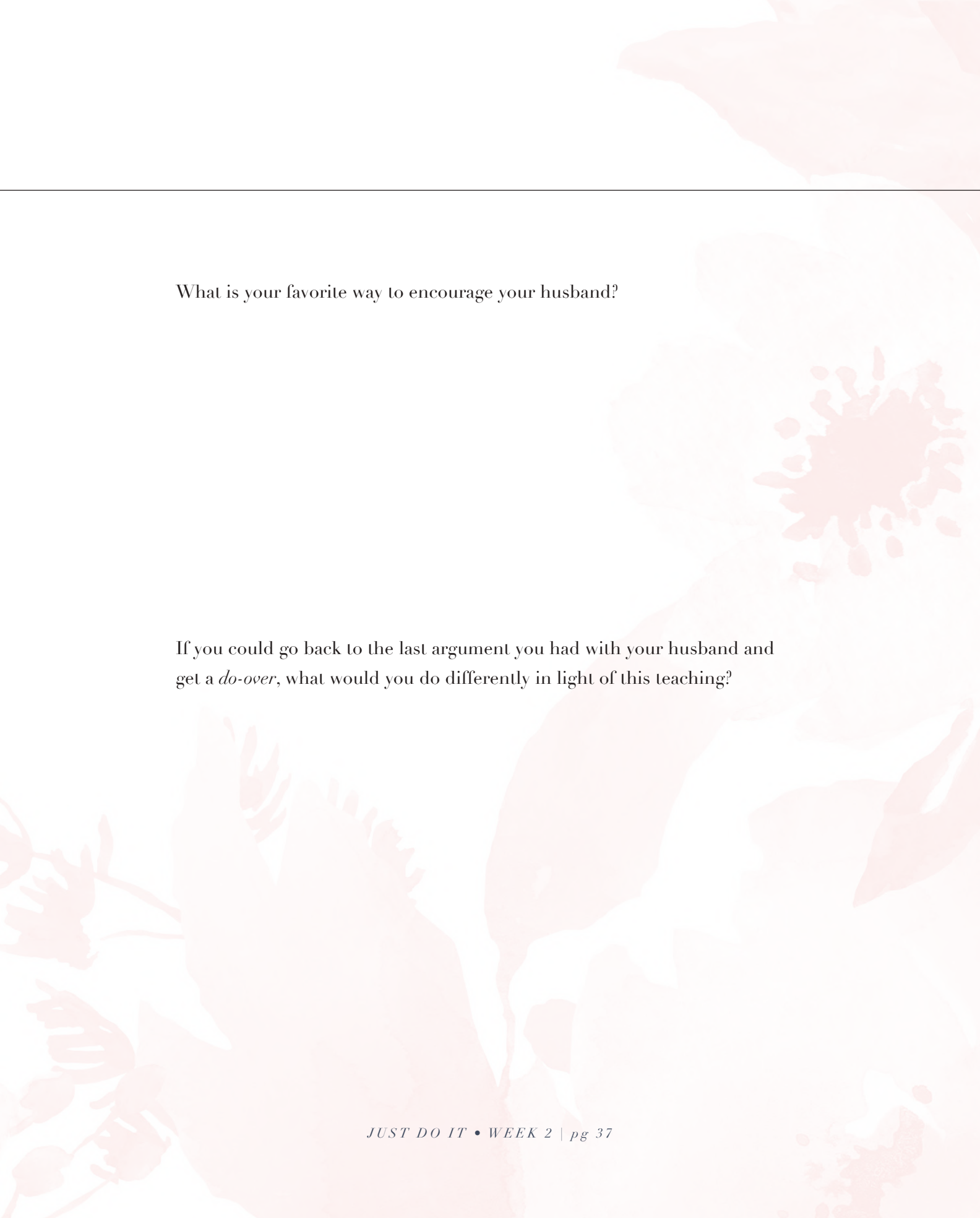
Review

Review your notes to answer a few questions from this week's video teaching. To watch the teaching again, go to week 2 at www.BecomingMrsBetterhalf.com.

.....

Of the three places you can show your husband respect, which one challenged you the most and why?

Can you think of a time you were accusing instead of affirming toward your husband and unknowingly communicated disrespect to him?



What is your favorite way to encourage your husband?

If you could go back to the last argument you had with your husband and get a *do-over*, what would you do differently in light of this teaching?

Reflect



Growing up, how was respect modeled in your home?



Describe how encouragement was given.



Name a woman you look up to for the way that she respects and/or encourages her husband. Describe her actions.

What bad habits have you fallen into when it comes to communicating respect to your husband?

Respond

EPHESIANS 5:33 (NASB)

*Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must **see to it** that she respects her husband*

Paul commands men to love their wives and women to respect their husbands. Why do you think he did not command women to love their husbands?



This version uses the phrase, “see to it.” List a few practical ways you can daily see to it that your husband feels respected.

1 PETER 3:1-2

Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives.

Peter is talking specifically to women married to unbelieving men in these verses. How does he suggest the men will be won over?

According to these verses, how powerful are your attitudes and actions?

What attitudes, actions, and habits do you need to change?



Reflect

How can you show respect to your husband in the following areas?
(Remember: words, actions, attitudes, and body language)

His space

His time

His job

His decisions

His preferences

In front of others

Identify a recent time where you know you disrespected your husband.
How did it affect him? How did it affect you, your evening, your week, and
your home?



Identify a recent time where you did respect your husband.
How did it affect him? How did it affect you, your evening, your week, and
your home?

Respond

2 CORINTHIANS 13:11

Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.

I love this verse because, in a lot of ways, I think it sums up what it takes to become Mrs. Betterhalf. What are the commands in this verse?

What are the benefits?

HEBREWS 10:24

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.

What are the love and good deeds you would like to see in your husband?

How can you encourage him (or spur him on) in those areas?

Reflect

Your husband has an insatiable appetite for encouragement from YOU. You have the opportunity each day to pour courage into him. How can you encourage him in the following areas? (Remember: words, actions, attitudes, and body language)

His job

His parenting

His dreams

His efforts

His leadership

His self-esteem

What is one small thing you can encourage in your husband that could make a huge difference?

What is one small thing you need to ignore?

Reinforce

Go to www.BecomingMrsBetterhalf.com, week 2 to watch "Do Not Reverse Your Circumcision" by Pastor Steven and Holly (from May 2015 Meant to Be Series)

.....

Use this space to take notes as you listen then answer the question below.

Which of the six callings meant the most to you?

The page features a light pink, watercolor-style floral pattern in the background, with various flowers and leaves scattered across the page. A thin black horizontal line is positioned above the word "Recite".

Recite

Memorize Philippians 2:1-4

Write the scripture out below. Then, turn this scripture into a prayer for your marriage.



Request

This is your husband's opportunity to voice his opinion without being penalized. Tear out the perforated card from the back of your book labeled week 1. Give it to your husband and ask him to verbalize or write down his answer to the following question.

.....

This week we are discussing the idea that a man's response to feeling disrespected is often anger. Can you tell me about a recent time where you were angry or frustrated with me?

What was your husband's response to this week's question?



How do you feel about his response?

What adjustments do you need to make?

CATCH THE FOXES

TRUST HONOR **BODY LANGUAGE** TRUST TONE

actions ACKNOWLEDGE APPLICATION

ATTITUDES *call out*

AFFIRM GREATNESS

SPUR ON

WORDS

APPRECIATE

MAGNIFY SEE TO IT

RESPECT

ENCOURAGE VALUE

BREATHE LIFE THANK



Renew

Throughout the course of this study, you will be compiling a list of renewed promises. Use the words to the left to write an action sentence (25 words or less) based on the topic for this week.



Recount

Write a note, email, or text to your husband encouraging him in one specific area of his life right now.

Resources

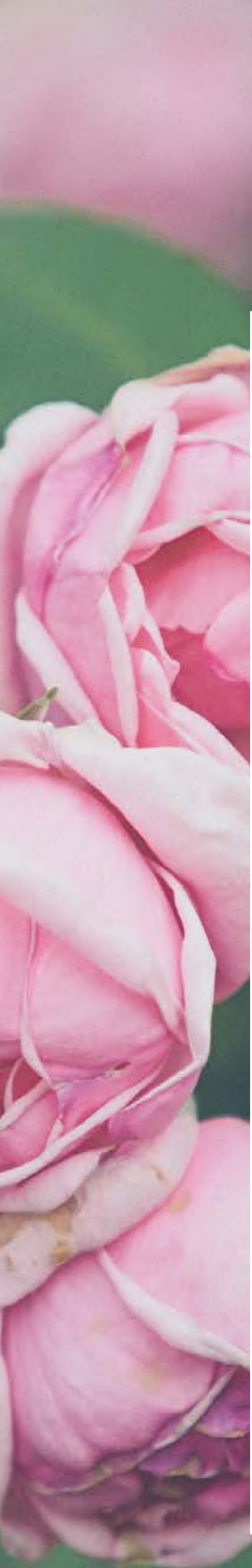
For more information on this topic read *Love and Respect* by Emerson Eggerich.



