

# **The Respect Dare**

A Small Group Leader's Guide

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Published by Greater Impact Ministries, Inc., 554 Belle Meade Farm Drive, Loveland, OH, 45140.

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Printed in the United States of America.

# **The Respect Dare**

A Small Group Leader's Guide

by Nina Roesner



## **For God's Women...**

who bravely follow His Word in an effort to become more holy as wives.

In honor of the *Daughters of Sarah*, who actively live out Ephesians 5:33b, which reads, "And the wife shall respect her husband."

And for the lovely women who choose leadership, following Titus 2:4-5, encouraging others to become women of strength and dignity:

*Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.*

*You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.*

1 Peter 3:6b



## Guiding Your Small Group

As a woman who has chosen to lead a small group to complete **The Respect Dare** together, you are obviously familiar with the struggles wives face and have a passion for helping them. Women get married with dreams, hopes and aspirations of feeling fulfilled in the most intimate of human relationships, that of marriage. More than half end in divorce in the United States, and many women that stay married still suffer the same dismal death of their dreams. Captive within their own relationships and feeling inadequate in impacting the world around them, women across America daily succumb in droves to despair, depression, and addictions.

As is the case with most women's studies, choosing to work through issues which keep our sisters in Christ from deeply connecting with God and their husbands is a challenging, but rewarding endeavor. I want you to know that I wrote this guide specifically for you, and want you to have a deeper understanding of the book, how and why it was created, and how this guide can help you facilitate your small group.

Our ministry delivers training to people of faith around the globe via the internet and in person. We began in 2006 with a remarkable program, *Daughters of Sarah*, as a non-denominational course for married women of faith, primarily because I wasn't satisfied with the answers being provided to Christian women to help them be successful in their marriages. I had spent several years sitting through many workshops, reading a myriad of books, and listening to speakers on the subject of a wife's role in marriage in an attempt to improve my relationship with my own husband. We are commanded in the Bible to be respectful and submissive wives. The treatment of these concepts in

much of what I was reading and hearing was to place a woman in the role of a second-class citizen in her relationship with her husband. I continued to walk away with the perception that to honor God, I needed to give up the hopes and dreams I had and live out life as a diminished person.

For example, much of the advice dealt with not correcting one's husband or disagreeing with him. When I applied this advice, I found it frustrated both of us. Finally, I just started communicating more about what I was reading and asking his opinion. I found there is no perfect formula for a happy marriage.

When I learned that, in the Bible, God described wives with the exact same word as He used for the Holy Spirit, I started to understand what God intended for His women that choose marriage. When I realized that God has given us all a spirit of power, love and self-discipline, and not one of timidity (1 Timothy 1:9), I started experiencing the privilege of being a wife, as opposed to the drudgery of being one.

I wanted to do something for the plethora of women who loved God as I did, wanted to serve Him, and yet struggled with His Biblical instructions for wives just as I did. I wanted to empower them in their relationships. I sensed that the 15 years I had been training other trainers and delivering training myself utilizing the most successful life-changing methods available were all for this purpose. I quit my job and *Daughters of Sarah*, Greater Impact's intensive training course for wives, was born.

Tired of feeling alone in their marriages, and struggling in many of the same ways that I have, wives who participate in *Daughters of Sarah* are enabled to form life-changing connections with God, their husband, and their strengths.

These wives emerge stronger, braver, and more effective in their relationships. Women caught in the quagmire of mediocrity - stagnant, unsatisfied, and wondering when their marital dreams for happiness and contentment evaporated - have emerged more confident, more capable at positively handling conflicts, as better communicators, and smiling at the days to come. *Daughters of Sarah* is an experiential training course like no other program in existence today that creates an environment through participative coaching, teaching, practice and accountability for real and lasting change to take place. Participant surveys done on this program demonstrates excellent results:

- 97% of graduates emerge more confident
- 95% improve their connection with God
- 93% improve their relationship with their husband
- Two full years later, over 93% say the results "stick!"

Having personally experienced this transformation within my own marriage as a result of applying the concept of respect to my relationship with my husband, I can attest to the value of listening to Ephesians 5:33b from the Bible, which reads, "And the wife shall respect her husband." I can still clearly remember those days of being frustrated, angry, disappointed and primarily feeling alone and taken for granted. What is amazing is this transformation came not by my husband's actions, but by my own change in focus. Instead of paying attention to his inadequacies and perceived failures, I realized that I can really only control my own behavior. This realization was consistent with God's teachings on our nature to be judgmental and critical in our communication. It was also backed up by my training experiences. When we focus on how we walk through our circumstances *instead* of emphasizing other

people's failures and shortcomings, we can create changes that impact our relationships long term.

As a professional speaker for women's groups and a facilitator of *Daughters of Sarah*, I have seen literally thousands of people positively impacted by the understanding and application of the Biblical concept of respect. While all that goes on in a *Daughters of Sarah* course will not be experienced by reading this book, I believe and pray women everywhere can positively impact their marriages by understanding these Biblical principles and learning how to apply them.

After **The Respect Dare** was published, a woman contacted us to let us know she was struggling. She had given up on doing the dares because of her husband's lack of response, and she felt alone in the process. Our team felt burdened for her. When one of our directors suggested that we create an e-course to walk along side these women as they go through the book, we prayed about it, and sensed God's leading. To be completely honest, I didn't know how God would accomplish something meaningful using the internet.

What ended up happening stunned us. God demonstrated His faithfulness and life-changing Truths through the e-course in ways we could not have imagined nor orchestrated. The video teaching segments seemed to literally come together on their own and the assignments correlated flawlessly. We knew He had ordained this activity for our ministry when lives began seeing dramatic change, hearts began to soften, and marriages began to be impacted. We went back to the woman who originally contacted us about her struggle and invited her to join us in the e-course. She said she would give it a try. This is what she had to say when it was over:

*I started the book before starting the online course, so when the right time came I looked at my 6 statements. When I read what I had written, I was amazed to see that God answered each one, exactly as it was written.*

*God gave me exactly what I asked for. I didn't ask for much, because any improvement at that point would have been a 180 degree turn around.*

*You see, my husband was still seeking a divorce then. I had asked for simple things that would have been small steps forward in a marriage that was not being threatened. Really small things. But any progress meant that we had to stop, turn around, and go the right way.*

*I read through my list for week 9 and realized that God did exactly, word for word, what I wrote down. When I wrote it, I didn't really believe that it would happen. I knew that God was capable, but I just couldn't imagine my husband being willing. The biggest thing for me was to see that God does things in my life to the exact degree of my faith in Him.*

As a result of the many women who walked through the dares in the e-course, we started a community page on Facebook® to continue the support for them. We started hearing of women around America, in Canada and in Australia and Africa doing the book as a women's small group experience.

We wrote this short guide to walk along side you as you facilitate discussion for nine weeks in your women's group. We hope you find what we have learned along the way tremendously beneficial. Please know that we would love to have you contact us with your success stories and

prayer requests online at [www.GreaterImpact.org](http://www.GreaterImpact.org) via the “Interact” tab. As is the case whenever you encourage others to put God's Word into practice, you are walking on holy ground. We join you in this journey and remind you that you are never alone!

*~ Nina*

### **A Note from Greater Impact Ministries:**

We want to give all leaders of a small group doing the book together access to additional information and support. As a leader, we invite you to join our online e-course for a discount. The e-course will provide you with additional insight into **The Respect Dare**. It is a completely different experience than the book or the small group. Please contact us via the website for more details.

You should also be aware that Nina also presents many of the concepts contained in the book for wives in a **Respect Dare Weekend Retreat** format, which can be tailored for all demographics of women, married or not. She provides a unique training experience utilizing a method that helps participants grow in their relationship with God and others, all while helping them move forward in their own personal area of focus. You can get booking information via <http://www.GreaterImpact.org> .

## Small Group Basic Principles

This book is written such that the questions are ones that can easily be used in small groups without a great deal of preparation on your part.

We suggest meeting once a week for nine weeks to complete the dares as a group. We recommend that your group only does five dares a week.

