

# Leader's Guide

PWOC is now providing Bible studies, written by PWOC authors and specifically designed to address the needs of military women. This study and the ones to follow use adult learning techniques that will facilitate discipleship behavior.<sup>1</sup> In his latest book, *The Great Omission*, Dallas Willard points out that in the New Testament the word "Christian" is used 3 times, while the word "disciple" is used 269 times!<sup>2</sup> It's more important than ever for Christian leaders and Bible teachers to assist people in embracing discipleship. This is the goal of [loggingontocourage.calm](http://loggingontocourage.calm).

The new PWOC Bible studies are unique. Please read the following introductory pages with pencil in hand. *Mark* everything that strikes you as important. Each lesson has a leader's guide which will greatly assist you to facilitate the class.

You are about to begin the rewarding activity of leading adults through Bible study. Even the most worthwhile endeavors come with a measure of apprehension. If you are anxious about leading this study, be encouraged that great leaders in the Bible like Moses, Joshua, Deborah, Peter and Paul felt nervous at times. Just as God's resources were ample for them, they are ample for you.

Perhaps nothing is as effective as healthy, dynamic small group discussion to facilitate learning and to encourage adults to become genuine disciples. Thus, your task as a small group leader is crucially important. These lessons are designed to help people learn truths of Scripture and to integrate them into their lives.

<sup>1</sup>If you have questions concerning the adult learning and small group methods of leading [loggingontocourage.calm](http://loggingontocourage.calm), contact Becky Shirey at [couragestudy@aol.com](mailto:couragestudy@aol.com).

<sup>2</sup> Willard, Dallas, *The Great Omission, Reclaiming Jesus' Essential Teachings on Discipleship* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 2006)

God has given you a desire to lead adults in their Christian spiritual growth process; therefore, your leadership is an act of stewardship essential for the advancement of God's kingdom.

Your small group leadership skills will increase as you follow this *Leadership Guide* and practice the small group techniques. The goal of these techniques is to encourage maximum participation from students and to establish a safe learning environment.

Adults learn best from their peers, so it's important to lead your group in a way that promotes the involvement of every group member. For maximum effectiveness, see yourself as a *guide*, not a teacher. The Holy Spirit, working through the lessons, Scripture, and the completed homework, does the teaching. You guide a dialogue about what people learned as they considered the lesson content.

This study, [loggingontocourage.calm](http://loggingontocourage.calm), is designed for participants to *do* something courageous. You will have group members who may be shy or insecure about their ability to be courageous. These guidelines will equip you to facilitate an environment which will make it possible for hesitancy to be transformed into courageous action. Some members will be bolder by nature and may be motivated to speak out and apply everything they learn quickly. Most students will fall somewhere in between. The Leader's Guide will provide tools to facilitate a healthy discussion, and create a positive learning environment for both groups.

Each person brings their personality, context and attitude to the group. Keep this principle in mind:

*Adults learn by doing. To learn about courage, they must do something courageous.*

Every element in these lessons is directed toward applying the information studied. Your positive attitude will assist learners in recognizing that they can *do* every part of the lesson and that the outcome will be beneficial to them.

## YOUR PERSONAL PREPARATION

1. Prayerfully and carefully work through each activity in every section of the lesson before the first day of class. Seek to understand what God is saying to you in each lesson. Ask Him to show you how to apply the lesson personally. This will enable you to guide others.
2. Build a supportive, personal relationship with each member of your group. Building relationships will encourage attendance and participation and will also help you understand the best way to support their spiritual growth. Interact with class participants by calling them by name, affirming their responses in class, speaking with them personally at each group meeting, and making phone calls, or sending Emails or cards. Be creative in finding ways to foster involvement and to show that you appreciate each member.
3. Mark in your lesson the time you will allot to each learning task. As the group leader, you are responsible to cover the learning tasks without a sense of being hurried. It might be helpful to decide in advance which tasks have the greatest priority for your group. The time you allot for each question is simply your way of planning the discussion. *Each* learning task is important, but you will learn which ones you can omit if time becomes an issue.
4. This PWOC study is designed for a group discussion and prayer in a 90 minute time frame. You will need to know your group members and decide what division of time works best for them. You can divide class time with 1 hour and 15 minutes for discussion and 15 minutes for prayer. If you see the need for more time in prayer, then you might want 1 hour for discussion, 30 minutes for prayer.

Be aware that the learning tasks in each lesson are designed to stimulate discussion. The techniques you learn will make that possible. It's easy to lose track of time, so allowing *at least* twenty minutes for the case study, the last section of the lesson, is very important.

