



the heart of marriage

STUDY GUIDE

STORIES
THAT CELEBRATE
THE ADVENTURE OF
LIFE TOGETHER

Dawn Camp EDITOR
FOREWORD BY EDIE WADSWORTH

The Heart of Marriage Book Study Guide

Stories That Celebrate the Adventure of Life Together

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To Have and to Hold

That Kiss

by Shannon Lowe

What are some ways you can reconnect with the feeling of when you and your spouse first met or were first married?

Can your spouse still make you weak in the knees? (with *that* kiss, *that* dance, *that* song?)

One Simple Way to Start a Small Blaze in Your Marriage

by Lisa Jacobson

It is important to welcome your spouse warmly at the end of the day. Try to make your home a place of rest and sanctuary in your marriage.

What are some intentional ways you can “fill” your spouse’s heart at the end of the day?

The Four Most Important Words You Can Say

by Francie Winslow

What are some words of affirmation you can speak (or leave in a note) to your spouse?

Do you share your love and appreciation often, or are you guilty of assuming the words can wait?

Challenge: Take a minute to observe your spouse—take in the details: how they relate to your children, take care of you or your home, or look as they sit and read or pay the bills—and then close your eyes and absorb the moment. Take the time to tell them how much you love and appreciate them today.

Choosing Love

by Liz Sagaser

Let's be honest: even in the best of marriages, sometimes one or both of you will get annoyed with the other. Try this as a filter for your feelings: will this still matter to me in seven days? If the answer is no, try to let it go.

We Used to Hold Hands

by Marci Stevens

What are some activities you and your spouse enjoyed early in your relationship? What about now?

Has the way you spend your time together changed over the years as your relationship has matured? Are you happy with the changes?

Sunday Mornings in the Kitchen

by Dawn Camp

What are some ways you can enter into your spouse's space, interests, or world or invite them into yours?

What are some things that you don't necessarily expect, but desire that your spouse do with you?

Marriage is a Sacrament They Say

by Shawn Smucker

Are you intentional about making time for the physical relationship in your marriage and scheduling time together as a couple?

How can you and your spouse find quiet time amid life's chaos?

Through the Eyes of Love

When I Stopped Looking Through My Husband

by Erin Mohring

Do you see your spouse for himself or herself at the end of the work day or do you simply appreciate their presence and the role they fulfill within your home?

Does your spouse need time to rest and refuel before being bombarded with the details of your day, or is there time to unwind during the drive home?

Challenge: Learn your spouse's love language and how to speak it!

Sometimes Love in Marriage Comes Down to the Smallest of Things

by Lisa Jacobson

Is there one little thing—no matter how meaningless it might seem to you—that you could do to make your spouse happy?

What is your spouses' peanut butter jar? Don't assume. Ask.

A Secret to Marriage for Life

by Robin Dance

Read Matthew 6:33 and reflect on it. Is your heart and behavior Matthew 6:33-like?

Challenge: Talk with your spouse about how you can seek God first each day.

The Day I Said “Oh Yeah!”

by Holley Gerth

The unknowns in your marriage might not always be pretty, but think back to your wedding vows. Do you sometimes have to remind yourself to say yes to both the good and the bad?

What does your spouse do for you that makes you feel like you’re “getting the better end of the deal”?

What Love Sounds Like: Love on Purpose

by Edie Wadsworth

Husbands, how can you model Christ’s sacrificial love in your marriage?

Wives, in what ways are you showing sacrificial love towards your husband?

Noticing the Man in Front of Me

by Alexandra Kuykendall

Are there things that you prayed for that you see in your life today?

Challenge: Is your spouse a hottie? How do they help you? How do they care for your family? Go tell them now!

How Love Changes Everything

by Shelly Miller

How can you be a servant to your spouse?

Challenge: Try to out-serve your spouse—putting them first—and see how it blesses your marriage!

As Long as We Both Shall Live

How to Make a Marriage Flourish

by Dawn Camp

How can you continue to woo your spouse?