When facilitating a small group of women who may share intimate details of their lives, you may find it helpful to keep these things in mind:

1. **Stress confidentiality to all your group members every single week.** Make it the first thing you do when you get together. You might say something like, “We want to have an environment where we can be transparent and share, so our one rule is that whatever is shared here, stays here. You are encouraged to talk about what we’re doing, but do it in a way that doesn’t identify any specific individual.” Reminding them of the confidentiality in this way allows them to talk things over with their spouse, a sister or other friend, but also protects the identity of the group members.
2. **You should open each session with a short prayer, inviting God to be present and lead your discussion.** You should also feel the freedom to pray for individuals as the session is going on if someone is extremely upset about a situation, etc.
3. **Do not offer advice, but rather turn the women in your group back to God’s advice.** If someone is asking what she should do about something, then

encourage discussion about what the Bible says, rather than allowing the women to offer a bunch of opinions. Have a concordance handy or a topical index so you can look things up rather quickly if need be.

4. **Don't put anyone on the spot when asking the questions.** You might even consider beginning by asking something non-threatening like, "What did you think of the dares for this week?" Don't go around the table or room for input. Instead, allow women to contribute as they feel led.
5. **Ask open ended questions, rather than questions that end with, "Yes," or "No."**
6. **At the end of your meeting time, ask for prayer requests for the women to pray over between meetings.** It is okay to go around the room at this time.
7. **Be transparent as a leader, but be careful not to monopolize the time talking about yourself.** It takes at least six seconds for the human brain to respond to a question, so wait a bit before jumping in with your own examples or responses. If you start answering first, your group will expect you to do this each week and then will not share as easily.
8. **Be in prayer about each of the women in between meetings, and have a friend or two pray for you specifically while you are leading your group.**

## What You Need to Know about The Process

Most people go through a process when attempting to make a major change in their lives. As a facilitator of a small group of women, you need to be aware of and prepared to deal with some of the challenges in the process. The better listener and encourager you are, the more effective leader you will be. This section will give you some insights into what we have historically seen women go through and what you might encounter as you facilitate the group.

Each woman in your group is going to arrive there with some level of pain in her life. As a leader, you will need to be very sensitive to this pain. While you do not want to wallow in their pits with them, you do need to demonstrate good reflective listening skills to make them feel heard. They will not trust you until you do two things: 1) listen intently without judgment to the circumstances they are in and how they feel about them, and 2) share your own struggles with them. If these women see you as someone who has not suffered, they will not be able to view you as credible. Some of these women will be living lives of deep sin and addiction – be careful to not condone their behavior nor judge them for it. Often, the most effective group leaders will simply restate what the woman has said, “You feel frustrated with your husband’s lack of interest in you, so you’ve chosen to have this affair, is that what you’re saying? This must be very hard for you.” In the early two or three weeks, it is important that they are able to communicate how they feel, experience compassion, and be heard.

When you share an example from your own life, you might do so in a way that makes you appear human. Leaders are

often viewed as “perfect” and are always held to a higher standard. Communicating to the women that you have struggles too, but responding to them in a way that honors God, is one way you can encourage them that they can do it too. “I am tempted sometimes to leave him when he says things to me that are hurtful – especially in front of our kids...but I know that God’s Word says in the book of Malachi that God hates divorce. I’m learning how to rely on God’s strength instead of my own, waiting on God to work in my husband’s life. I want to be a woman of strength and dignity with a gentle spirit that will eventually bring kindness to my husband’s words to me,” is an example of how you might do that.

You will need to be very careful that your small group meetings do not turn into “husband bashing” sessions. Asking for advice or prayer is one thing, but making fun of the men God gave us is quite another! As the leader, you are expected to set the standard for respectful communication about these men. Never be condemning of a woman’s criticism or when she makes fun of her husband. Ignore these comments, but be certain to point out someone who asks for prayer in a respectful way. “Sarah, I so appreciate how you shared about your husband’s addiction in a way that was still respectful of him – that is an example for all of us, that instead of gossiping about our husbands, we should be praying for them,” is one way you might do that.

Be prepared for them to ask you for advice. Be very careful about giving any. You do not know their husband or them well enough to offer it. Always turn them back to what God says, and if you do not know how to answer someone, simply say, “Carol, I want to be of as much help to you as I can. Let me pray about this for a day and I’ll get back to you.” Then see what God has to say about it in the Bible and give her His Word. Isaiah 55:11 reads, “so is my

word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.” None of us have the power to fix another person’s marriage. Nor do we have the power to convict a person of the right thing to do. Our job is to be constantly pointing the women back to what God says *so they will learn to go to Him themselves*. His Word has the power to teach, convict, and inspire – great leaders stay out of His way!

One thing you may not be aware of is that many of the women in the study will suffer greatly and go through tremendous difficulty as they grow. Pain is the most common Biblical route to growth. None of us like this truth, but it is God’s way. When they cry, when they suffer, when they complain, you can encourage them to persevere, and encourage them by really listening to them and acknowledging their pain, then gently reminding them where they started and the progress they are making. These women will feel as though they are making no progress in their walk with God, and they may start to feel as though they are a disappointment to Him because of their “failures.” Our job as leaders is to constantly remind them of His love, His care, His compassion, and His truth for us. Again, use Bible verses to do this. Becoming an expert on God’s great love for us and being able to remind each woman where she started and how far she has come will help you be successful in facilitating your group. If you keep them focused on how very far they have to go, they will become discouraged. In listening to each other, they will see what God wants them to see at that time! Your key role as leader is to help them stay encouraged and help them lean on God during the pain. Jesus alone can comfort them in the middle of the night when you cannot. Resist the temptation to become their “Holy Spirit.” Continually point them back to His Word and remind them that their pain is a completely natural part of the growth

process. If you can get them to normalize suffering and identify with the sufferings of Christ, you will have accomplished much as a small group leader. You may consider growing in your conflict management skills, as well. Most women are uncomfortable with conflict, much less comfortable with the thought of causing conflict to facilitate growth. There is a balance between judgment and creating conflict to help someone grow – the most effective way of doing this is simply, again, to rely on God’s Word. “Karen, you are in a difficult spot and I appreciate your struggle. Dave’s been out of work for nearly a year now and I’m sure you are growing weary with being the provider for your family! I realize you don’t like the thought of being respectful to your husband until he finds a job because you don’t think he deserves it, but what does God’s Word say about respect in Ephesians 5:33b? His Word says we are to respect – there are no conditions to place on this command. How can we pray for you to help you persevere and obey God’s Word here?” A word of caution, however - make sure your motives are originating from love and not judgment, being certain to reflect back her feelings so she feels heard. If you have not shared some of your struggles with her, she will not view you as credible, and will be tempted to discount what you say. Be certain not to gossip about your husband, but communicate your struggles from your perspective as you go through the dares with them, so you have more respect, credibility, and trust.

The ladies will also be tempted repeatedly to expect a return from their husbands. This whole concept of expectations is covered in great depth in the “rules” section for each week. It might seem rather silly to repeat the rules week to week, but they will continue to struggle with having expectations and seeking rewards from their husbands for their efforts. You will need to pray about this temptation and continue to address it each week.

**You will also need to seek encouragement for yourself as you are dealing with these women.** Please take advantage of our resources at Greater Impact Ministries. Send an email to us if you have questions or need prayer. There is a forum available to you and other leaders like you – all you need to do is let us know you are leading and we'll get you in contact with other women just like you who have chosen to bravely walk through the dares with a group of women. Consider as well, asking your husband to pray for you. Be aware your own marriage may come under fire because of your leadership with these other women. The enemy is formidable, but you can trust that God is victorious and you will be as well.