Notes



Notes



Find +
Replace

WEEK 3

Read

Were you convicted by the lesson this week? I know, as I was teaching it, I was thinking of times where I have been a nag. I don't want to be that woman!

As you go through your week, remember the tips I gave you to help get away from nagging:

REPLACE NEGATIVITY WITH CURIOSITY.

Instead of complaining about his obsession with football, learn about it.

TAKE A LOOK IN THE MIRROR.

Instead of focusing on things he could change, focus on what you can change.

NAG TO THE RIGHT ONE: GOD!

Instead of nagging him, take your complaints to God.

GIVE HIM THE GRACE YOU HOPE HE WILL GIVE TO YOU.

Instead of harping on him right away, give a grace period.

Whew! Now, that's enough negativity. Our homework this week is all about gratitude. I hope God has already been revealing so much to you through your bracelet. You should be wearing your bracelet and changing hands every time you nag, complain, think negatively, or talk negatively about someone, something, or yourself.

I know that's a lot. But, as I reminded you in the video teaching this week, don't cheat yourself on this activity because it is meant to make you aware of negative patterns and areas where you're prone to complain. We will check back on your observations later in the week.

Right now I want to focus on what you should do in the moment when you catch yourself complaining. It is a little activity you may have read about in chapter four of Pastor Steven's book, *Crash the Chatterbox*. He calls it "find and replace." Just like the editing function on your computer, you must find the complaining and replace it with gratefulness.

The first time I did the bracelet challenge (inspired by Linda Dillow in, *What's It Like to Be Married to Me?*) I started to get depressed about how much I was complaining. After all, I do not consider myself to be a negative person. But throughout my day I would catch myself thinking things like, I hate unloading the dishwasher, or getting gas in my car is such a pain, or laundry in my house never ends, or no one at my job appreciates me. After a day of this, I felt so down on myself.

You see, I found the complaining, but I didn't replace it with gratitude. When you catch yourself complaining, it is not enough just to reprimand yourself. You must replace the complaint with the truth.

I hate unloading the dishwasher... Lord, thank you that I have a house with a dishwasher and running water and electricity to run it.

Getting gas is such a pain... I am so grateful I have a car that runs and money to pay for gas.

The laundry never ends... Thank you Lord, for healthy kids who play sports and are messy eaters. Thank you for the feet that fill all these socks.

No one at my job appreciates me... I am so grateful I have a job that pays money.

Look at what Paul wrote in Colossians,

COLOSSIANS 3:15-17

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

We all want a peaceful heart, a peaceful home, and a peaceful marriage. But, we have to remember that the peace of Christ rules in grateful hearts and homes. Contentment is the breeding ground for peace.

As a woman, you are the thermostat of your home. You probably know the saying, “If Mama ain’t happy, ain’t nobody happy.” Start expressing your gratefulness, first to yourself, then to your husband, and watch the atmosphere change in your home.

And yes, sometimes choosing to have a good attitude in order to protect the peace of your home is a sacrifice! But remember: sacrifice is a good thing sometimes. In the teaching this week I shared three good kinds of sacrifice:

THE SACRIFICE OF HUMILITY.

When you respond with grace because you know grace has been given to you.

THE SACRIFICE OF PRAISE.

When you turn your questions into praising God simply for who He is to you.

THE SACRIFICE OF THANKS.

When you acknowledge your pain but focus on the blessings you do have in your life.

Be on the lookout this week for small things you can thank your husband for doing. Please, don't think, *Well he never thanks me!* Who is this study about, him or you?

Pastor Steven says, "Gratitude begins where my sense of entitlement ends." It is time to stop acting like you are entitled to all the things your husband does for you and start thanking him.

Let's go deeper.

you must have the same attitude
that Christ Jesus had.

Though he was God,
he did not think of equality with God
as something to cling to.
Instead, he gave up his divine privileges;
he took the humble position of a slave
and was born as a human being.
When he appeared in human form,

PHILIPPIANS 2:5-7

Review

Review your notes to answer a few questions from this week's video teaching. To watch the teaching again, go to week 3 at www.BecomingMrsBetterhalf.com.

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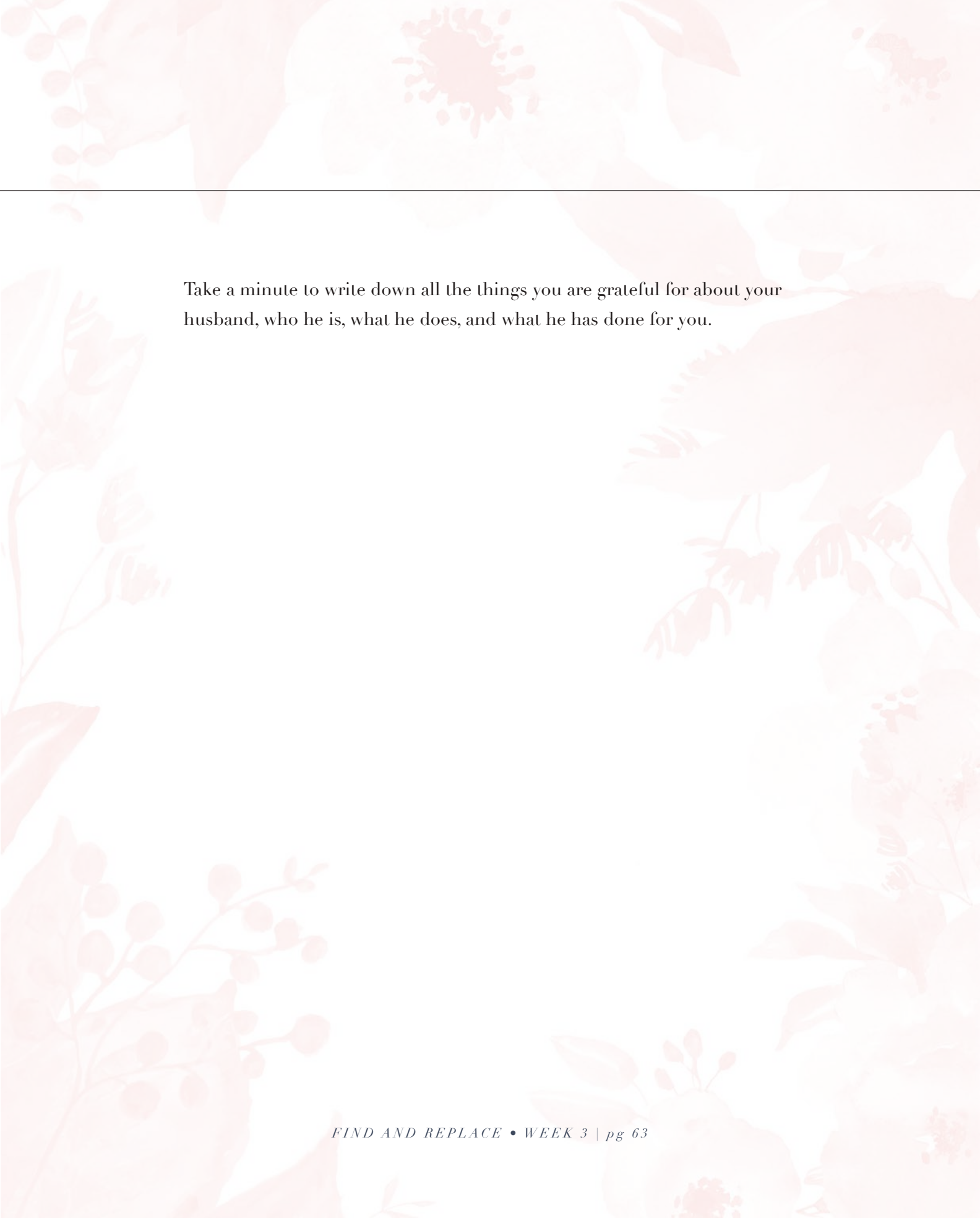
What is one thing you need to stop nagging your husband about? Which approach to avoid nagging will you put into practice?

Recall a time where you have had to make one of the three sacrifices.
(humility, praise, or thanks)

Reflect

Describe the atmosphere of your home growing up. Was there an overall spirit of nagging and complaining or a spirit of grace and gratitude?

Who is a woman you think embodies grace and gratitude?
Explain your answer.