Harmony matters. Is it sometimes better to be kind than to be right? How can you be a peacemaker in your marriage instead of a peacekeeper?

A New Perspective

by Gregory Bledsoe, MD

What are some memories that you can make together now that you can cling to later in life?

How can you advocate for your spouse?

Challenge: Pray with your spouse that you'll have an enviable marriage that others would want to emulate.

In Defense of Totally Ordinary Love Stories

by Lisa-Jo Baker

Sometimes big things make us fall in love, but recognition of who our spouses are in the little things helps us stay in love. What little things does your spouse do in your ordinary, everyday life that helps you see their love for you?

What things do you or could you do to show your spouse your love?

Something that Helps by Deidra Riggs

Do you know a newlywed or soon-to-be wed couple you could pray for?

Are you intentional about asking God to bless your own marriage?

Challenge: Make a commitment to pray specifically for your spouse and your marriage for the next week, focusing on particular areas of need.

Choose What Type of Couple You Want to Be by Shaunti Feldhahn

Are you the type of couple that wants to work everything out before you commit to it or that commits to working everything out?

Can you think of some examples?

What I Learned Wednesday Afternoon at the Grocery Store by Dawn Camp

Throughout your marriage you'll go through many stages. How has your relationship changed with time?

How are you navigating through your current stage—whether it's life with children, fertility challenges, empty nesters, golden years—and how do you foresee your next stage together?

Not Today by Diane Bailey

Even if it hasn't been a life or death situation, you've probably been through stressful periods or trials in your marriage. How has God brought you through those times?

If you're currently in one of those stages, are you trusting God to carry you through?

Challenge: Read Psalm 27:1, 3 out loud for encouragement.

For Better, For Worse

The Story of Us

by **Laura Parker**

Look back on the beginning of your marriage. Was it what you expected?

What were you told as a newlywed that you didn't believe that turned out to be truth?

Intimacy should be a priority in your marriage. How can you work to build intimacy with your spouse?

How I Saved My Marriage

by **Richard Paul Evans**

Are you at an impasse in your marriage? Although you can't change your spouse, you can pray for God to change *your* heart.

How can you be more selfless in your relationship?

Challenge: For a week, each day ask your spouse, "How can I make your day better?"

Notes on a Marriage

by **Shannan Martin**

Do you spend time communicating as a couple, even if it's kid-free time alone in your bedroom or a walk through your neighborhood?

Challenge: Sometimes you can't rely on your first impression of a situation. Be still. Try to see it from God's perspective.

Grace, Mercy, and Cheesesteaks by Crystal Stine

Did you become sweethearts in high school or college?

Was yours a love-at-first-sight relationship or a friendship turned into love?
Was your courtship or engagement challenging or long distance?

In what way did your childhood experiences impact your ideas about marriage?

A Peek Into My Everyday Marriage by Emily T. Wierenga

Intimacy is more than just knowing your spouse in a physical sense; it's learning and knowing how to meet their day-to-day, practical needs. Are you taking time to study your spouse and how their needs have changed with time?

What have you learned about your spouse recently that has surprised you?

We Make Beautiful Amends by Alia Joy Hagenbach

Your spouse will never be enough for you—that's too much responsibility for one person to be everything to another—but with God in the midst of your relationship, He is enough.

Have you had a “but God” moment in your marriage, when you made the conscious decision to continue to choose each other instead of choosing to leave?

Tending Hope by Kelley J. Leigh

Was there a time in your marriage when you tried to nurture and grow your relationship, but things kept tearing it down, until you finally gave it up to God? Give an example.

Are there any shearing and pruning conversations that you need to have with your spouse?

Great Expectations

Thanks a Lot, Jane Austen

by Ashleigh Slater

Do you ever miss the silver linings in your relationship because you're expecting the gold?

Challenge: Acts of service can be the daily love notes of a spouse. What is something you could do for your spouse this week that you did during your courtship or engagement?