Be aware that some of the ladies will not be able to keep up with the schedule. Know that they might be tempted to view this as another “failure” on their part. You might feel that you have failed them, which is also not true. Whenever you come across these things, please know my heart and feel free to share this with them:

*My dear sister in Christ,  
You do not remember this right now, but you are a child of Grace, not of the law. Do not become encumbered and discouraged by the pursuit of checking each dare off each day. God's love for you supersedes any direction we would give to you. Do what you can, and do it in His strength, and at His pace. Know that the timing for you may be different than what the book says – and SO WHAT if it is?! More than completing each dare, seek Him and His guidance. He will know if your husband cannot hear your words of encouragement right now. Experience the freedom to grow at the pace you can grow at now – and receive nothing but encouragement from us in doing so. Move forward, Beloved, and stretch yourself at your own pace in His perfect timing.*

*Know that you bring Him glory and delight and never disappointment in your efforts. A woman who loves the Lord is*

*truly beautiful and He smiles at her efforts and her tries. No more than you would condemn your own child for trying to feed himself and getting a little food on his chin would we or God condemn you for your efforts. Persevere in your pursuit of becoming a Godly woman, but know you only find grace and mercy here.*

You may find it necessary in each session to simply ask, “Okay, what has God been teaching you since we last met?” if several of your ladies are struggling and not responding to questions because they are behind. Remember, there’s joy in the journey – make your group a place where they are encouraged to persevere, but not condemned if they fall behind.

You might also want to run the small group more than once a year – and personally invite back the women from the last group to walk alongside the new members. Imagine a community of women working on their marriages! What a beautiful thing this could become!

We are frequently asked what is available for men – we highly recommend *The Love Dare*, written by Alex and Stephen Kendrick. This book fulfills the first part of Ephesians 5:33, which tells husbands to love their wives and is excellent.

Know as well that your own marriage may come under spiritual attack as a result of you stepping out as a leader. Please take advantage of our prayer warriors! At [www.GreaterImpact.org](http://www.GreaterImpact.org), if you go to the “Interact” tab, you can access our prayer request hotline.

## How to Answer the Most Common Questions They Will Ask You

You know as well as I do that the first question many of the wives in your small group want answered is, “Do I have to respect my husband when he is not acting loving toward me?” The second question they have is, “Why doesn’t he have to earn my respect?”

The answers are straightforward Biblically, but there are a number of points you will have to fully understand before you can answer and encourage the members of your group. This section will help you with that understanding. The bottom line is, “Yes, because God says so,” however, being that blunt to a woman who is struggling is not going to motivate her. Like Christ, you will need to meet them where they are, sharing His Truth as He directs, sometimes gently, sometimes more directly. And all the while, you will need to be communicating empathy with their circumstances. There is a ton of learning to take place, much of it difficult, over the coming weeks. These ladies don’t know what they don’t know – they just want change.

Most wives who ask questions about why they should respect their husbands are feeling unloved and want to know, “Why should I take the relational risk of respecting this man who doesn’t treat me with love like he’s supposed to?” or, “HE’S not following the Biblical commands, so why should I?” *We want him to be worthy of respect.* We feel that way because God actually wired us to desperately want the man we married to be a man we can admire and respect. But because we listen to the culture, we believe the lie that respect should be earned, instead of listening to God’s Truth:

### **Ephesians 5:32-35**

32 This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. 33 However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Imagine for a moment that it's the other way around, and our husbands are waiting to feel respected before they will demonstrate love for us. Would you be okay with that?

Of course not.

First of all, please know that we fully understand the depth of the pain these women might be experiencing within the context of marriage. As we have discussed previously, they will need to know you understand this as well.

Nothing wounds a woman like marriage difficulties. We've seen wives who are abused, demeaned, degraded, married to husbands who turn away from God, never knew Him, or just aren't very far in their walk. Men who abuse their children, men who won't get a job. Men who make bad decisions that steal security or embarrass the whole family. Men who pursue other women or are addicted to pornography. Men who leave for days and no one knows where they are. Men who ask their wives to do the wrong things, men who are absent emotionally. Men who want nothing to do with their wives relationally.

Please know our Lord holds their tears in His hands and understands fully the depth of your pain. Remind them of this.

They should also know that while men generally don't think, "I'll treat my wife lovingly when she treats me with respect," women *will* think, "I'll show him respect when he shows me some love," because women are (generally speaking) more relational than men. Our brains physically

have more connections between the “feeling” side and the “thinking” side, than men do. So, while men might sense something “not quite right” in their marriage, it generally doesn’t naturally occur to them that they should be more loving. And because women are more relational than men and because God actually created us this way physically, I feel very strongly that it is *our responsibility as mature, God-honoring women* to take action in this area.

You may need to occasionally remind the ladies that we assume here that they have worked out a few of the “basics of being a Christ-follower” and know that the goal is to be more Christ-like with their lives. This then assumes the Truth that if they have chosen to follow God, they would naturally also choose to obey God’s command in Ephesians 5:33b, “and the wife shall respect her husband.” The assumption doesn’t mean it is easy, but rather that they would work hard to figure this out because God commands it. These women will experience a number of things in seeking to live out Ephesians 5:33b, all of which will bring them closer to God and their husbands, as did you when you went through **The Respect Dare** for the first time. In an effort to help you respond to these women and their concerns, we are sharing with you a few things we know to be true, based on the thousands of women we have dealt with who have chosen to do **The Respect Dare** book or E-Course, taken *Daughters of Sarah*, or attended one of our retreats, or workshops:

- 1) **The wives might “get results” from their husband in 3 months, 3 years, or 3 decades.** Maybe longer.
- 2) **1 Peter 3:1-6 tells us that men who don’t even know God at all can be saved by their wife’s treatment of them, so in the long run, her “respect efforts” are completely worth it.** If God can literally save these men, what else will He do for those wives who already love Him? Remember, He’s a Father who wants good

things for His children. He wants her husband to be in heaven. He wants him to turn from his ways and accept the gift of His son and all that entails. She might be “the only Jesus her husband ever sees.” Salvation and the daily playing out of what Christ looks like are the opportunities she is presented with.

- 3) **If we measure our “respect efforts” by our husband’s “responses,” we will FREQUENTLY be disappointed.** The culture influences our thinking and we’ll not see all the neat things he did, but rather focus on the one thing he didn’t do, or vice versa, whatever’s most negative and hurtful to us.
- 4) **If we measure our “respect efforts” by whether or not we are pleasing to God, we will have a strength and dignity within ALL our relationships that other people won’t even begin to understand.** Living life for The Audience of One, fully knowing that we are doing the right thing builds confidence like nothing else does.
- 5) **Wives who frequently lose their tempers and yell, frequently nag and complain, criticize their husbands in front of others or to them, or withhold sex, undo what progress they could be making with communicating respect.** These behaviors are not “winsome” and destroy trust. God wants us to be winsome, for His sake and ours.
- 6) **If the husband doesn’t trust his wife, this process takes much longer.** Meaning, if we’ve spent ten years (or two or thirty) treating him disrespectfully, we can’t expect him to completely trust this “new respectful me” in 40 days.
- 7) **Husbands who have been deeply wounded by their wives will sometimes “test” their wife’s “new respect efforts” by acting crummy to her.** On purpose, even. They want to know if her new behavior is legitimate or if it’s going to wear off. This isn’t a nice thing to say, but it happens. Some of this is due to the fact (again, based on research) that men have fragile egos. They

want to be able to “be real” and crave intimacy with us, but are literally afraid to be hurt. So they will keep their guard up if we are not a “safe place to fall,” meaning, “I feel accepted, encouraged, and respected by my wife, no matter what I have done. I can come to her when I am happy, or when I am disappointed. *Her respect for me is unconditional.* I don’t have to perform and be perfect to meet her approval – it’s always there.”