Take a minute to write down all the things you are grateful for about your husband, who he is, what he does, and what he has done for you.

Respond

PHILIPPIANS 4:8

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely; whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.



Take a moment to reflect on lovely moments you have had with your husband. Write a prayer giving thanks to God.

HEBREWS 13:15-16

Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

How does this scripture describe a sacrifice of praise?

When have you had to offer a sacrifice of praise to God?

According to the scripture, how does God feel toward you when you make a sacrifice?



Reflect

This week, we talked about nagging. Reflect on a time when you have been a nagging wife. What was the outcome of your griping?

Reflect on a time when you have been a grateful wife. What was the outcome of your gratefulness?



What has the bracelet challenge shown you about yourself this week?

What patterns of negativity were you able to identify this week?

(Example: a certain time of day, a certain person you complain to or about, a certain task you complain about, a specific way you think about yourself, etc.)



Reflect

How does your negativity affect the atmosphere of your home?

Write a prayer asking the Lord to help you improve in this area.

Reinforce

Go to www.BecomingMrsBetterhalf.com, week 3 to watch "Graduating in Gratitude" by Pastor Steven (from January 2015 Power of Same series)

.....

Use this space to take notes as you listen then answer the question below.

How can you graduate in gratitude in your marriage?



Recite

Memorize Philippians 2:1-7

Write it out below and circle some of the actions that we should take in order to follow Christ's example.



Request

This is your husband's opportunity to voice his opinion without being penalized. Tear out the perforated card from the back of your book labeled week 3. Give it to your husband and ask him to verbalize or write down his answer to the following question.

.....

This week we are discussing the effect a woman's attitude can have on her whole household. What is one thing I complain about or one thing you wish I would let go of?

What was your husband's response to this week's question?



How do you feel about his response?

What adjustments do you need to make?

ASSUME THE BEST
LOOK IN THE MIRROR
GIVE THANKS
HABIT *lovely* PRAISE
NOBLE RIGHT *partner* GIVE CHANGE ADMIRABLE
ATMOSPHERE
TRUTH HOLY SPIRIT CONTENTMENT GRATEFUL FIND AND REPLACE
PEACE SACRIFICE THANKFUL
THERMOSTAT HUMILITY
cheerleader



Renew

Throughout the course of this study, you will be compiling a list of renewed promises. Use the words to the left to write an action sentence (25 words or less) based on the topic for this week.

Recount

Look at the list you wrote of all the things you are grateful for about your husband, in the first Reflect section of this chapter. Write your husband several thank you notes and creatively distribute them over the next few days. (Example: use sticky notes, leave him a thankful trail all over the car or house, put them in his briefcase or bag for work.)

Resources

For more information of the topic of complaining read *Change Your Words*, *Change Your Life*, by Joyce Meyer.



Notes



Notes

Who's
The King

WEEK 4

Read

This week's topic is such a sensitive one. As I said in the teaching, we all come from different backgrounds when it comes to the issue of sex. Some of us have a history of abuse that we need to overcome. Some of us have a history of total abstinence that caused us to have negative attitudes toward sex. Some of us experimented at an early age and have a past that haunts us.

The good news is there is no need for shame no matter what your background. Shame is the enemy's way of keeping you from experiencing the ultimate healing Jesus wants to give you.

In the teaching this week, we discussed

THE WHY.

Understanding the bond that defines your marriage

THE HOW.

Knowing yourself, knowing him, and redefining your goals

THE PERKS.

Appreciating both the physical and emotional benefits

THE COMMITMENT.

Realistically finding a place to start

When I sat down to write on this topic, I thought about a little game my husband and I play called "What is king?" It's based on an axiom he heard one time: "In the songwriting jungle, melody is king."

We often discuss different areas of expertise and what would be considered king in that particular *jungle*. As I thought about what to write for this week, I considered calling it: sex is king.

But is it really true that, in the marriage jungle, sex is king? No, not really. In fact, I would say, in the marriage jungle, selflessness is king. But sex might be a close second. You see, I think many women fall into the trap of letting sex take a backseat in their marriage. We all have different reasons. Maybe it doesn't feel the same anymore. Maybe sex reminds you too much of your past. Maybe you are just too tired. And for a while, you can get by without it. But sex means so much to a man and after a while, a lack of sex will create toxic tension!

Shaunti Feldhahn says, "A wife who stops having sex with her husband is like a man who stops talking to his wife." If this is true, how would you feel if your husband only talked to you once a week, or worse, once a month, or even worse still, once a year?

It is time to stop looking at sex as something that's always exhilarating and fun, OR something that is gross and dirty. Your thoughts and feelings about sex are important (we will even talk about them this week) BUT this is not a study about you and your needs. Remember, we are becoming Mrs. Betterhalf. We are becoming students of the men we love. For a moment, put aside your thoughts and feelings about sex, and start seeing sex as a way for you to talk to your husband. To tell him...

I love you.

I want you.

You're the man.

Sex can often be exhilarating and fun but not always. On those days where sex isn't a particular craving we feel, or when it feels routine, we must get beyond the physical feelings that come from sex and think about the emotional benefits. Sex makes you feel secure. Sex makes you feel close. Sex makes you feel accepted. Sex makes you ONE.

Is it possible that your marriage feels empty because you are not physically connecting with your husband?

We all have room to grow in this area of our marriage. It is a sensitive, deep, complicated issue for us all. As I said in my video teaching, I do not mean to oversimplify the topic, but I kind of need to, because no matter what stage of life you are in, sex must be central in your marriage.

This week we are going to take a bird's eye view on the topic of sex inside marriage and all I ask is, as you complete the week's assignment, you do so with an open mind and an honest heart. Here we go!

he humbled himself in obedience to God
and died a criminal's death on a cross.
Therefore, God elevated him to the place of
highest honor and gave him the name
above all others.

PHILIPPIANS 2:8-9



Review

Review your notes to answer a few questions from this week's video teaching. To watch the teaching again, go to week 4 at www.BecomingMrsBetterhalf.com.

.....

What barriers do you need to acknowledge from your sexual background?

What steps can you take to begin overcoming these barriers?



What is one new perspective on sex that you gained from this week's teaching?


In the teaching we discussed the importance of knowing yourself. What makes you feel unsexy? What makes you feel sexy?

Reflect

How are you doing in your attitudes toward sex? Write out a prayer below asking the Lord to open your eyes to show you areas you need to work on this week.



What myths have you believed about sex? (From movies, magazines, books, friends, etc.)



Growing up, what misconceptions did you have about men (in the context of sex) that changed after you were married?



What advice would you give to a newly married woman about sex?

How have your expectations of sex in marriage changed over the years?

Respond

GENESIS 2:24

That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

What does it mean to you to become *one flesh*?

PHILIPPIANS 2:3-4

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

How does this familiar verse apply to your sex life?

PROVERBS 31:11-12 (NLT)

*Her husband can trust her, and she will greatly enrich his life. She brings him good, not harm,
all the days of her life.*

Maybe this verse isn't talking about sex, maybe it is.
Let's believe it is. When it comes to sex, can your husband
trust you?

How do you enrich your husband's sex life?

1 CORINTHIANS 7:4-5

The wife does not have authority over her own body but yields it to her husband. In the same way, the husband does not have authority over his own body but yields it to his wife. Do not deprive each other except perhaps by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

Write out a prayer asking the Lord to open your eyes to how you can yield to your husband.

The page features a faint, artistic illustration of various flowers and leaves in shades of light pink and peach, scattered across the background. The word "Reflect" is centered in a black, elegant cursive font, flanked by two horizontal lines that extend towards the left and right margins.

Reflect

Describe a time when you felt your sex life was very healthy and explain one or more benefits this brought to your marriage.

Describe a season in your marriage when sex was infrequent. How did you feel? How did you transition out of this season?

If sex is the way you communicate with your husband, what have you been saying to him lately?

What are some other barriers (besides your past) that are keeping you from having a thriving sex life? (health, children, schedule, self-esteem, trust issues, etc.)

If this study is about becoming a student of your husband, I must ask this question: what does your husband like in the bedroom? This is the one question you can answer in your head.

Reinforce

Go to www.BecomingMrsBetterhalf.com, week 4 to watch Watch the sermon "Hidden Issues" by Pastor Steven (from April 2016)

Use this space to take notes as you listen then answer the question below.

Pastor Steven taught us "what I hide, God cannot heal." What issues, in the area of sex, do you need to face so that God can bring healing?



Recite

Memorize Philippians 2:1-9

Write the scripture out below. Circle all the words or phrases that describe humility.

Request

This is your husband's opportunity to voice his opinion without being penalized. Tear out the perforated card from the back of your book labeled week 4. Give it to your husband and ask him to verbalize or write down his answer to the following question.

