

Bless Your Husband

LEADER'S GUIDE

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Hello!

Thank you so much for taking hold of this opportunity to lead a group through *Bless Your Husband, Creative Ways to Encourage and Love Your Man*. I have no doubt that marriages are going to thrive and grow under your leadership.

If you're nervous about leading a group, take heart. You'll mostly be facilitating. This guide will help guide you through the process, and I know you'll be blessed for doing so. If you want to start a group, but don't really feel comfortable yet, ask a friend to co-lead with you. Or volunteer to host the group and ask your church to appoint a leader. Or, my favorite option—just jump in! You can do it!

Starting a Group

If you'd like to start a group, but don't know where to begin, here are some ideas.

- ♥ Ask your church to host a new group and volunteer to lead it. Plan to meet once a week for 4-6 weeks.
- ♥ Suggest using *Bless Your Husband* for an existing Bible study or small group in your church. Give a copy of the book to your small group or teaching pastor along with a copy of the flier found here and ask them to consider using BYH for their next study. Bonus, my publisher has great discounts if you're ordering 20+ copies!
- ♥ If you're unable to lead a group through your church, host a small group on your own. Invite some wives you know may enjoy the study and gather once a week in your home or at a café or park.
- ♥ Create a Facebook group and invite your friends to go through the book together and discuss it in your online group.

Gear Up

Anytime you begin a new ministry effort, you're sure to be attacked spiritually. Cover yourself and your marriage in prayer. Ask a dear friend or family member to hold you in prayer as well as you prepare and throughout the weeks you're with the group.

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. ~Ephesians 6:12

Be Prepared

I suggest spending some time—even 10 minutes—each week before you arrive to the group, (Maybe in your car if needed) praying and reading over the notes for that week. Glance through the Weekend Reflection questions and the notes in this Leader's Guide and mark the questions you want to use for discussion. You might also want to quickly look through the week's readings, noting any notes you took. As one of my pastors used to say: There is ministry in the preparation!

Some weeks, I do suggest to bring something to the group, so it's best to prepare at home. But if you find yourself running late and preparing during the ice breaker, no sweat! Even if you just have the Weekend Reflection Questions in the book, you'll have a great discussion. Everything else is icing on the cake!

More Content for Your Group

You can find a flier to print or distribute via email or social media here: angelamillsbooks.com/groupleaders

Be sure to download the bonus content here: angelamillsbooks.com/husbandbonuscontent (password on pg. 196)

A Group Date

If it works for your group, it could be super fun to plan a group date at some point during the study. It doesn't have to be anything fancy or outrageous. Think simple: a potluck dinner party, a meetup at a restaurant, or even a night of bowling or a movie night. Getting together outside of the group will not only be fun, it can help promote friendships and strengthen marriages. If you feel overwhelmed by the idea, enlist the help of a member who is an excellent planner and put her in charge of planning a fun evening.

Oh, and if you post pictures on Social media, I would love to see them! Just use the hashtag, #byhgroupdate and I should be able to find it if it's a public post.

Bless Your Group

Approach your group with the same heart you approach this study. Pray for your members throughout the week, encourage them often, and be available for questions. Set up Facebook or email group suggested on page five, enlist someone to plan a group date, and try to keep a positive, uplifting tone when you're speaking during meetings. Be authentic and don't be afraid to share some of your own shortcomings. In other words, be the kind of group leader you've always wanted to have!

A Word About Introverts

I've written this Leader's Guide with consideration for introverts, shy women, and those with social anxiety. I myself am an introvert and I can be shy sometimes. And did you know that even extroverts can experience social anxiety? No matter where you might fall on the introvert/extrovert scale, groups can be hard on all of us sometimes!

So, while mostly everything here will apply to all of your members, I do try to keep in mind those who have a hard time with group settings and I give some tips to make everyone as comfortable as possible, including you, the leaders. For this reason, I've written actual prayers out for you and I've included easy breezy ice breakers.

A huge part of our population deals with social anxiety in some form, so please keep these people in mind when guiding your discussion. Never try to force anyone to share, and always respect that some may be more comfortable simply listening. Allow members to volunteer to answer questions as opposed to calling on people or going around in a circle and requiring everyone to participate. This is another benefit of creating a Facebook or email group for your members; those that are introverted may feel more comfortable sharing in that way during the rest of the week and warm up to the group meeting more quickly.