- 8) **Wives who go through these “tests” well greatly impact their husbands.** When are we more like Christ than when we are loving those who don’t deserve it? Remember, husbands experience our love through our respect.
- 9) **Wives typically don’t know enough about men to easily get respect correct in their relationships with the men in their lives.** Husbands, sons, coworkers, etc. For example, most women don’t know that men find our asking them the question, “Why?” is disrespectful to them. We think, “I don’t mean it that way, why would he take it like that?” “Why?” is a challenge word to men. It means we don’t trust them or the decision or course of action they’ve taken. They take it personally. Who would have thought that? Yet research supports this. We teach women (through **The Respect Dare** book, our retreats, courses, and the E-Course) to “speak the language of respect” to be more effective in these relationships.
- 10) **There are little things we do every day that communicate, “I don’t respect you,” to our husbands.** MOST of these things are completely unintentional on our part, but intent is irrelevant if we’re trying to be effective. *Because we are more relational than they are, with more connections in all areas of our brains, it’s up to us to learn to speak their language, not the other way around.*

- 11) **Most wives, even Christ-followers, buy the cultural lie that marriage is supposed to make us happy.** The Bible teaches us that marriage is supposed to make us holy – if we choose to follow God’s advice. Marriage is the first organization designed by God, other than His own Trinity. *It’s really important to God. Very specifically, marriage is designed to give the world a picture of Christ’s relationship with the church. We wander around calling ourselves, “Christians.” His reputation is on the line. He’s going to grow us to help us get this right for His glory. See Ephesians 5:32-33.*
- 12) **After we have fully learned to die to our own selfish desires, after we have learned to treat our husbands the way God wants us to, we can continue our development as relationship architects and move our marriage toward “mutual respect.”** The wives in your group need to look at this as a new phase, as though they have now passed “basic training” and have thus earned the right to teach their husbands the way *they* want to be treated. He needs help in communicating relationally with us. Because at this point our husband trusts us, *because we have actually become good at speaking his language of respect*, we are then (and only then) effective in our communication to him of how we experience love from him. He will want to hear this. Then they, because they feel safe and respected by us, typically eagerly pursue our happiness. They want to delight us at this point.
- 13) **When we get to the place where “mutual respect” exists in our marriage, and we are wise in how we communicate with our husband, we can tell him difficult things about the relationship and he will appreciate hearing them.** He’ll then work harder to change because he is motivated by our unconditional respect of him.
- 14) **Most women have the process reversed and try to teach their husband how to treat them first.** *This*

*never works.* Most men typically don't pursue delighting wives who don't respect them. They figure, "What's the point?"

- 15) **Your ladies may want you to tell them what to do – you can't. Send them back to God. Only He can give clear direction.** We have seen women, physically, verbally, or emotionally abused separate from their husbands. They felt led by God to do so. We support them. We have seen other women, living in similar circumstances, choose to stay with their husbands and endure because they felt led by God. We support them, too.
- 16) **Wives who really want to change their marriages CAN and DO learn to speak the language of respect to their husbands.** They see their new communication skills impact their relationships with ALL the men in their lives. For example, if we are having trouble with our 6<sup>th</sup> grade boy, we need to recognize he is looking for a little respect from mom! Men (and boys becoming men) don't appreciate "mothering."
- 17) **Wives who say their husbands don't do anything worthy of respect aren't looking closely enough.** No one is a complete disaster in every single area of his or her life. For us to say there's nothing our husband does that we can respect is more a reflection of our poor attitude than of him.
- 18) **Within the small nuances created by personality within a relationship, what looks like respect to one man, can look like disrespect to another.** There are many "big" ways to communicate respect that will apply, generally speaking, to all men; but each man, and therefore each marriage, is going to be a little different in the small things. What that means is if I say, "Never ever let your husband know he's going to miss the exit," that might work in one marriage, but it might feel like, "You aren't my friend," in another. Encourage your ladies to deeply get to know the men

in their families. Encourage them to ask their husbands, “What do I do that communicates respect to you? Disrespect?” Encourage them to ACT on this information.

19) **“Help” looks different to each man, too.** For some, packing his suitcase for him before he travels might be a wonderful thing. For another, it might make him frustrated. That’s why we recommend each woman gets to know GOD better. He will help us understand the men in our lives because He already knows them intimately!

20) **Wives who grow their relationship with God see Him working things out with their husbands in His time experience peace as result and are more useful to God.** These women are discerning enough to actively choose to become more patient and are able to give their husbands the time they need to grow the way God wants to grow them. They don’t try to change the man they married. And these ladies recognize the difference between trying to change someone, and influencing those around them for the cause of Christ. It will be hard at times for the wives in your group to wait on the Lord, and you will need to encourage them to do so.

Help your small group members understand that God created marriage to glorify Him. Explain to them that when we get married, we choose to participate in this context. It was never about making us happy. Help them remember He’s going to grow all those who call themselves Christians. He wants us to accurately reflect His glory. If they choose to follow His advice in the Bible, they will have peace and joy during the journey and less pain. The journey is hard, but they are not alone and they can have greater strength if they can find contentment in their circumstances and obey God.

If marriage was easy, people wouldn't get divorced. Whether they choose God's path, to follow Christ, or not, their marriages (and ours) will be difficult. But with Christ, we won't walk alone, and we have joy, comfort, and peace that surpasses all understanding. Remind them of these Truths frequently. Suggest to them that they'll make an impact in their families and in the world that wouldn't otherwise occur.

So should a wife choose to communicate respect to a man that doesn't treat her right?

Yes.

Why?

Because God says so.

It never was and should not ever be about how deserving of respect her husband is or whether he is living his life the way he should be. *It IS now and always has been about whether or not she is going to trust that God knows what He's doing and obey what He's telling HER to do.*

Take the Biblical journey of marriage as He intended. Help the women in your group do the same. It's hard, bumpy, long and tiring. It's worth it. Do it God's way and you will all experience joy, peace, comfort, and deep connection with the Father, and your husband. And remember, it's not about your husband's response (although you'll probably eventually get one if you can hang in there enough for him to truly trust you).

*The bottom line about respect is pretty simple (not easy, but simple): It's about a wife's relationship with God.*

Unconditional respect. Dare you!



# Meeting 1: Beginnings

As is the case with any small group study, you will spend the first meeting getting acquainted, distributing materials if necessary, and setting up the expectations for the study. This guide assumes that you have a basic understanding of facilitating women's groups and will focus on the weekly discussion topics for each session.

## ✧ Facilitator Steps ✧

- 1) **Prior to Meeting 1:**
  - a) Become familiar with the "Introduction," "What You Need to Know," and "Understand This First" sections in this manual.
  - b) Send out an email encouraging the women to sign up for the marriage tips on [www.TheRespectDare.com](http://www.TheRespectDare.com). These provide data and foundational knowledge that supports their experience in doing the dares and are provided to you at no cost. We recommend waiting until the end of the entire nine week study to encourage them to join the group on Facebook®. This will provide them with support and encouragement when your study is over.
  
- 2) **During Meeting 1:** Cover the following "Rules" of the study (refer back to these each week):
  - a) Take one day at a time. *(Leader's Note: Encourage participants to start fresh each day, regardless of what has or has not happened the day before. Each day they will have a new exercise or dare to complete. Let them know they will share some of the exercises with the group. Encourage them to try each dare each day, 5 dares a week for a total of 8 weeks of dares. Let them know they should do*

*their best to keep up, but if they cannot get to all the dares for that week, they need to start the next week's dares with the group so your discussions are beneficial. The schedule looks like this:*

- i) Meeting 1: Complete the dare from Day 1 in study and verbally cover "Understand This First" and the "Introduction" section.*
  - ii) Meeting 2: Should have completed the dares from Days 2-5 and have read "Introduction" and "Understand This First" sections when they show up*
  - iii) Meeting 3: Completed the dares from Days 6-10*
  - iv) Meeting 4: Completed the dares from Days 11-15*
  - v) Meeting 5: Completed the dares from Days 16-20*
  - vi) Meeting 6: Completed the dares from Days 21-25*
  - vii) Meeting 7: Completed the dares from Days 26-30*
  - viii) Meeting 8: Completed the dares from Days 31-35*
  - ix) Meeting 9: Completed the dares from Days 36-41)*
- b) Have no expectations of your spouse's behavior** or you will experience discouragement and resentment. *(Leader's Note: This will be something the women struggle with repeatedly over the term of the study. Your goal is to reinforce the times when they do not have expectations and to remind them that they are being like Christ in those moments. Sacrificial giving with expectation is never a gift... it is an attempted purchase. These negative feelings will always be born out of expectations of their husbands to fill the Christ shaped hole in their hearts. Encourage them not to trust these feelings; they will eventually pass if they can continue to remind themselves to persevere.)* Your level of resentment and disappointment is directly related to how you are viewing your marriage – is this a context through which you expect personal happiness? Or are you willing to

grow spiritually and use this context as a tool for that growth?