.....

This week we are discussing the topic of sex inside of marriage. What do you like best about our sex life and what can I do to make our sex life better?

What did your husband say?



How do you feel about his response?

What adjustments do you need to make?

MAKE IT ABOUT HIM

DESIRE CONNECTION HEAL BENEFITS REKINDLE BOND

DESIRE HEAL KING BENEFITS REKINDLE *affirm* IT TAKES PRACTICE GLUE

DESIRE *intimacy* HONEST BENEFITS REKINDLE WANT

DEMONSTRATE

UNDERSTAND SEX

ENJOY *passion* E SEX

ENJOY AWARENESS RESPOND M GIVE

ENJOY AWARENESS ONE FLESH THE HOW

ENJOY AWARENESS THE COMMITMENT F THE PERKS ONLY I CAN GIVE IT

FAKE IT TIL YOU FEEL IT



Renew

Throughout the course of this study, you will be compiling a list of renewed promises. Use the words to the left to write an action sentence (25 words or less) based on the topic for this week.

Recount

This is an action-taking week. No writing! Initiate sex with your husband one time this week.

Resources

For more information about sex in marriage read *For Women Only* by Shaunti Feldhahn or *Intimate Issues* by Linda Dillow.



Notes



Notes



Five
Fighters

WEEK 5

Read

This week we are talking about confrontation and forgiveness. Conflict in marriage is unavoidable. But how you deal with it can literally make or break your marriage.

In my video teaching this week I explained that good communication is a marriage essential, in order for two to become one – that place of unity we are striving toward. The amount of time you spend arguing with your spouse has little to do with how healthy your bond is. What matters is how you fight and what you fight about.

We discussed the way to strengthen this bond is to remember the following things:

GAIN THE KNOWLEDGE.

Are you a stuffer, shouter, or pouter?

GET TO THE ROOT.

Do you get to the heart of an argument?

GROUND YOURSELF.

Can you exercise the arts of self-control and timing?

GIVE IT UP.

Are you willing to forgive?

This week I want us to dig a little deeper into this topic of dealing with confrontation. (Remember, confrontation is absolutely unavoidable in marriage.) Here is a mental picture that may help you see confrontation in a whole new light: Confrontation in your marriage is like a fire.

A fire that is contained is a beneficial thing. It brings warmth, sheds light, purifies, and makes room for new growth. This is called a controlled burn.

A fire that is out of control destroys. It consumes and kills. This is called a wildfire. And a wildfire of confrontation literally has the power to take the life from your marriage. No one wants a fire that is out of control.

Let me ask you a question. If you were cooking dinner and a dishtowel caught on fire, what would you do? Is there any chance you would throw gasoline on that burning towel? No way! Because you don't want your house to burn down.

You would throw water on that towel and do whatever you could to put the fire out as quickly as you could. Then, AFTER the fire was put out, you would analyze what mistakes were made to cause that towel to catch on fire, and try not to make that mistake ever again.

So let's anticipate the next confrontation you have with your spouse. Sparks fly and a conflict ensues. Tempers rise and suddenly you have a small fire, a tiff. What do you do? I want you to see that once sparks fly between you and your spouse; you have the opportunity to either throw water on it - or gasoline.

Proverbs 17:14 says,

PROVERBS 17:14 (TLB)

It is hard to stop a quarrel once it starts so don't let one begin.

Throwing gasoline can be defined as anything that makes the argument bigger. For example, if your silence enrages your spouse, you have thrown gasoline, not water, even though you did not yell. Gasoline can be a look, a word, a reminder of a past mistake, an accusation, and of course, it can be a verbal or physical explosion.

Water diffuses a fire. Throwing water could come in the form of a sincere apology, a confession, or an act of kindness. Throwing water might mean walking away or letting it go.

Proverbs 19:11 says,

PROVERBS 19:11

A person's wisdom yields patience; it is to one's glory to overlook an offense.

What if controlling the fire of an argument begins with me? What if it begins with an act that is so counterintuitive for me that I have to pray my way through it?

Overlooking an offense doesn't mean overlooking the issue. It means you throw water on the fire. Let the fire die.

Walk away, and think about what caused the fire. Then decide if the offense is big enough to address in a non-emotional manner so no one makes that mistake again.


Confrontation is a huge part of being married. A healthy marriage is not measured by how few confrontations there are; it is measured by your ability to learn from confrontation and grow through it. In other words: learn to stop fighting the same fights over and over again.

I want to close with one last verse and one last question.

ROMANS 12:18

If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

As far as it depends on you, can you contain fires and bring peace into your marriage?



that at the name
of Jesus every knee should bow, in
heaven and on earth and under the
earth, and every tongue declare that
Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of
God the Father.

PHILIPPIANS 2:10-11



Review

Review your notes to answer a few questions about this week's video teaching. To watch the teaching again, go to week 5 at www.BecomingMrsBetterhalf.com.

.....



Are you primarily a stuffer, shouter, or pouter?

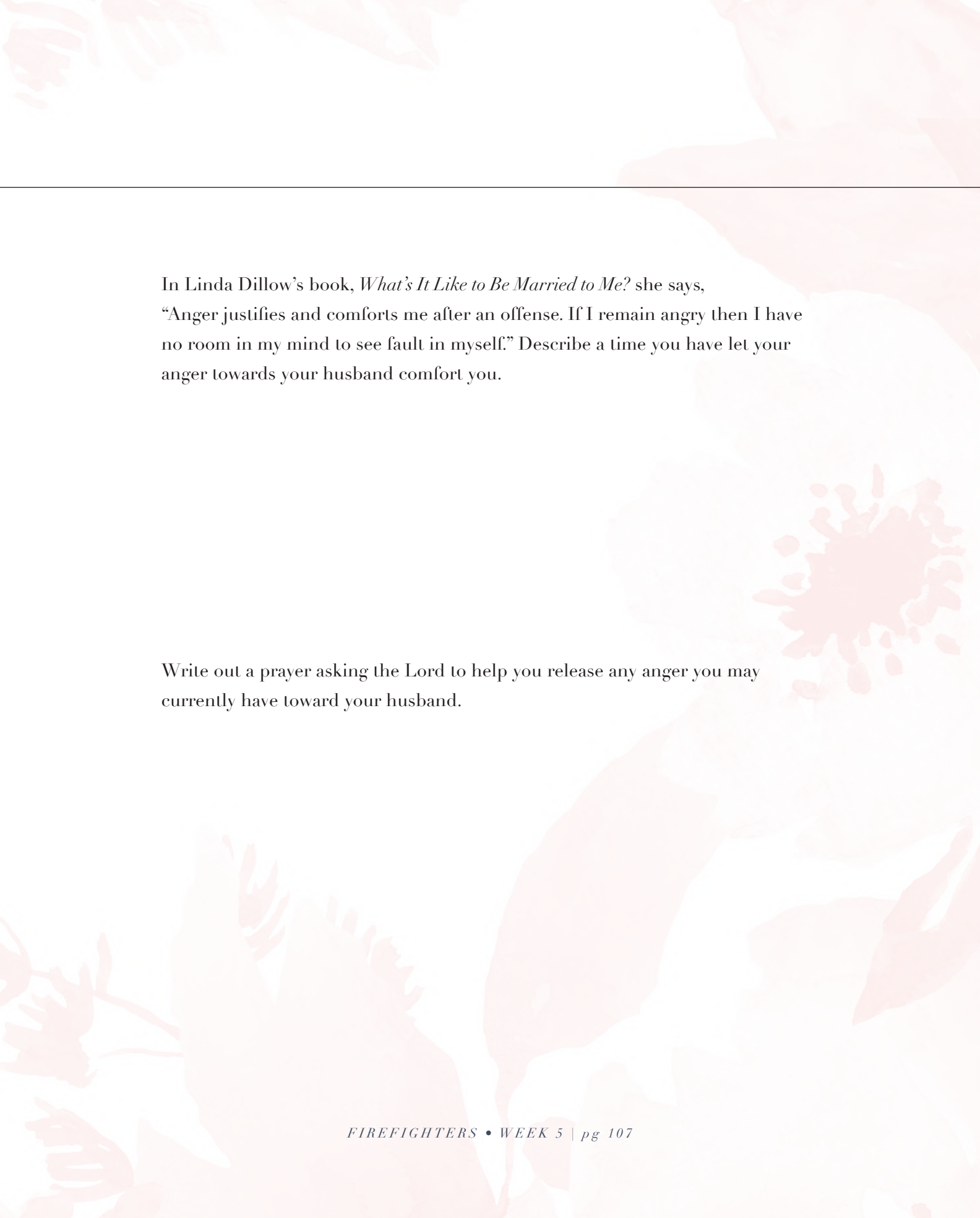
Which one is your husband?

