

Power of a Positive Wife Leader's Guide

Helpful Hints for Leaders

As you embark on studying *The Power of a Positive Wife* as a group, I would like to offer you encouragement in three areas.

1. *Seek God's guidance.* Ask God to assist you in how to lead your precious group of moms. You may not know all of the needs and hidden hurts of the women in your group, but God does. Seek God's wisdom as you lead your group (James 1:5).
2. *Build relationships.* This is not only a study to help everyone learn to be more positive in their homes; it is also a study to encourage mom-to-mom friendships. Plan fellowships, play groups and lunches together. As the leader, keep up with the moms who do not attend by giving them a quick phone call or writing them a letter. You may even want to share emails, so you can communicate easily through out the week.
3. *Stay Focused.* Be sensitive to everyone's time, by starting and ending on time. I do think it is wise to allow a little time for arrival and fellowship at the beginning. There is a healthy balance of staying on target and not being too rigid. Please guard against gossip or griping. You will also need to be aware of people who manipulate the conversation time or take the lesson down a rabbit trail. In both cases, turn the conversation back to the lesson by saying something like, "Well, I think we better get back to the questions so we can cover everything we want to cover."

Before you begin you will want to prayerfully make a decision as to how you will study the book. I suggest that you assign one chapter per week, plus the Power Points. You may choose to ask the questions from the leader's guide when you meet together, or you can give the questions out each week and allow the girls to come prepared with answers. These are simple discussion questions allowing the girls to share their own insights or personal examples. Don't expect everyone to answer. Allow several people to answer and then move on to the next question. Always be prepared to give your own answer, if the conversation needs help in

getting started. If you have extra time, go back through the chapter and ask people to share some of the things that were important to them. Encourage them to highlight in their books. You may also want to discuss the Power Points.

If you are leading a large group (say 15 or more) you may want to have an assistant or two. It is helpful to have a secretary to collect and organize the phone numbers and addresses and perhaps a hospitality person to organize snacks and socials.

As far as praying together, I suggest you start off your time together with prayer, but reserve taking prayer requests until the end of class. Have index cards available so ladies can write their requests. Then give the card to someone else to pray for the requests. This helps to avoid long discussions (with everyone adding their opinion) over a prayer request or concern.

Introduction

Use this first meeting as a time to get to know one another. You will be introducing the book and how you plan to study it together at this time. Do not expect anyone to have read the book yet.

1. Ask everyone to share their name and the names of their family members. Also ask each participant to share one of her greatest joys in her life right now.
2. Read the introduction together, having one person read it out loud while the others follow along.
3. Explain how you are going to study the book together (homework and study questions).

Other things to discuss include: where you are going to meet, time frame and childcare.

Close with prayer.

Chapter 1

1. The most important ingredient in the recipe for a great wife is God-centeredness (not husband-centeredness). How would you describe God-centeredness in your own words.
2. What are some of the "Small Stuff" areas that you feel you need to let go of in your marriage?
3. What is a good, practical way to focus on eternal things?
4. Share with the group ways that your weaknesses are complemented by your husbands strengths.

Chapter 2

1. God's great power knows no limits. Why then, do we tend to depend on ourselves instead of depending on God's power at work in our lives?
2. Queen Esther recognized her responsibility while also relying on God's power. In what ways can we follow her example in our marriage relationships?
3. Please share about your experience this week when you designated a day to dwelling in God's presence all day long (under Power Point)

Chapter 3

1. Can you recall any mumpsimus you have believed in your own relationship with your husband?
2. Which of the three love principles has been the most challenging and/or rewarding for you in your marriage?
3. What has God taught you through the way you have loved your husband? This might be something about your relationship with God as well as the relationship with your husband.
4. What ways can you demonstrate true love to your husband?

Chapter 4

1. Why is it be more difficult to forgive a person we know and love (our husband, for example) than to forgive a total stranger?
2. How might you grow closer in your relationship with Christ as you regularly perform "forgiveness checks?"
3. How can the forgiveness that you extend to your spouse enable him to become a new person with a fresh beginning?
4. How has Christ's forgiveness toward you affected your life?

Chapter 5

1. What are some of the reasons so many couples today are only willing to commit to what is convenient?
2. Some couples hold the foundational belief that marriage is for life. How can this belief only increase their chances for a successful marriage?
3. Discuss couples in the Bible who had lifelong marriages despite the challenges that came their way. How can this encourage us in our marriages today?
4. How can perseverance in marriage be one of the tools God wants to use to conform us to His image?

Chapter 6

1. Why is it so difficult for us to give up our "rights" for what is right?
2. Romans 14:19 says, "Let us make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification." It is very easy to interpret "every effort" in a way that is perceived to mean in my own way. How can we apply this differently by yielding our ways to God's?
3. Which rules from "The Positive Wife's List of Conflict Do's and Don'ts" have you found to enrich your marriage and which one(s) are the most challenging for you?