- c) Measure your progress in terms of spiritual growth. Don't use the standard of our culture to evaluate your progress. We constantly compare ourselves to others and feel inadequate. Use only what you are learning about men, God and the Bible to evaluate your growth.
- d) Write your responses to the questions. Write down your answers each time you are asked to do so. This will provide you with clarity of thought and a needed perspective later. Sometimes you'll be asked to refer back to these writings, so be sure you have them! *(Leader's Note: You will need to set the example by writing your responses here, as well!)*
- e) Remember that this is a journey - and that you will need to actively choose to take the high road, even when it seems pointless and without reward. Remember that sometimes action precedes feelings, and that our impulses cannot always be trusted, especially when it comes to walking the sacred ground in marriage. *(Leader's Note: One of the critical aspects of leading this study is that you will consistently have the opportunity to refer them back to the life of Jesus. Women frequently struggle with the cultural lie that our feelings are justified, when the truth actually is that our feelings will frequently lie to us.)*
- f) This is a confidential group. Whatever is shared within the confines of our time together needs to be kept confidential to ensure the small group is a safe place for all the participants to experience growth. Women should be encouraged to discuss what they are learning with their husbands, however, they need to do so in a way that doesn't identify other participant's issues. Encourage them

to share examples of respect in action and ask their husbands how they feel about the issues without being specific with names. Please review “The Rules” with your group each time you meet.

**3) Facilitation:**

- a) Complete the dare from Day 1 during your time together.
- b) Provide them with pieces of paper and envelopes.
- c) Encourage them to keep their progress statements small.
- d) Give them about 15-20 minutes to do this, perhaps including a small break if they finish early.

**4) Discussion Questions:** Do as many of these as you have time for:

- a) Introduce yourself – name, husband’s name, how long you’ve been married, number of kids, what you do.
- b) Why did you decide to do this study at this time?
- c) What challenges do you think we’ll face as we go through this study?
- d) What can we do to overcome these challenges?
- e) After Completing the dare from Day 1, share “your expectations for your progress” but NOT the ones they wrote for their husbands. Tell them they need to trust God and His timing for their expectations for their husbands, and reality is that their husbands may or may not be any different as a result of doing this study.

**5) Prayer Time:** Lead the participants in prayer

- a) addressing the challenges discussed above,
- b) giving God their expectations for their husbands’ behavior,
- c) ask God for protection for the women and their marriages as they begin the journey, and

- d) pray for God's blessings to be seen this side of heaven for your ladies.

### Prayer †

*Father God,*

*The earth and all it contains is Yours...the world, and all who dwell in it. You have founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers. Surely You have my marriage under Your grace. Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? And who may stand in Your holy place? Those with clean hands and pure hearts, those who have not lifted their souls to lies and deceit; those are who shall receive Your blessing. We seek Your face, Oh God, You who are strong and mighty, You who are the King of glory.*

*Father, please hear our petitions, help us and our husbands become righteous, help us have marriages which bring glory and honor to Your name. (include specifics from the women here) Protect us as we move forward, see our hearts as broken before You, and teach us Your ways, Father. Help us listen. We seek Your voice, Oh Lord. We pray all these things in the precious name of Your Son Jesus, Who came that we might have eternal life. Amen.*

- 6) **Assignments:** Review the schedule for next week. They are to:
- a) complete the dares from Days 2-5,
  - b) read the "Introduction" and
  - c) "Understand This First" sections of the book.
  - d) Remind them that they are to attempt to do as many dares as they can (Days 2-5) for next time.

Many others have been down this path before you and overcome the same obstacles you will face. The ones that finish strong are those who are wise enough to know that

growth is often challenging, sometimes riddled with tears, and often comes with a price to be paid – but the prize at the end is worth it. Know that most that have begun this journey finish it.

## Meeting 2: Wisdom

People grow when they realize they have a problem that needs to be fixed. As a group, you will discuss two dares that point out these problems and God's blessings to your women.

### ✪ Facilitator Steps ✪

- 1) **Prior to Meeting 2:**
  - a) Understand the connection between what we experience in childhood and how we live our lives. Many times individuals will believe a lie at a very young age that deeply influences their perceptions throughout their entire life. Pray that God will use you to help the women see these connections and the possibilities for Truth that unfold as a result of their being willing to explore their childhood, even in the brief way we do here. Be prepared for tears.
  - b) Be sensitive to those women who may not know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior and be prepared to discuss that if the opportunity arises during your time together.
- 2) **During Meeting 2:** After everyone gets settled, take a few moments to review "The Rules" of the study from the Meeting 1 notes.
- 3) **Open in Prayer:** Open with a brief prayer, inviting God and His wisdom to direct the discussion.
- 4) **Discussion Questions:** Do as many of these as you have time for:
  - a) Following the format for question 1, day 2, of **The Respect Dare**, we're going to share our stories from our childhood and share how that has

impacted how we interact in marriage today.  
*(Leader's Note: If you have a group larger than 8-10 women, you might want to split into two discussion groups for this section to allow time for each participant to speak.)* Share your story and the response to question 3 from Day 2, then ask, "Who's next?" After the sharing is finished, continue to "b."

- b) What did God teach you in the dare from Day 2?
  - c) What was your experience of the self-assessment from the dare from Day 3?
  - d) Knowing these are behaviors based on Scripture, where do you have the most opportunity to grow?
  - e) How did we do in the "Disciple" area? (Spend a little bit of time listening to their walks with God, then take a few moments to share the gospel message, asking for the women to contribute their experience of Jesus if you are uncertain as to whether the ladies are followers of Christ. Let them know that if they have questions about this, they can talk to you after your group, privately.)
  - f) How did you feel doing the evaluation?
  - g) Why does Nina ask us question 3, "Can those feelings be trusted?"
  - h) What two areas are you working on?
- 5) **Prayer Time:** Lead the participants in prayer:
- a) thanking God for the learning in the dare from Day 2,
  - b) ask God for protection for the women and their marriages as they begin to work on the areas they've indicated as opportunities, and
  - c) pray for God's blessings to be seen this side of heaven for your ladies!

## Prayer †

*Father God,*

*Be not far from us, Oh Lord. O You, great Help, come to our assistance. Deliver our souls from the pain we have suffered. Save us from the devastation of remaining mired in the pain of the past. Teach us Your lessons for today and tomorrow and equip us to move forward.*

*Only You bring such comfort and safety to Your people. Only You are the Great Shepherd. We shall not want. You make us rest in green pastures, You lead us beside still waters, You restore our souls and You restore our marriages. You guide us in the paths of righteousness, Father. We shall be brave as we face the days to come, knowing You are beside, in front and behind us, each step of the way. Father, we ask (insert specific requests from the women).*

*We claim the promises of Your Word over our marriages, we know You hate divorce and You see beauty in families restored. Surely goodness and Your loving kindness will follow us all the days of our lives, as we dwell in the shelter of the Most High.*

- 6) **Assignments:** Review the schedule for next meeting. They should complete the dares from Days 6-10 before the next meeting.



## Meeting 3: Building Up or Tearing Down?

We all need to become more aware that the words that come out of our mouths can either build up someone, or tear down. Our communication skills in this area are representative of our abilities as communicators, overall, as well. For your purposes as a leader of your group, you should be aware that we've seen a progression of growth throughout our courses. Wives frequently learn that they must get control of their thoughts and tongues before they can start saying words that edify. The progression of communication skill development typically follows a pattern:

1. The wives should begin with silence. Not reacting shows that we are willing and able to control our tongue, and then we can move toward a *response*, versus a *reaction*.
2. We need to work out our resentment with God, praying that He will show us His Truth about these things.
3. After the first areas are dealt with, we find it easier to recognize the positive attributes in others.
4. Next, we give voice to these positive attributes in a healthy and specific way, while overcoming our selfish nature with an absence of resentment.
5. The next level occurs when we can effectively handle conflict situations, *focusing on the outcome or experience we desire, versus the problem behaviors of another*, while using encouraging words that bring consensus and enhance the relationship.
6. The final and highest level of interpersonal communication skills is represented by two consecutively occurring attributes: first, more positive and specific reinforcement is given

naturally and more frequently than negative feedback; and second, we have the ability to actively choose to enter into conflict when it is necessary, reaching resolution in a healthy way.