Based on this information, what adjustments can you make to your responses before your next disagreement?

How would you grade yourself in the areas of self-control and timing?



What are some practical things you can do in order to ground yourself when you feel a confrontation arising?

A faint, light-colored illustration in the background shows several hands reaching up to hold a large, multi-petaled flower. The style is soft and artistic, with a color palette of light pinks and whites.

In Linda Dillow's book, *What's It Like to Be Married to Me?* she says, "Anger justifies and comforts me after an offense. If I remain angry then I have no room in my mind to see fault in myself." Describe a time you have let your anger towards your husband comfort you.

Write out a prayer asking the Lord to help you release any anger you may currently have toward your husband.

Reflect

What do you typically throw when faced with a confrontation, water or gasoline?

Recall a time when you threw gasoline on a confrontation.

How did it affect your home?

How did it affect your relationship?



Recall a time when you threw water on a confrontation.

How did it affect your home?

How did it affect your relationship?

Write a prayer asking the Lord to open your eyes this week to ways you can bring peace into your marriage.

Respond

PROVERBS 17:9

Whoever would foster love covers over an offense, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends.

What fuels the ability to overlook an offense?

What happens when you cannot overlook an offense?

HEBREWS 12:14

Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.

How can you make every effort for peace in your home?

EPHESIANS 4:31-32

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Is there a touch of bitterness or anger you need to let go of?
What are some practical ways you can be kind and
compassionate instead of bitter and angry?

If you are thinking: why do I have to be the peacemaker?
How does this verse answer your question?

Reflect



What are some good and bad things you learned about communication in marriage from your childhood home?

Name a couple you respect in this area of handling confrontation. What sets this couple apart from other couples you know?

What are some small issues you argue about that you need to let go? (A few examples may be telling him how to drive, coming home late from work, dirty laundry or dishes left around the house.)



What is a recurring argument you have with your spouse?

What is the root of the issue? (For example, is there a root of disrespect, insecurity, past hurt, or something else that needs to be addressed?)

This may seem strange, but go with me here. Write a letter to your future self, giving yourself a pep talk for the next time you feel offended or angry toward your spouse.

Reinforce

Go to www.BecomingMrsBetterhalf.com, week 5 to watch "Fight Night" by Les Parrot (May 2016)

Use this space to take notes as you listen then answer the question below.

Based on this teaching, what is one thing you can do to improve your communication during conflict?

*Go to www.BecomingMrsBetterhalf.com, week 5 to listen to the sermon, No More Nails,
from Pastor Steven*

Use this space to take notes as you listen then answer the question below.



What is one thing the Holy Spirit is directing you to do in response to this sermon?



Recite

Memorize Philippians 2:1-11

Write it out below. Then underline the words that describe Christ's given authority.



Request

This is your husband's opportunity to voice his opinion without being penalized. Tear out the perforated card from the back of your book labeled week 5. Give it to your husband and ask him to verbalize or write down his answer to the following question.

.....

This week we are talking about how to deal with conflict in a healthy way. When we have a conflict, what is something I can do to prevent the disagreement from escalating?

What was your husband's response to this week's question?



How do you feel about his response?

What adjustments do you need to make?

PROCESS *self-control* UNIFIED KNOWLEDGE TIMING **FORGIVE** CHANGE CONFRONTATION APOLOGIZE ONE UNIT
COMMUNICATION
BITTERNESS
CONTROLLED BURN **OFFENSE** *strength* **KINDNESS** DIFFUSE
say i'm sorry
PEACE SIMPLE
SHOUT
understand **OVERLOOK**
DECIDE LET GO
GROW
RESPOND POUT **STUFF KIND**

The page features a light pink, watercolor-style floral pattern in the background, with various flowers and leaves scattered across the page. The word "Renew" is written in a black, elegant cursive font, centered at the top. It is flanked by two horizontal lines that extend outwards from the word.

Renew

Throughout the course of this study, you will be compiling a list of renewed promises. Use the words to the left to write an action sentence (25 words or less) based on the topic for this week.



Recount

Write a text, email, or note to your husband thanking him for being patient with you.

Resources

For more information on the topic of communication read *The Good Fight* by Dr. Les and Leslie Parrot.



Notes



Notes

Tinkled
Pink

WEEK 6

Read

It is week 6. Can you see the finish line? I am so proud of you for staying on this journey. I know it has not been easy. In many ways this study may feel similar to healing from major surgery. The healing process is slow and a little painful, but so beneficial in the long run.

Last week, we talked about fighting. This week we are talking about finances, which is the number one topic couples fight about. And it should not surprise you to learn we are going to discover the why behind your financial arguments.

In the video teaching this week, we learned every husband has an innate need to provide three things for his wife.

IMMEDIATE NEEDS

bills, mortgage, groceries, gas, etc.

SECURITY FOR THE FUTURE

savings, retirement, college funds, etc.

YOUR GENERAL HAPPINESS

your satisfaction and contentment

We learned that, to him, providing does not just mean earning money. At his core, your husband feels the burden to provide stability and happiness for you today, and for your future. And whether he is the primary bread winner in your home or not, he still feels this weight.

We also talked about spenders versus savers. (You can count on some questions about that in this homework.)

Today, I want to draw your attention toward the area of contentment. There are two questions I would like for you to consider this week:

Are you content?

Are you communicating contentment to your husband?

The enemy wants you to live in a perpetual state of discontent. He wants you to believe lies such as:

- “If we only made more money, we would be able to get out of debt.”
- “If we had more income, we would be able to tithe to our church.”
- “If I had a bigger house, I would be more organized.”
- “If we had nicer furniture, we would be more hospitable.”
- “If I had a nicer wardrobe, I would feel more self-confident.”
- “If we could afford better groceries, we would be able to be healthy.”

Dave Ramsey says, “You can get out of debt, save money, and get on a budget, but until your intellect forces your emotions and your spirit to accept that STUFF does not equal CONTENTMENT, your finances will always feel stressed.”

One of the greatest personal realizations I have had on the subject of contentment was when I came to the understanding that my “wanter” will never be satisfied.

No matter how much we make, no matter how much I have, I will always want more.

And, the more I feed the “wanter,” the more I want.

The number one way to fuel the “wanter” is COMPARISON.

We live in a world where comparison is literally at our fingertips- with Instagram, Pinterest, Facebook, etc. These social media sites are wonderful, but they can also be detrimental to our joy. If I spend all day checking these sites, I am filling my mind with the things my friends have, or worse, people I don't even know - the parties they throw, the way they decorate their house, their "OOTD" (outfit of the day), their perfectly cooked meals. Then I am forced to compare myself.

Now, here is where discontentment creeps into my marriage without me even knowing it. All of a sudden, I am making conversation with my husband, filling him in on all the things I learned on Facebook today: "Did you know so-and-so got a new car and it has keyless entry!" "Did you hear that so-and-so put their house on the market and are looking to buy a house on more land?" "Did you see that they vacationed at that place I've been showing you?" "Did you know Ashley Furniture is having a huge sale this weekend? Want to go look?"

In the video teaching this week I talked about how these statements and questions can cause us to send our husbands mixed messages regarding our finances without even realizing it. We discussed three specific areas where we may be sending these mixed messages:

RESPECT

I may not be practicing spending habits that communicate respect.

TEAMWORK

I may not be working toward the common financial goals we have set.

CONTENTMENT

I may not be communicating my general happiness.

For example, as a couple, you may be working hard toward the goal of getting out of debt. But when you mention something you'd like to buy or someplace you'd like to vacation, it might not communicate teamwork.

What you are saying may be totally innocent to you. But what your husband may be hearing is, "I am not happy with my car, my house, my sofa, or my life. You worthless idiot, why can't you make more money?" You are unintentionally communicating discontentment.

Your desire to make your home, yourself, and your children look beautiful is God-given. Just like a man has the innate desire to provide stability, a woman has the innate desire to provide an experience. As the old saying goes, Men make houses, women make homes. But our desire becomes corrupt when it is fueled by a desire to keep up, especially when it means spending beyond our means.

The apostle Paul said in 1 Timothy 6:6-7,

1 TIMOTHY 6:6-7 (NLT)

Yet true godliness with contentment is itself great wealth. After all, we brought nothing with us when we came into the world, and we can't take anything with us when we leave it.

The key to contentment is to learn how to focus on the right things. To focus on the things you do have, not the things you don't. Does your husband know, if all were lost, his wife would still be there? You must tell him things such as:

I love our neighborhood; it feels like home.