Chapter 7

1. How can God use the respect that you show your husband to allow your spouse to be all that he can be?
2. The Amplified Bible translates Ephesians 5:33: "Let the wife see that she respects and reverences her husband (that she notices him, regards him, honors him, prefers him, venerates and esteems him; and that she defers to him, praises him, and loves and admires him exceedingly)." Share with the group some ways that you have been able to show respect to your husband in the various ways listed.
3. Were you able to find some ways you might have been disrespecting your husband from the list on page 108 that might even have been unconscious decisions?
4. How does the submission that we show to our husbands reflect our submission to God's authority?

Chapter 8

1. As Christian wives, how can we maintain a positive attitude in the midst of negative emotions or circumstances?
2. What mumpsimus (remember Chapter 3!) pervade our society today that seem to encourage women to be home destroyers instead of home builders?

3. When you made your "blessings inventory" which ones brought you the most joy?
4. How did Ruth Bell Graham's choice to live positively through the storms of life inspire you?

Chapter 9

1. Why might our attitude and behavior change when we learn that respect is not so much an act of obedience to our husbands as it is an act of obedience to God?
2. Discuss what can be learned from Proverb 21:3, "To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice."
3. Why might it help our husband to be a better man and a better father if we make an effort to point out something he is doing right instead of everything that he is doing wrong?
4. What could be the benefit of keeping our eyes focused on the Lord instead of our husband's faults?

Chapter 10

1. Can you remember a time when you were a child and someone spoke encouraging words to you? What were they and why do you think you still remember them, perhaps even decades later?
2. In Proverbs 31, Solomon says, "She opens her mouth with skillful and godly Wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness." Could others say that about us?
3. Did you try a "fast" from criticism this week? What did God show you?
4. After reading James 3:3-12 and Matthew 19:26, describe the only way that a tongue can be tamed.

Chapter 11

1. Compare the innate differences that men and women have in the way they build and develop relationships.
2. In Proverbs 18:24, Solomon says that a man of many companions comes to ruin. Why is this so, and what can it teach us about our priorities?
3. We plan many activities, meals, schedules, etc.. in our role as wives, but we often don't schedule time with our spouse. On page 157 it states, "We must continually choose creativity over complacency if we want to build a deep and satisfying companionship that lasts a lifetime." Why do we tend to choose complacency over creativity?
4. Share with the group some memorable dates you have had with your husband over the years or any new ideas that you might have planned this week.

Chapter 12

1. I Corinthians 6:19-20 says, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body." What are some ways that you can honor God with your body?
2. Why is a smile the most important beauty tool? Can you think of someone you know whose smile makes them beautiful?
3. It says on page 181, "I determine to forget about myself and focus on how I can love and serve others." What blessings can come to you and others with this attitude?
4. Have you ever read Psalm 139: 13-16 in a beauty magazine? How does God's idea of beauty differ from the world's view?

Chapter 13

1. Why are married women more apt to enjoy sex than single women?
2. The Shulamite woman in Song of Songs shows us that sex is not a matter of looking for what we can get; it's looking for what we can give. Can you think of any commonly held beliefs today that encourage the opposite idea?
3. Why is it important that you want to look attractive for your husband?

Chapter 14

1. In this chapter we are told to ask God to help us develop hearts of contentment. How can distinguishing between a want and a need enhance our understanding of contentment?
2. Why is it that most people will not save or invest adequately unless they do so systematically?
3. Which verses from Proverbs that were listed in Power Point brought new insight about your views on handling money?

Chapter 15

1. Proverbs 31 serves as a reminder that we should focus on our strengths and not focus on our weaknesses. Share some strengths and weaknesses you possess and how you will draw out more blessings for your husband from them.
2. Ecclesiastes 3:1 reminds us, "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven." Did God show you some ways this week that you can balance your life by adding or deleting from your calendar?
3. Has God revealed any ways that you could reach out and meet others' needs in your community with the abilities he has given you?

Chapter 16

1. Why does every principle that's been discussed up to this point in the book depend greatly on the principle of being a prayerful wife?
2. Why are we more likely to recognize and enjoy God's presence all day long when we start our day in fellowship with the Lord?
3. Why do we grow deeper in our love for our husbands as we faithfully pray for their physical, emotional and spiritual needs?
4. Isaiah 55:8-9 says that God's ways are different than our ways, and his thoughts are much higher than our thoughts. Can you remember times in your life when it didn't appear God answered your prayers with the timing and result you had hoped for, but through time, experience and faith you learned the truth and wisdom of this verse?

Chapter 17

1. What are some reasons that people neglect to read the Bible?
2. Philippians 2:5-7 tells us, "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness." How could our marriages be enriched if we had a Christ-like attitude described in this verse?
3. When Catherine Marshall's husband described her he said, "Catherine's passion for the Word permeated her whole life." Is it your desire to have such passion? Fill your name in the blank and share what you are willing to do to acquire this aspiration. "_____ 's passion for the Word permeates her whole life."

Conclusion:

1. What impressed you about the example in the story of the wives of Weinsberg?
2. What do you plan to do differently as a result of reading this book?
3. Which one of the seven principles in this book has been the most inspirational to you and why?