### 🌀 Facilitator Steps 🌀

- 1) **Prior to Meeting 3:** Be sensitive to those women who may not know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior and be prepared to discuss that if the opportunity arises during your time together.
- 2) **During Meeting 3:** Please take a few moments to review, “The Rules” from Meeting 1.
- 3) **Opening Prayer:** Open with a brief prayer, inviting God and His wisdom to direct the discussion.
- 4) **Discussion Questions:** Do as many of these as you have time for:
  - a) From the dare from Day 6, what act of kindness did you do for your husband?
  - b) How were your expectations challenged when doing this?
  - c) What was illuminated for you from the Philippians 2:14 verse?
  - d) Why does Nina talk about stating the facts versus communicating emotionally with your husband?
  - e) How did you respond to question 5 in Day 6 from **The Respect Dare**, “Why does choosing a good attitude while serving NOT make you a doormat?”  
*(Leader’s Note: Be prepared to make connections to the life of Christ and how He served without expectations. Use an example from the gospels and ask the ladies to contribute other examples of how Jesus served sacrificially.)*

- f) What were God's motivations in sending Jesus to earth? *(Leader's Note: Some people believe that Jesus came to help God experience human suffering, rather than understanding the omniscience of God. Be prepared to address the sovereign nature of God, using Scripture to back this up. Answers to this question involve, "Save humanity, teach us how to live, help us get it, to be the sacrifice, etc., but when Christ talked about His purpose on earth to Pilate, He said He was here to "testify to the truth." 75 times in Scripture, Jesus states, "I tell you the truth," and He also says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but through me." An understanding of Jesus is essential to growing in our relationship with God. Invite your pastor to your group next week to speak about this if you sense some confusion on the part of your participants.)*
- g) How did you respond to the questions from Day 9?

5) **Prayer Time:** Lead the participants in prayer:

- a) thank God for the learning in the dare from Day 6,
- b) ask God to deepen His relationship with them through Jesus, and finally,
- c) pray for God's blessings to be seen this side of heaven for your ladies!

### Prayer †

*Oh Lord,*

*Your Word tells us that a joyful heart is good medicine, and we know there is a time to laugh, and a time to mourn. Father, for so many of us, this seems to be a time to cry and be disappointed, and yet we trust in Your promises. We remember that You very specifically tell us that those who sow in tears will reap a harvest in full joy.*

*Lord, we ask for the gift of Your peace, and that we would be filled with Your strength such that we cannot just survive our challenges, but rejoice in the midst of them. We call upon the power of Your Spirit, which lives in us as a gift from You, when we chose to follow Jesus, accepting His gift of salvation.*

*Father, remind us that we gain nothing by dwelling in the darkness. Help us see Your light, because sometimes, we just can't on our own.*

(Specific requests of the women)

*In Jesus' name we pray, amen.*

**6) Assignments:** Review the schedule for next meeting. They should complete the dares from Days 11-15 before the next meeting.

## Meeting 4: God Helps Us

The women in your group may start feeling a little frustrated with their progress around this week or next. They might start focusing on their short-comings instead of the blessings in their lives. This is frequently due to the fact that they will feel as though they are putting a ton of effort into this study and their marriage, and will have seen little to no response from their husband. This week we need to focus them on how God accomplishes things in people's lives, reminding them that it is perseverance in obedience that matters most. Doing what is right with the purpose of a reward means we are self-motivated, as opposed to being women who desire to be pleasing to God. Given their struggles with "dying to self," we end the group experience this week leaving the women feeling especially encouraged.

### ✧ Facilitator Steps ✧

- 1) **Prior to Meeting 4:**
  - a) Send an email and ask the ladies to bring an item that represents the achievement from the dare from Day 11, if they have one.
  - b) Have a list of all the participants' names ready to hand out for the exercise at the end of today's meeting.
  - c) If your pastor is attending to address questions about Jesus from last week, cut out some of the beginning discussion questions to be sure to include the little "positive change" question at the end.
  
- 2) **During Meeting 4:** Please take a few moments to review, "The Rules" of the study from Meeting 1.

- 3) **Opening Prayer:** Open with a brief prayer, inviting God and His wisdom to direct the discussion.
  
- 4) **Discussion Questions:** Questions “e” and “f” go together. You'll want to make sure you schedule time such that you have enough available to do “g” as this exercise will make an incredible impact on the women in your group. Take replies from as many who want to contribute to as many of these questions as you have time for before moving to “g:”
  - a) In the dare from Day 12 of **The Respect Dare**, how did you answer question 2?
  - b) What is one thing you can do to honor your husband and children (question 3 of **The Respect Dare**) when speaking to them?
  - c) Have you seen your mother, sisters, or friends talking about their husbands in negative ways? Why is this wrong?
  - d) What did you come up with for the list of 8 things that wives can do to make our husbands feel like men?
  - e) What did you sense God teaching you about yourself as you reflected upon your achievement for the dare from Day 11? (question 4 of **The Respect Dare**) This is where you can ask them about what they brought to share.
  - f) What do you sense God wants you to know about Him as a result of this reflection
  - g) To determine what positive changes we've seen each others, we're going to do an exercise.

*Leaders Note: Follow these steps and this exercise will be easy to administrate:*

- *Hand out the sheets with the ladies' names on them.*

- *Tell the ladies they are not allowed to ask for or give constructive feedback. The only communication allowed is positive.*
- *Have the ladies write: 1) a “positive change” next to each woman’s name on the list of all your study group members and, 2) a reason why that strength matters to you. Give them about 40 seconds per participant to do this. EX: “Next to Joanne’s name, I could write, ‘has more peace’ and ‘this encourages me to trust God when I see you doing it.’ Each person should be specific and concise, while supporting it with why that strength is important.”*
- *Have the ladies get up from their seats and spend 12-20 minutes (depending on how many people you have, give about a minute per person in your group total time) sharing these positive changes with each other. Say something like, “You’ll have time to get to nearly everyone, but start with the person standing closest to you. If she gets grabbed by someone else, start with the next person.”*
- *Now and again, encourage them to, “Keep moving!” and, “Only 2 minutes left, ladies!” so they get to as many women as possible. If you do not do this, they will stand and elaborate, cry and hug, which while nice, keeps them from sharing with the other women on their list.*

- 5) **Prayer Time:** Lead the participants in prayer:
- a) thanking God for the learning in the dare from Day 6, specifically mentioning what you heard, and for the many strengths He’s given His women.
  - b) ask God to deepen His relationship with them through Jesus, and finally,
  - c) pray for God’s blessings to be seen this side of heaven for your ladies!

## Prayer †

*Oh Lord,*

*We give thanks to You, because You are good. Your kindnesses and Your gentleness is everlasting. We seek Your righteousness, Lord. We look to Abraham and Sarah, whom You alone multiplied. You comforted them, and kept your promises. Twenty six years is a long time to wait, Father, for the fulfillment of a promise, but Abraham and Sarah saw You be true to Your word.*

*We trust in the promises You have made to us, as well, Lord. We believe You in 1 Peter 3:1-6, where You declare that we are precious in Your sight when we have a gentle and quiet spirit. Help us Lord, as we cannot do these things without Your strength.*

(Specific requests of the women)

*In Jesus' name we pray, amen.*

- 6) **Assignments:** Review the schedule for next meeting. They should complete the dares from Days 16-20 before the next meeting.

## Meeting 5: The Lens of The Holy Spirit

This week is all about focusing on living life through the lens of the Holy Spirit, paying attention to whatever is good, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, praiseworthy, or excellent. The habits of thinking we have determine how we experience the world around us. You will guide the participants through Day 16 of **The Respect Dare**, in an attempt to learn as much about these habits of thinking and the lens of the Holy Spirit as possible.

### ✪ Facilitator Steps ✪

- 1) **Prior to Meeting 5:** Think and pray about how the sharing of the positive changes last week might have affected your ladies and how this relates to “experiencing life through the lens of the Holy Spirit.” You might want to open with this concept.
- 2) **During Meeting 5:** Please take a few moments to review “The Rules” of the study from Meeting 1.
- 3) **Opening Prayer:** Open with a brief prayer, inviting God and His wisdom to direct the discussion.
- 4) **Discussion Questions:** Do as many of these as you have time for:
  - a) Regarding the dare from Day 16 in **The Respect Dare**, were you able to achieve the dare?
  - b) Why or why not?
  - c) What was easy or hard about it?
  - d) Was the dare easier with people who are “close” to you or “acquaintances?” Why?
  - e) Did you ever find yourself struggling with pride instead of apologizing? How did you know?