The Date Night Dress

by Dawn Camp

Do you consider what you wear and how it pleases your spouse?

What effort could you make in your appearance that your spouse would appreciate?

The Most Romantic Gesture Ever

by Mary Carver

Do you ever experience romance envy?

What does romance look like in your marriage right now?

The Good Wife: How I (Thought I) Failed My Marriage

by Ann Swindell

Did you go into your marriage with unrealistic expectations for you or your spouse?

Are you putting the expectations on yourself or are they from your spouse?

What type of wife or husband has God called you to be?

A Kind Wife

by Joy Forney

Have you ever wrongly emphasized serving your spouse more than being kind?

Challenge: Ask your spouse if your current “to do” list lines up with their expectations.

Sometimes Happily Ever After Don't Start Out the Way You Planned

by Dawn Camp

What do you remember fondly about your wedding?

Do you have any unresolved feelings about your wedding day? {Disclaimer: Remember that your wedding day was perfect because at the end of the day you were married!}

Invitation to Dance

by Lynn D. Morrissey

Is there something that your spouse really wants to do that you have been reluctant to do?

Discuss your reservations and decide if you would be willing to participate as an act of love in spite of your reluctance?

What does growing old together look like to you? In what ways does your view differ from your spouse's?

The Refining Power of Marriage

When You'd Like to Stay in Love by Holley Gerth

Are you and your spouse opposites?

In what ways have your differences helped you?

The Marriage Marathon by Kristen Welch

Has there been a time that you've had to remember that you're on the same team?

Do you celebrate each other and cheer each other on?

Challenge: Look for ways to be a better cheerleader for your spouse.

Is Love Supposed to Be Fair? by Angela Nazworth

Did you enter marriage with delusions of fairness?

Are there times in your marriage when it's been necessary for one spouse to shouldered more responsibilities?

In what ways has your spouse shown sacrificial love to you?

Five Keys to Having a Strong Marriage - Even During the Storms of Life by Crystal Paine

What have you figured out about your spouse and what do you wish they understood about you?

Challenge: Out of the five keys Crystal lists, choose one to focus on this week.

I Just Got Engaged and Immediately Doubted My Decision: Here's Why I Still Said Yes

by Mo Isom

Did you enter marriage with the illusion that your spouse was supposed to complete you?

How does your marriage reflect the love of Christ?

Made for Each Other: Embracing Your Differences

by Sheila Wray Gregoire

Over the years, how have you and your spouse become more alike?

How have your differences become opportunities for growth within your marriage?

Why Marriage is So Hard

by Edie Wadsworth

How has God used your marriage to refine your heart?

Is there an area where God has used your spouse to bring you out of your comfort zone?

Writing Our Love Story

Dear Husband

by Laura Boggess

In what ways has your relationship with God grown throughout your marriage?

How can you encourage each other in your spiritual walk?

Belated Happy Valentine's Day

by Rachel Anne Ridge

Are you still each other's Valentine?

Do you have a favorite picture of the two of you from early in your relationship and another more recent photo?

After All These Years

by Kris Camealy

How has your life together been "ordinarily extraordinary"?

How can you keep Christ at the core of your relationship?

Shirtless Nostalgia

by Mandy Arioto

Reminisce about how you and your spouse first met. How did you know he or she was the one?

Who pursued whom?

The Security of Our Story
by Renee Swope

Do your kids know your love story?

Do you have any mementos or keepsakes that you've kept for years?

Challenge: Sit down with your children and share a story about the two of you that they haven't heard.

What I Want My Daughters to Know About My Wedding
by Kristen Welch

What is a favorite detail from your wedding? Can you happily say, "... my wedding wasn't much. But my marriage is more"?

The Secret to a Happy Marriage
by Shawn Smucker

How can you keep finding each other amid the LEGOs and the laundry?

Challenge: Create a date night at home for just the two of you.

With This Ring (Parts 1, 2, & 3)

Does your wedding ring have a history or a story attached to it? Does it start with you or does it date back further?