You may even want to announce that your group will be "Introvert Friendly" when advertising your group and getting sign-ups. I have to say, I would run, not walk, to a group that advertised that!

Request a Visit from the Author (In Person or Via Skype)

If you'd like to schedule a visit from me, you can do so here. If you're in Southern California, I may be able to visit you in person. Otherwise, I can possibly Skype in and do a Q&A, or schedule a private, live Facebook video just for your group. Please know that I will attend as many groups as possible, but I won't be able to meet with every single group. And if you want to request me for a retreat or other speaking engagements, you can use the same form linked above. (angelamillsbooks.com/speaking)

Sample Routines for Meetings

1. You may want to start or end with mingling time, maybe with beverages or a snack, depending on your group. This social time can benefit those who are looking for new friends and deeper connections. Setting this time aside at the beginning gives latecomers a chance to arrive before the discussion starts.
2. Open in prayer. Set a firm starting time and gather everyone to open in prayer.
3. Say the week's memory verse as a group. Don't worry if you haven't memorized it yet and need to read along in your Bible. God's Word being spoken is always a good thing!
4. Do the weekly ice breaker.
5. Discussion: Use the Weekend Reflection each week to guide your discussions. If you run out of discussion and have time left, I've added a few more discussion topics for each week here in the guide.
6. Share prayer requests, then close in prayer. Depending on the size of your group, you may break into smaller groups for this.

**LET US NOT BECOME WEARY IN DOING GOOD, FOR AT THE PROPER
TIME WE WILL REAP A HARVEST IF WE DO NOT GIVE UP.**

GALATIANS 6:9



General Notes for Each Week

♥ Be sure to read “Ideas for using Bless Your Husband in a Group Setting” in the “Resources” section of the book, on pages 184–186.

♥ Let members know if they need to read and complete Week One before your first meeting.

♥ Another option is to have everyone read the Introduction and Expectations Sections before the first meeting, have a Get to Know You gathering before you kick off the study, then meet the following week to discuss week one.

♥ However you decide to structure your group, be sure to make it clear that women should attend whether they’ve completed their study for the week or not. Set the tone for showing grace to themselves and each other. Just showing up is important, and they’ll still get something from the discussion even if they weren’t able to do every day’s reading.

♥ Consider creating a private Facebook group or email loop for women in your group. You can encourage each other throughout the week, and some members may form closer bonds. You can also join my private group, Blessing Your Husband Daily Challenges here, on Facebook.

➔ **Ice Breakers.** Each week, there is a suggested ice breaker question. This is totally optional, but it allows everyone to answer an easy question that doesn’t require much thought. It gives those who are shy or have a hard time answering thought-provoking questions on the spot a chance to join in and warm up a little. I don’t even use “what is your favorite...” type of questions because those can be hard for some to answer on the spot. (Myself included!) If you are limited on time, or have a very large group, have them talk with groups of 2–3 women sitting near them and give them 1–2 min. to discuss the ice breaker amongst themselves.

✝ **Prayer.** I’ve included actual prayers for those leading a group who may be shy about praying in front of others. Practice over time makes this easier and having a guide at first will help some feel more comfortable. Don’t feel embarrassed to read the prayer from this guide... I have seen well-known pastors do this and there is no shame in it! However, if you feel you don’t need this guide, then by all means, just pray from your heart.

And please, never, ever put someone on the spot to pray without asking them privately first. I have seen people leave Bible studies because this happened to them, and it’s so unnecessary. I was raised praying in front of groups and so it’s never bothered me, but I have family members who would rather fall off a cliff than do so. Respect that everyone is different in this area and it isn’t a sign of how deep their walk with Christ is. It’s a personality thing, plain and simple.

Week One: The Wife of His Youth


Notes

- **HANDOUT IDEA:** Print out the lyrics to a worship song sang recently at church and bring copies for all. (See #2 below.)

- Make sure you mention that you should not compare your ideal frequency for sex. On Day 4, readers are asked in the Reflect Section how often they and their husbands believe they should have sex. Do not discuss this as a group, but instead be clear that what works for them is between them and their husbands only. I have had countless women ask me this question, and I always tell them that it only matters what they decide in their own marriage. It's pointless and sometimes hurtful or destructive to compare your needs/wants with other couples. Everyone is going to be different, and each couple may change from season to season.