- f) Is it easy or hard for you to apologize? Why is that?
  - g) What do you sense God teaching you through Ephesians 4:29?
  - h) What kind of an encourager are you naturally?
  - i) Let's move to the dare from Day 17 in **The Respect Dare**. How hard was it to come up with the strengths your husband possesses?
  - j) How many notes did you get written?
  - k) Did anything happen?
  - l) What was easy or hard about this exercise?
  - m) How did our "expectations" come into play during this exercise?
  - n) What did God show you as you experienced the homework?
- 5) **Prayer Time:** Lead the participants in a time of prayer,
- a) thanking God for the learning in the dares from Days 16 and 17,
  - b) asking God to deepen His relationship with them through Jesus,
  - c) taking some time to pray for your group's husbands and their walk with the Lord,
  - d) praying for God's blessings to be seen this side of heaven for your ladies!

### Prayer †

*Father God,*

*We know it is blessed to walk this path blamelessly, we yearn to walk in Your ways. You bless those who follow You, those who seek You with all their heart. Help us, Lord, to be women who seek You. Help us be wives who seek to delight You with our lives.*

*Father, we desire to be women who give thanks to You in everything, not just what we perceive to be the good things in life. We ask that You give us Your eyes, Your ears, that we may see the people around us and ourselves the way that You do. Father, help us to be instruments of Yours, to be useful to You.*

*You have given us Light, and Truth in Jesus. Help us grow in the way we follow Him.*

(Specific requests of the women)

*Thank You, Father. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen*

- 6) **Assignments:** Review the schedule for next meeting. They should complete the dares from Days 21-25 in **The Respect Dare**, before the next meeting.



## Meeting 6: Speak the Language of Respect

This week we focus on things from our husbands' perspectives. Few things help us connect more deeply with another person than seeing things from their point of view. During Meeting 6, you will encourage your study members to take a good look at how their husbands' experience love. They make commitments to expressing love in a way he can hear it. Next, we supercharge our "respect speaking" skills by expressing tangible respect and admiration.

### Facilitator Steps

- 1) **Prior to Meeting 6:** One of the best ways to prepare for facilitating this meeting is to have an in-depth discussion with your own husband about some of the things he's seen that communicate respect or a lack of respect.
- 2) **During Meeting 6:** Please take a moment to review "The Rules" of the study from Meeting 1.
- 3) **Opening Prayer:** Open with a brief prayer, inviting God and His wisdom to direct the discussion.
- 4) **Discussion Questions:** Do as many of these as you have time for:
  - a) Referring to the dare from Day 20 in **The Respect Dare**, what way does your husband most readily receive love from you? How do you know this?
  - b) What commitments did you make to communicate love in a way he can "hear" it?
  - c) Has your husband noticed anything that you've done by participating in the dares?

- d) What revelations did you have from your time in prayer reflecting on the sacrificial love of God from Day 20?
  - e) Describe how you have celebrated a success of your husband's from Day 23.
  - f) What tangible evidence of respect and admiration are you planning to give to your husband?
  - g) Turn to Day 25. Imagine for a moment that Jesus is talking with you about your husband. What would He have to say about question 1?
- 5) **Facilitate:** Take a few moments to discuss the concept of "respect" and how it ties in to Ephesians 5:31-33. As your group pours over these Scriptures, ask them,
- a) What words stand out to you? Why?
  - b) What picture is being created? How?
  - c) What is God specifically showing you through these verses?
- 6) **Prayer Time:** Lead the participants in prayer
- a) thanking God for the learning this week,
  - b) asking God to deepen His relationship with them through Jesus,
  - c) taking some time to pray for all the women in your group to fully understand how to "speak respect" to their husband, and finally,
  - d) praying for God's blessings to be seen this side of heaven for your ladies!

### Prayer †

*Dear Lord,*

*If we dwell in Your shelter, Most High God, we will rest in Your shadow of safety and comfort. We say to You this day, "Our refuge, our fortress, You are our God, in whom we place our trust."*

*Father, it is You who delivers us from the enemy. Lord, we know he prowls around the earth, seeking to destroy us. You, Oh Mighty God, are not afraid of him. While we cower in the darkness, we are reminded that in You we have victory. You have won this battle, this war. We simply need to remember this.*

*Lord, help us draw nearer to You. Help us be women worthy of Your favor. We confess in our hearts the things we have done this week that have not been on the path You have set before us (pause).*

(Specific requests of the women)

*Father, we finish this prayer with a sigh, curling up in Your lap, letting You wrap Your loving arms around us.*

*It is our great hope that regardless of our husband's behavior, we are women that honor You. Give us the strength to do that this week. Help us hear Your small, still voice. Help us obey.*

*In Jesus' name, Amen.*

- 7) **Assignment:** Review the schedule for next meeting. They should complete the dares from Days 26-30 of **The Respect Dare**, before the next meeting.



## Meeting 7: The “S” Word

This is a difficult week for many women. They don't like the concept of Biblical submission because they don't understand it. Once they do, however, they ALWAYS find great freedom and blessings in obeying God at this level. And they see that it dramatically impacts their marriages over time. You might want to bring in a couple of wise, older women who are known for respecting their husbands from outside your group to speak on this topic. These are the ladies we refer to as, “Titus 2 Encouragers,” based on the teaching in Titus 2 of the Bible. This might give the women in your group an understanding on a deeper level.

### ✪ Facilitator Steps ✪

- 1) **Prior to Meeting 7:** One of the best ways to prepare for facilitating this meeting is to review the Biblical roles of men and women. If one looks at the Genesis story, we see that woman is created from man, even though God could have created them in the same way. We believe this was done to communicate the positioning of the social order, with man as head of the family. Today, done well, with men loving their wives, acting as head of their homes, and wives respecting their husbands, submitting to their leadership, we end up with a marriage that *reflects* “mutual submission,” where true partnership and consultation between man and wife occur.
- 2) **During Meeting 7:** Please take a few moments to review “The Rules” of the study from Meeting 1.
- 3) **Opening Prayer:** Open with a brief prayer, inviting God and His wisdom to direct the discussion.

- 4) **Discussion Questions:** Do as many of these as you have time for:
- a) Read aloud and discuss each question from Day 26. Recognize that the concept of “mutual submission” (which may or may not come up) is realized in a mature relationship where the husband is respected and the wife feels loved. This is the ideal, where true intimacy occurs, but even then, the representation of Christ and the church via marriage stays the same. The church must give itself over to the authority of Christ.
  - b) How close to Edna and Charlie’s marriage is yours, in terms of intimacy?
  - c) How “safe” are you as a place for your husband to “fall?” If it is very safe, and you have this deep intimacy, how did God create this in your marriage?
  - d) Regarding the issue of sexual intimacy, how have you respected or not respected your husband in this area?
  - e) How comfortable are you initiating sex? Why would this matter to your husband? (What does it communicate to him?)
  - f) What does God have to say about sexual intimacy?
  - g) Day 29 discusses our responses to and thoughts about change. What stood out to you as important during this reflection on the topic of “change?”
- 5) **Facilitate:** Take a few moments to discuss the concept of “respect” and “submission” and how it ties in to 1 Peter 3:1-6. As your group pours over these Scriptures, ask them,
- a) What words stand out to you? Why?
  - b) What picture is being created? How?
  - c) What is God specifically showing you through these verses?

- d) What have you witnessed in real life that reinforces the truth found in these Scriptures?
- 6) **Prayer Time:** Lead the participants in prayer,
- a) thanking God for the learning this week,
  - b) asking God to deepen His relationship with them through Jesus,
  - c) taking some time to pray for all the women in your group to fully understand how to “speak respect” to their husband,
  - d) praying for God’s blessings to be seen this side of heaven for your ladies!