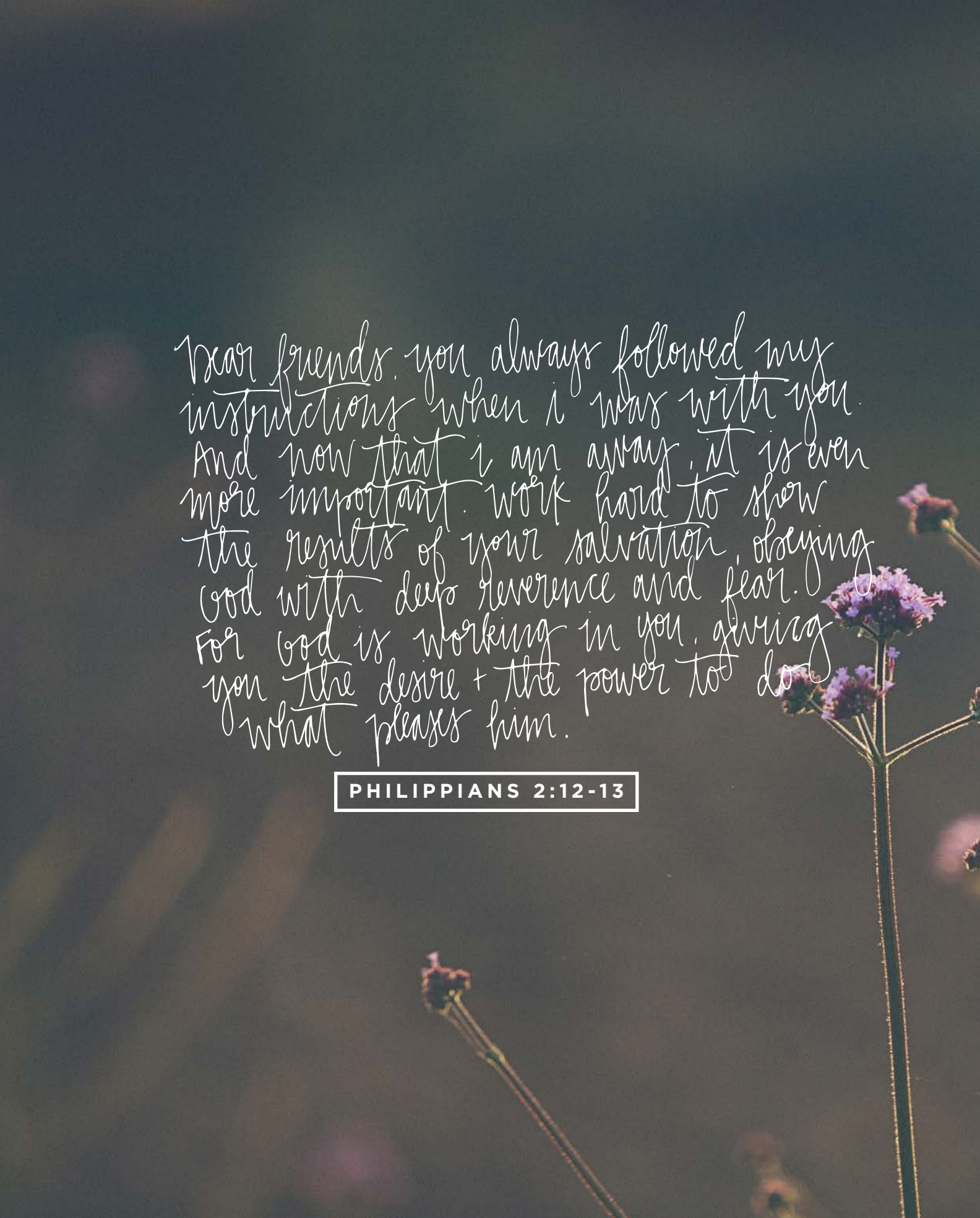
I love this couch; it fits perfectly in this room.

I love my car; I am so proud we paid it off.

A content heart is a grateful heart.

When I was studying for this week, I searched synonyms for the word *contentment*, and one I found was the phrase *tickled pink*. That's a perfect description of Mrs. Betterhalf. She's tickled pink to live the life she has.

Are you tickled pink today?



Dear friends, you always followed my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away, it is even more important. Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. For God is working in you, giving you the desire + the power to do what pleases him.

PHILIPPIANS 2:12-13

Review

Review your notes to answer a few questions from this week's video teaching. To watch the teaching again, go to week 6 at www.BecomingMrsBetterhalf.com.

.....

Of the three things your husband wants to provide for you, which do you see your husband striving for the most right now?



What are some financial goals you have accomplished as a couple?



What are some financial goals you are working toward as a couple?



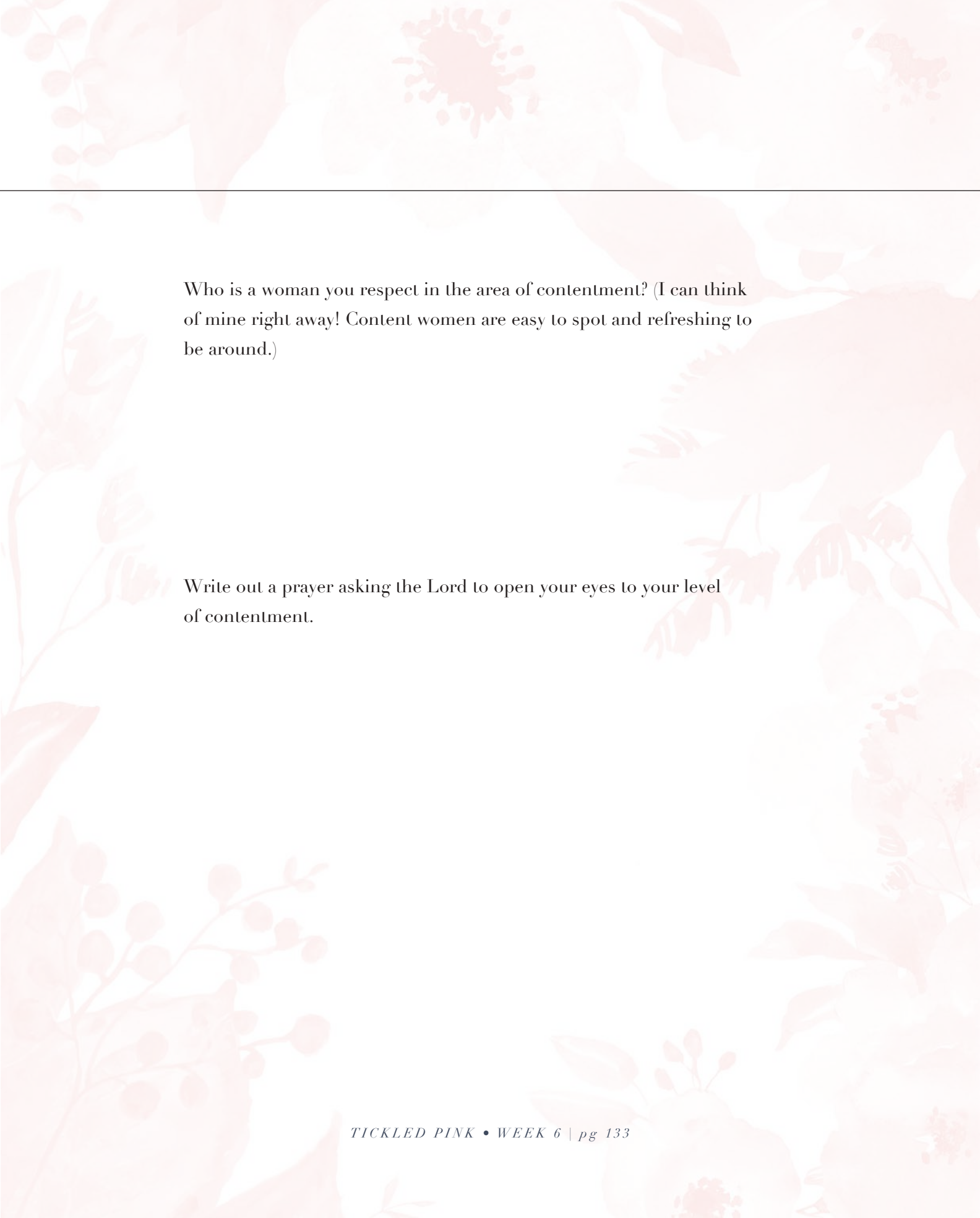
What is one mixed message you realize you have been sending to your husband?

Reflect

Would you describe yourself as tickled pink today?

What area do you struggle with contentment the most? (finances, family, job, material possessions)

Who do you compare yourself to the most, and how has this comparison affected your overall contentment?