Prayer

Dear Lord, thank you for bringing each and every woman to this group. Thank you for your guidance and for the friendship and community we will build here. Please bless our time together and help our words and actions to bring glory to you. We pray that you will open our hearts to your Word and that we will grow as wives that truly desire to bless our husbands. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

 **Recite Weekly Memory Verse Together.** (Let members know that it's okay if they haven't memorized it yet and encourage them to read along in their book or Bible if they need to.)

He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the LORD. Proverbs 18:22

→ Ice Breaker

How did you and your husband meet?

Discuss Questions in the Weekend Reflection

Additional Discussion Questions to Use As Needed:

1. Read the gratitude list on Day Two and have a variety of members volunteer to share how they filled in the blanks.
2. Talk about one of the songs sang for worship at church last week. Go over the lyrics and discuss what you can learn from them, or how it can encourage you in the Lord.
3. Check in with each other on the tasks and discuss which you all enjoyed most/least that week.

End with Sharing Prayer Requests and Praying for One Another

Week Two: The Servant Wife

Notes

- This may be a controversial week, depending on the women in your group. Try to keep the conversation going in a positive direction and combat any bitterness with encouragement. Don't be afraid to use the phrase, "Let's move on..." to redirect the conversation in a gentle way so that it's uplifting to all.

- BRING FROM HOME: If time permits, you may want to bring some lotion or oil and have a couple volunteers give a hand massage to members that want them, upon arriving or after your meeting is over. Most of them have probably given hands-on love to their husband this week and it would be a sweet way to bless them. If you have a smaller group, you could even do this yourself, serving your members like Jesus served His disciples.

Prayer

Dear Lord, thank you for this amazing group of women. Thank you for setting the ultimate example for us in serving others. We pray that you would help our hearts to be humble and we ask that you would give us the reminders we need to be servant-like every day. Please bless our conversation today and let it be seasoned with grace and bring you glory. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Recite Weekly Memory Verse Together. (Read along in Bible if needed)

A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.

John 13:34

Ice Breaker

What was your first job? Have you ever been someone's assistant?

Discuss Questions in the Weekend Reflection

Additional Discussion Questions to Use As Needed:

1. Can you remember a time when someone served you and you felt uncomfortable?
2. You can do the Suitable Helper Quiz out loud, by a show of hands, but only if you think your group will have fun with it! Keep it light and set an example by being honest about your own shortcomings.
3. Go over the Ideas to Make His Day Easier and have everybody choose one thing to add in the next week.
4. Check in with each other on the tasks and discuss which you all enjoyed most/least that week.

End with Sharing Prayer Requests and Praying for One Another

Week Three: The Barnabas Wife

Notes

- HANDOUT IDEA. Make sure you've filled out the Reflect Question on Day 4. Be ready to share some of these verses with your group. You may even want to type them out and make copies to handout your members.

Prayer

Dear Lord, we thank you for the encouragement that you've given us in your word. Thank you for creating us in your image and for telling us over and over again how loved we are by you. We pray that you would help us to encourage our husbands with sincere hearts and that you would also help us to encourage one another in our discussion today. Please bless our time together and let us honor you in all we do. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Recite Weekly Memory Verse Together. (Read along in Bible if needed)

Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones. Proverbs 16:24

Ice Breaker

Where did you get married?

Discuss Questions in the Weekend Reflection

Additional Discussion Questions to Use As Needed:

1. Which "I am..." Statement from Day One did you choose to dwell on this week?
2. Have members share some of the verses they found for Reflect on Day 4. Share your handout at this time.
3. Check in with each other on the tasks and discuss which you all enjoyed most/least that week.

End with Sharing Prayer Requests and Praying for One Another

Week Four: The Beautiful Wife

Notes

- BRING FROM HOME: Gather some magazine covers (or look online for current ones) and find some ridiculous headlines regarding beauty, aging, weight loss, etc.
- Pay special attention this week to Day 4, Avoiding Comparison. This is a common problem when we start to gather in groups, so discuss this and encourage your members to stay away from comparisons.