### Prayer †

*Father God,*

*You have taken account of our wanderings, collected each of our tears and put them in Your bottle. Are they not in Your book? It is You who we praise, Oh Lord. It is You, whom we have put our trust. We shall not be afraid.*

*You deliver our souls from death, Lord. You rescue our feet from stumbling, if we will but listen and heed.*

*Help us make confession part of our regular prayer life, Lord. In the secret, quiet places we spend with You during the week, please remind us of our iniquities, help us ask forgiveness, and restore our souls with Your promises.*

*Heal our marriages, Lord, and the men You've given us.*

(Specific request of the women)

*Lord, we give praises to You, for You are great in all the earth. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

- 7) **Assignments:** Review the schedule for next meeting.  
They should complete the dares from Days 31-35  
before the next meeting.

## Meeting 8: Mature Faith Part 1

Mature faith means that we put all of our hope in our God, trusting in His perfect love for us through Jesus Christ, instead of leaning on humans or ourselves. It means complete and utter submission to the authority of Christ, dying to ourselves, and living for the audience of One. This maturity occurs through the multiplication of tiny steps of faith over time. The more we trust, the more risks we'll take, which result in even more trust, and the cycle begins.

### ✪ Facilitator Steps ✪

- 1) **Prior to Meeting 8:**
  - a) Pray about your own relationship with God and take time to reflect on how very far you have come. Know He is delighted with you! He is pleased with your continued growth and is eager to continue raising you up in His ways.
  - b) Seek through your Bible for a favorite verse about how much He loves you – you'll share this with the group! You might also want to bring a laptop computer to search [www.BibleGateway.com](http://www.BibleGateway.com) when the ladies offer up theirs, but some won't remember the references, and you can quickly provide them if you have a concordance or website to go to.
  - c) Send an email letting them know they will need to bring the piece of paper from Day 34's assignment to the study that week. Give no other details.
  - d) If possible, arrange to have a large cross brought into your room for study this week.
  
- 2) **During Meeting 8:** Please take a few moments to review "The Rules" of the study from Meeting 1.

- 3) **Prayer Time:** Open with a brief prayer, inviting God and His wisdom to direct the discussion.
  
- 4) **Discussion Questions:** Do as many of these as you have time for:
  - a) On Day 33 we have two options. Which option did you pick? What happened?
  - b) Have the ladies bring their pieces of paper from Day 34 to the study. Have them tear it in half and put “his list” into a garbage can in the center of the room, or if you have a cross in your room, placing these at the foot of the cross. Tell them this symbolizes giving their husband over to God, to allow Him to deal with his issues directly, and after each woman has put her husband’s “list” in God’s hands, pray out loud for all of you to be able to stay out of God’s way in how He grows your husband.
  - c) How do you think God perceives you? Why do you think that?
  - d) Is this different than how you used to think He perceived you? How? Why has this changed, if it has?
  - e) What is the truth about how God sees us when we put our faith in the resurrected Jesus Christ?  
(Answer: blameless, pure, innocent, beautiful, a great treasure)
  - f) Share your verse from your own preparation time with the group. Ask them if they have a favorite verse that communicates God’s love for them that they’d like to share.
  - g) How does God see your husbands? (Answer: the same precious way He sees them.)
  - h) What does that love from God for our husbands mean for us, personally? Are any of us missionaries in our own homes?

- 5) **Prayer Time:** Lead the participants in prayer,
- a) thanking God for the learning this week,
  - b) thanking Him for His Word, which communicates His great love for us,
  - c) thanking Him for Jesus, the manifestation of that love that testifies truth into our lives,
  - d) take some time to pray for all the women in your group to fully understand how to be an instrument of God's love to their husbands,
  - e) pray for God's blessings to be seen this side of heaven for your ladies!

### **Prayer †**

*Father God,*

*We just thank you for all you have done and will continue to do in our lives. You are our Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. We have but one more week together here, Father, but our marriages and friendships will continue to march on. May You be ever present in our daily comings and goings.*

*Lord, we thank you for the tears and the joys, the broken hearts and the healing. We trust Your good purpose for it all.*

(Specific requests of the women)

*In Jesus' name, Amen.*

- 6) **Assignment:** Review the schedule for next meeting. They should complete the dares from Days 35-41 before the next meeting.



## Meeting 9: Mature Faith Part 2

Mature faith means that God shares His perspective with us. He enables us, through His divine grace and deep intimacy with Him, to see people as He sees them. Often this means we are insulated from stinging words and harmful insults. Those who injure us become people we have God's love for, extend His patience to, and pray for as we come to have the compassion of Christ for them. Mature faith means we shine the light of Christ to those around us and our "sufferings" take on a whole new meaning.

### ✻ Facilitator Steps ✻

- 1) **Prior to Meeting 9:**
  - a) This is a celebration! Send an email encouraging the women in your study to bring some food or beverages and have a small feast to celebrate what God has done!
  - b) Once again, print out the list of names for each participant.
- 2) **During Meeting 9:** Please take a moment to review "The Rules" from Meeting 1.
- 3) **Opening Prayer:** Open with a brief prayer, inviting God and His wisdom to direct the discussion.
- 4) **Discussion Questions:** Do as many of these as you have time for:
  - a) On Day 39, there are questions about forgiveness. What have you learned about forgiveness through this study?
  - b) Turn to Day 39's questions and respond to question 1 - What is the greatest challenge you have

- c) overcome or made progress toward achieving?  
What has God done to help you with this?
  - d) What 3 areas (question 3) are you sensing you have behaved in a way that is pleasing to God?
  - e) How do you feel about the statement, “One of the few ways we can offer love back to God is by obeying Him?” This is John 14:15.
  - f) Share what you wrote for “Your Story” for Day 40.
  - g) Distribute the list of participants to each member of the study. Give the ladies 40 seconds per participant to write down a strength and evidence of that strength for each woman. Ask them to write down what you’ve seen God do in their life since the beginning of the study. Give them the remaining time to share these strengths with each other, telling them to “Let each other know why you think your sister is brave, what strength you see in her, and how you’ve seen God grow her.”
- 5) **Prayer Time:** Lead the participants in prayer:
- a) thank God for the learning this week,
  - b) thank Him for His Word, which hasn’t left us unchanged,
  - c) thank Him for Jesus, the manifestation of that love that testifies truth into our lives,
  - d) take some time to pray for all the women in your group to grow in their understanding of how to be an instrument of God’s love to their husbands,
  - e) pray for God’s blessings to be seen this side of heaven for your ladies!
- 6) **Celebrate:**
- a) Celebrate what God has done with fellowship!
  - b) Be sure to share the Facebook® community page for **The Respect Dare** with them, so they can receive daily encouragement in their continued journey.

## **Thank You!**

Thank you so much for allowing us to walk beside you as you led, encouraged, supported and cared for the women in your group over the last nine weeks. For many of these ladies, this is just the beginning of deeper intimacy with God and their husband. You can rest in the knowledge that you were used by Him for His purposes. To God be the glory!

## **Online E-Course**

Should you wish to continue pursuing the application of Biblical respect, we invite you to join us in the E-Course. This online video teaching experience is different from the small group you have just completed.

## About The Author

Nina has seen God's hand at work in the courses He's inspired her to write. Over 95 percent of her participants report improving their relationship with God and becoming more confident. She firmly believes that to be fully productive and have peace, one must live life for the audience of One, being fully engaged in all the roles He has placed us in. She has found her calling in leaving secular business to write and deliver courses for Christians at a fraction of the cost of what the same high caliber of training goes for in the marketplace.

Nina has over 20 years in the communications and training industry including 15 years with the largest and most successful training company in the world. She has coached numerous executives and pastors around the country and currently provides leadership for Greater Impact Ministries, Inc. as Executive Director.

Nina's expertise in the classroom as a facilitator, trainer, and coach display her God given talents. She and her husband, Jim, met in 1985 and married in 1991 after Nina finished her Masters degree at West Virginia University. She and Jim are privileged to be raising their 3 children, Adam, Bram and Elizabeth, together in Loveland, Ohio. Nina can be booked for speaking engagements through the ministry website at <http://www.GreaterImpact.org>.

## **There is more.**

Have you ever wondered, “Isn't there more?”  
Like something is missing?

### **There is.**

We can help you find it. That's what we're all about. You're not meant to do this on your own. God created us to rely on Him, but we don't. We fight it. We think we can do it by ourselves and that maybe God will be proud of us when we figure it out.

**Here's the truth: He wants to do it with us. Through us. He has a plan for each of us.**

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