Who is a woman you respect in the area of contentment? (I can think of mine right away! Content women are easy to spot and refreshing to be around.)

Write out a prayer asking the Lord to open your eyes to your level of contentment.

Respond

HEBREWS 13:5

Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

Why can we be content with what we have?

PHILIPPIANS 4:19-20

And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever.



Tell about a time where God provided for your family.

1 TIMOTHY 6:17-19

Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

Is there any area of your life in which God is calling you to be more generous?

PHILIPPIANS 4:11-13

I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty; I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry; whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

Where does the power to be content come from?

Reflect



Are you a spender or saver?

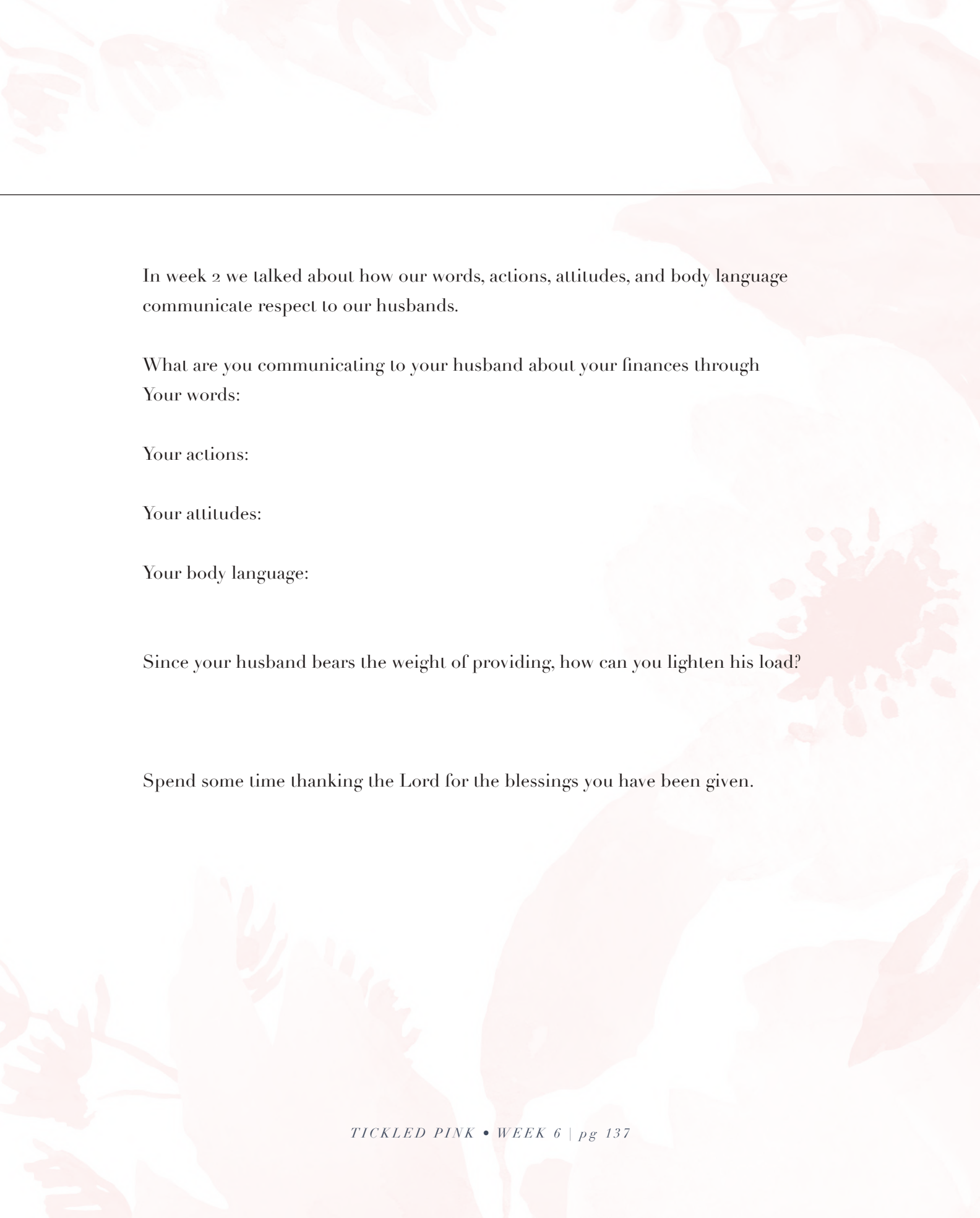
Is your husband a spender or saver?

What conflict does this cause in your relationship?

What was modeled for you as a child in the area of finances?

What was modeled for your husband?

What differences have you had to overcome in the area of your financial backgrounds?



In week 2 we talked about how our words, actions, attitudes, and body language communicate respect to our husbands.

What are you communicating to your husband about your finances through
Your words:

Your actions:

Your attitudes:

Your body language:

Since your husband bears the weight of providing, how can you lighten his load?

Spend some time thanking the Lord for the blessings you have been given.

Reinforce

Go to www.BecomingMrsBetterhalf.com to read the article "Working With Your Differences" by Dave Ramsey

Use this space to take notes as you read then answer the question below.

What is one change you would like to make after reading this article?

*Go to www.BecomingMrsBetterhalf.com, week 6 to watch "Financial Margin"
from Pastor Craig Groeschel*

.....

Use this space to take notes as you listen then answer the question below.

What is one thing you can do to create margin in your finances?



Recite

Memorize Philippians 2:1-14

Write the passage out below. Write out a prayer asking the Lord to help you have the attitude of Jesus in your marriage.



Request

This is your husband's opportunity to voice his opinion without being penalized. Tear out the perforated card from the back of your book labeled week 6. Give it to your husband and ask him to verbalize or write down his answer to the following question.

.....

This week we are talking about the importance of being on the same page in the area of our finances. How can I best support you in the area of our finances?

What was your husband's response to this week's question?



How do you feel about his response?

What adjustments do you need to make?

THE ENEMY OF CONTENTMENT IS COMPARISON

ONEY WANT GRATEFUL CONTENT
EY FAITHFUL
O BUDGET VALUES DEBT *tickled pink*
M FINANCES S MIXED
PROVIDE SAVE
NEED BURDEN
GOALS KNOW WHO YOU ARE *loyalty* PLENTY



Renew

Throughout the course of this study, you will be compiling a list of renewed promises. Use the words to the left to write an action sentence (25 words or less) based on the topic for this week.



Recount

Write a text, email, or note to your husband thanking him for how hard he works.

Resources

For more information on the topic of finances check out this great resource from Elevation Church at elevationchurch.org/financial-planning.



Notes



Notes

All you
Need is
Love

WEEK 7

Read

It's the last week of the study. You made it. I am so proud of you. We have one more week together, and I know you will give it your all.

In the video teaching this week, we studied the book of Ruth, which tells the story of a mother-in-law and her relationship with her daughter-in-law. It is a story of family tragedy and triumph. And it is also a picture of the redeeming power of Jesus. We learned five lessons from Ruth:

RUTH WAS FIERCELY LOYAL TO HER HUSBAND'S FAMILY.

RUTH LOVED EVEN WHEN HER FAMILY WAS NOT EASY TO LOVE.

RUTH DEVELOPED A REPUTATION FOR LOYALTY AND LOVE.

RUTH'S ACTIONS RENEWED THE LIFE OF HER MOTHER-IN-LAW.

RUTH RECEIVED THE ULTIMATE BLESSING FROM GOD.

Didn't you love how Ruth stayed true to who God was calling her to be and how God then blessed her by placing her son, Obed, in the lineage of Jesus Christ? Out of 28 generations, she was one of only four women mentioned in that line. What a beautiful picture of a woman who was exalted simply because of her obedience.

It is hard when you feel like you are the only one who is trying in a relationship. We've all had those days. Maybe one day someone will write a study for your husband called "Becoming Mr. Betterhalf" or one for your mother-in-law called "You are no longer in charge." But that's neither here nor there because, as I've reminded you throughout our time together, this is a study about you.

The enemy wants nothing more than for you to blame your actions on others because it never causes you to change a thing. We are all being tested every day. Our patience, our humility, and our love are all tested. But I have to remember that my grade is between the teacher and me. I am only responsible for my answers. The Teacher is not going to hold me accountable for my husband's answers or my mother-in-law's answers.

This week you will, once again, be tempted to say, "But what about them?" "What about the way they treat me?" Don't buy the lie. Keep your eyes on your own paper. It may sound harsh, but it's true. Remember week 1? "You be Jesus, let God be God". Focus on yourself and leave them to God. That is what Ruth did.