Prayer

Dear Lord, thank you for bringing this group of women together, in your perfect timing in each of our lives. We thank you that you look at our hearts, and not at our outer appearance. We ask that you would help us to see ourselves through your eyes, and that you would strengthen us as we continue to strive to be godly wives. We welcome your presence in our meeting tonight, may all we say and do bring you glory. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Recite Weekly Memory Verse Together. (Read along in Bible if needed)

Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.

Proverbs 31:30

Ice Breaker

Share your worst hair/fashion/beauty decision from your teen years.

Discuss Questions in the Weekend Reflection

Additional Discussion Questions to Use As Needed:

1. Read the headlines you found and discuss them as a group.
2. Ask if anyone wants to share their acrostic. Or, take a minute and let the women do an acrostic of their own name, using the words provided in the book.
3. Check in with each other on the tasks and discuss which you all enjoyed most/least that week.

End with Sharing Prayer Requests and Praying for One Another

Week Five: Cultivating Contentment While Making Your Home a Haven

Notes

- HANDOUT IDEA. Encourage members to visit the online bonus content page and download the home making lists and helps. If you are able, print a few copies of each to hand out to those who haven't gotten around to printing them out yet.
- BRING FROM HOME: Create a Hygge-like atmosphere for your meeting this week. Bring a plant, a bouquet of flowers, some candles, or a pretty table cloth and create a homey setting. (Since many people have problems with allergies, it's best to be thoughtful and use unscented candles for this.)
- Let members know that your discussion next week will be about Choosing Selflessness, not about their planned date. Some might not be able to do an overnight date right away, and we don't want them to feel as if they are going to be left out.

Prayer

Dear Lord, Thank you for creating our families and our homes. We thank you for giving us the tools we need to keep our homes running smoothly. We ask that you would help us to be women that build our homes up wisely, and that you would encourage us as we work on creating a cozy home base where our family feels safe and loved. Please be with us during our discussion today and help us to have thankful hearts in all circumstances. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Recite Weekly Memory Verse Together. (Read along in Bible if needed)

A wise woman builds her house, but with her own hands the foolish one tears hers down.

Proverbs 14:1

Ice Breaker

Where did you first live with your husband? A house or apartment? On your own or with family? Where was your home located?

Discuss Questions in the Weekend Reflection

Additional Discussion Questions to Use As Needed:

1. Have some members share a complaint and the thanksgiving they replaced it with.
2. Do you ever find ourselves expecting our husbands to be perfect in a way that only God can be?
3. Check in with each other on how you progressed with the homemaking side of the challenges this week.

End with Sharing Prayer Requests and Praying for One Another

Week Six: Choosing Selflessness While Planning an Overnight Date

Notes

- Planning the date is only one part of this week. The content in the daily reading—with the overall goal of choosing selflessness— is very important. Don't skip this week because you think it's only all about planning a date and not everyone is going to be able to participate.
- You did it! Encourage members to email me for their "I finished" bonus, detailed at the end of the Weekend Reflection for Week Six. Be sure to get yours, too! I would love to hear about your group, or you can send a quick line that says, "I finished!"

Prayer

Dear Lord, thank you for orchestrating our lives to bring each of us to this group. Thank you for all we have learned from each other and for the friendships we've built. Please continue to bless our efforts as we work to bless our husbands. We ask that our husbands would feel loved and valued and that you would strengthen our marriages and let our relationships glorify you. We ask that you would instruct us through our conversations today and that we would bring honor to your name. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Recite Weekly Memory Verse Together. (Read along in Bible if needed)

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather in humility, consider others better than yourselves.

Philippians 2:3

Ice Breaker

What was your first date with your husband?

Discuss Questions in the Weekend Reflection

Additional Discussion Questions to Use As Needed:

1. In what way did you show your husband this week that you were interested in him?
2. When you were asked in Day Two to determine how many minutes you could set aside for your husband each day, what did you decide? Was it surprising to you as you tried to make more time this week, or were already fully aware of the time you spent investing in him?
3. Spend a few minutes brainstorming creative date/budget/childcare ideas for those who are stumped or can't get away. Remember last week's promise and don't let this overwhelm your meeting but do set aside a few minutes to help any wives that are struggling with this.

End with Sharing Prayer Requests and Praying for One Another