When it comes to dealing with difficult people, I must remember the test of my ability to love is not measured by how I treat the people I like; it's measured by how I treat the people in my life that are difficult to love. Ouch. Read that again.

Just a thought, who in your life is difficult to love? What grade do you think you deserve based on the way you treat that person?

Are you ready for Jesus' words?

LUKE 6:32-35

If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full. But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.

The truth is, sometimes it is hardest to show love to the people we love the most. I am not just talking about your in-laws anymore. I am talking about your husband, your children, and your family.

I know this is true in my life because the people I yell at most are my own kids. In fact, they are really the only people I yell at.

Jesus did not say, love your in-laws, if they accept you with open arms. He didn't say, love your husband, if he treats you well, or love your children if they obey you. He said, love everyone, do good to them, lend to them without expecting anything back.

Love gives.

Love forgives.

Love says I'm sorry.

Love is patient and kind.

Love protects.

Love perseveres.

Love is not self-seeking.

Love is not easily angered.

As I mentioned in the video teaching, John Ortberg says: "Other people don't create your spirit, they reveal your spirit." In other words, the test is on me.

This makes me wonder, is it possible God has placed a difficult person in your life to show you He is at work in you? Maybe this difficult person is in your life to remind you of your need for God? Or even to show you He can give you the grace and the power to love them?

I am not saying you should let people mistreat you. There are situations where we must draw boundaries and set expectations, and all of those things are right and good and needed. But when I read the Bible, I don't primarily hear Jesus saying, "Stick up for yourself!" I hear him saying, "Turn the other cheek and lay down your life."

Remember in Philippians 2 (I hope you have this passage deep in your heart by now), Paul said to not merely look out for yourself, but also for the interests of others, and to consider others to be more important than yourself. He said Jesus humbled himself and God exalted him. Paul told us Christ is in you and will help you carry this out.

How do I wrap this up? I am not saying that once you complete this study you will be a perfect picture of love and patience to your husband and family. (I mean, we have practically reached the end of our time together, and we all still have such a long way to go on the journey of Becoming Mrs. Betterhalf!)

What I do hope you realize is, as a believer, the Holy Spirit lives inside of you and wants to empower you to love your husband and family with the love of Jesus.

Are you ready to dig in one last time?


Review

Review your notes to answer a few questions about this week's video teaching. To watch the teaching again, go to week 7 at www.BecomingMrsBetterhalf.com.

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Ruth had a reputation for love and loyalty. What is your reputation in your family?

What are some practical ways you can show love and loyalty to your family?



I talked about having a funeral for your expectations. What funeral do you need to have?

Think of the person in your life that is the most difficult for you to love. What could the Lord be trying to teach you through this relationship?

Reflect

What was your family like growing up?

What were the most interesting or unusual things about your husband's family that you learned when you became a part of his family?



What issues have you had to overcome as you've worked toward blending your lives together?



What are some good habits or traditions from your husband's family that you have integrated into your own family?

Who is someone you admire in the way she treats her in-laws, and what do you admire about her?

Respond

1 JOHN 3:18

Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

What actions can you take this week to love your family?

EPHESIANS 4:2-3

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

Are you making every effort to keep unity in your family?
If not, what efforts can you begin to make?

1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-11

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me.

Which aspects of love do you need to work on the most?

What childish ways do you need to put behind you?

ROMANS 12:10

Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.

What does it look like to honor others above yourself in your situation?


Reflect



In what ways have you done a good job of loving your extended family?

I asked you earlier to think about this question. Now you can write down your answer. Who in your life is difficult to love? What grade do you think you deserve based on the way you treat that person?

What is one thing you can do this week to show love to that person?

The background of the page features a soft, light-colored illustration. At the top, several hands are shown in various positions, some holding a heart. Below the hands, there are large, stylized flowers, including a prominent white flower with a dark center and a pink flower. The overall aesthetic is gentle and warm, with a focus on themes of love and care.

In the video teaching, I mentioned letting God be the gauge of how you should treat those He has placed in your life, versus always trying to keep everyone happy. Who do you need to stop trying to please, and how is God calling you to handle this situation?

Write a prayer asking God to open your eyes to how you can love the people closest to you.

Reinforce

Go to www.BecomingMrsBetterhalf.com, week 7 to watch "Family Is Funny: In-laws & Out-laws" by Dr. Nicole Fitzpatrick (from FearlessMom.com)

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Use this space to take notes as you listen then answer the question below.

Describe the action steps you need to take toward your in-law relationship.



Recite

Memorize Philippians 2:1-16

Write out the entire passage. Underline the phrases that have meant the most to you as you have studied these verses each week.

do everything without complaining
+ arguing, so that no one can
criticize you. Live clean, innocent
lives as children of God, shining
like bright lights in a world
full of crooked + perverse people.

Hold firmly to the word of life;
then on the day Christ returns,
I will be proud that I did not
run the race in vain + that
my work was not useless.

PHILIPPIANS 2:14-16



Request

This is your husband's opportunity to voice his opinion without being penalized. Tear out the perforated card from the back of your book labeled week 7. Give it to your husband and ask him to verbalize or write down his answer to the following question.

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This week we are discussing the dynamics of extended family.
What can I do to help make our family relationships healthier?

What was your husband's response to this week's question?



How do you feel about his response?

What adjustments do you need to make?

BOUNDARIES

RELATIONSHIPS

LOYALTY

LOVE

HONOR

PROTECT

KIND

EXPECTATIONS

CALLING

RENEW

OBEDIENCE

STAY TRUE

FAMILY

LOOK OUT

SLOW TO ANGER

Jesus

PATIENT

GOD IS MY GAUGE

FORGIVE

selfless

DO GOOD

KINDNESS

PERSEVERE

RESPOND GIVE

STOP TRYING TO CHANGE THEM



Renew

Throughout the course of this study, you will be compiling a list of renewed promises. Use the words to the left to write an action sentence (25 words or less) based on the topic for this week.

Recount

Write a text, email, or note to someone in your husband's family this week and thank them for their role in your life or his life.

Resources

For more information on managing family dynamics read *Boundaries* by Dr. Henry Cloud.



Notes

CONGRATULATIONS



You made it to the end of the book. That wasn't so bad now was it?

I am so proud of you. You should be proud of yourself. Slap your leg.

I was reading a book the other day and the author, Cindy Beall, was describing her first time running a 5k. She explained about how she took up running in her late 30s and trained hard for her first race. She described her exhilaration when she learned she had run her best time. Then she wrote about the days and months after the race when she struggled to stay motivated to keep running. She realized she didn't want to get up before dawn and run when she was not training for a race.

Then she turned her thoughts to marriage, and she got my attention. She wrote, "Keeping a marriage healthy requires training, maintenance and goal setting. Doing what it takes, when you actually feel the opposite- that is what's required when you care deeply about someone."

By finishing this study, you have completed a race! And what an exhilarating accomplishment that has been. But if you stop training, stop goal setting, and stop studying your husband, you will quickly slip back into old habits and thought patterns.

This is not the end of your journey. You still have many races ahead of you. This is the beginning of the new you, daily embracing the wife God desires for you to be.

The writer of Hebrews encouraged us to run our race when he said, Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Don't give up. Fix your eyes on Jesus. Remember, if He endured, you can endure.

Keep persevering, keep growing, keep giving, keep becoming Mrs. Betterhalf,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Holly Jurtick". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned in the lower-left quadrant of the page.

PS. I would love to hear how this study has impacted your life. If you would like to share, please write to me at holly@elevationchurch.org

WEEK THREE

This week we are discussing the effect a woman's attitude can have on her whole household. What is one thing I complain about or one thing you wish I would let go of?

WEEK ONE

This week we are talking about giving unconditionally to our husbands. What are three tangible things I can give to you or do for you each day?

BECOMING

Mrs Betterhalf

WEEK FOUR

This week we are discussing the topic of sex inside of marriage. What do you like best about our sex life and what can I do to make our sex life better?

BECOMING

Mrs Betterhalf

WEEK TWO

This week we are discussing the idea that a man's response to feeling disrespected is often anger. Can you tell me about a recent time where you were angry or frustrated with me?

BECOMING

Mrs Betterhalf

BECOMING

Mrs Betterhalf

WEEK SEVEN

This week we are discussing the dynamics of extended family. What can I do to help make our family relationships healthier?

WEEK FIVE

This week we are talking about how to deal with conflict in a healthy way. When we have a conflict, what is something I can do to prevent the disagreement from escalating?

BECOMING

Mrs. Betterhalf

BECOMING

Mrs. Betterhalf

WEEK SIX

This week we are talking about the importance of being on the same page in the area of our finances. How can I best support you in the area of our finances?

BECOMING

Mrs. Betterhalf

BECOMING

Mrs. Betterhalf