*It isn't an exaggeration to say that GROUP LEARNING is the most important section for your class. Through solving the problem in the case study participants will understand how to integrate what they learn into their lives. Allow at least twenty minutes for this essential learning task. Twenty-five minutes is even better!*

## LEADING THE LESSON

1. Begin and end the lesson in the time you have established. When you are prompt, your group will make an effort to be on time. Set the precedent in your first meeting and maintain it.
2. Communicate that diversity in the group and the insights of every member are assets. Each person gains from a rich body of experience. Inform the class that you will regularly invite their participation since this is not a lecture based study.
3. Ask your group to refrain from negative comments about other churches and religions. These types of comments can alienate and divide the class. Remind students of the Learning Agreement in the COMBINED WISDOM section of the first lesson.
4. Encourage several responses to the activities: *Let's hear more ideas... Another thought... A different point of view...*
5. An essential principle that insures engagement of every member in your small group is this:

*Everyone will share when they are one of a pair discussing familiar information; almost everyone will share when they are in a small group of four; unless extroverted or extremely articulate, many find it difficult to share in a group of five or more.*

These lessons are designed for maximum participation, which is essential for group learning. You will be asked to break your large group into pairs or small groups of no more than four at various times in the lesson.

6. Use *lavish* affirmation whenever possible. It is often difficult for people to feel comfortable expressing their ideas and feelings about the Bible. What might seem lavish to you could be exactly the level of encouragement someone needs.
7. Find tactful ways to respond to an incorrect or inappropriate answer. You might counter it with a question: *Which verse has led you to this conclusion? What do others of you think about this?*

It's also possible to correct an answer that contains some truth by taking a part that is true and turning it around for further discussion in the group. *Jan sees the challenge contained in this Scripture. What do the rest of you think?* As the thoughts of the class come out, you can gently steer them toward truth.

8. Be encouraging when people resist change. This study is designed for personal and spiritual growth. It's natural to face resistance. Accept the feelings that are expressed as part of the growth process. Encourage people in their stage of development and accept their pace. *Marcia, we can see your struggle from what you have shared. Growth isn't easy. We'll be praying with you in this.*
9. Don't deviate from the lesson topic. Each lesson FOCUS contains the great truth in Scripture you will study. Each activity in the lesson will relate to this truth. Your class members will appreciate it when you keep the discussion to the lesson topic. Intervene quickly if someone changes the subject. *Tracy has introduced another topic. Perhaps we can discuss this further after we've finished the lesson. Let's return now to activity. . .*
10. Allow for silence in your discussion. Silence gives opportunity for reflection. Important insights require time to process; pauses in conversation are natural. A group can tolerate about 15 seconds of silence before someone will break the tension by speaking. In authentic learning, silence is as necessary as speech. Welcome silence as a sign that participants are considering what they are learning

The first lesson is an introduction. The format for the remaining lessons will be the same throughout. Usually the PERSONAL STUDY takes a little more time than the other sections. As you read through the descriptions of each section of the study, you will understand how each one is integral to the learning process.

Note the time designated for the section topics and stick with it. If you set a precedent of lingering over a segment too long, you may not complete the discussion and it won't take your group members very long to realize they need not complete the lesson.

### PREPARING THE GROUP TO PARTICIPATE

Here are some tips to prepare your students:

- Give class participants a welcoming call before the first meeting.
- Express enthusiasm for the study and for each student's participation.
- Explain the *Learning Group Agreement* (located in COMBINED WISDOM) in lesson 1.
- Always begin each lesson by forming pairs to do the learning activity.

For example: Let's say you allot ten minutes to the FOCUS section of the lesson. Ask students to form pairs and share their summaries. Give them five minutes for this activity. Mid-way through, tell them that half their time is up. This will allow the other person to share. After five minutes, ask who (a person or a pair) would like to share their summaries with the whole group.

Beginning with a pair, then allowing time to share in the large group establishes a level of participation and a pace that you will keep throughout your lesson. You can lead a very large group and have every learner engaged if you will regularly break into smaller groups. It takes only a few seconds to form pairs by turning to the person sitting beside you. However, staying in that same pair throughout the whole lesson defeats the purpose of encouraging relationships. Simply ask students to form *new* pairs the next time you use this technique.

As we explain each section of the lesson, you will see how important it will be to *use* this principle of pairing to insure that each person will be engaged in discussion. Engagement is a key element of adult learning. More talkative members of your group will easily adapt to this equitable and participatory method.

## LESSON DESIGN

Each section of the lesson has an important purpose.

### *F*ocus

The FOCUS introduces the *major truth* of the lesson; it will always be directly related to the title of the lesson. Members are instructed to mark what is of particular interest to them as they read the FOCUS. Adults learn what is *useful* to them and, typically, they will mark what assists them in discovering what they are ready to learn.

### *Q*uiet *T*ime for *F*ocus

The QUIET TIME FOR FOCUS enables members to identify where they stand in relationship to the topic presented in the FOCUS. With the exception of Lesson 1, the first learning activity in QUIET TIME FOR FOCUS asks the students to summarize the FOCUS. Divide into pairs to discuss their summations.

*By breaking into pairs, everyone in your group participates at the beginning of the lesson, therefore setting a precedent for equity in sharing and engagement in learning.*

*You might say, "You have had a chance to read the FOCUS and mark what was useful to you. Form pairs with a person next to you and answer the questions that follow. You will have an opportunity later to share your insights with the group."*

Give students time to talk about their summaries, and then close by asking if anyone would like to share their summaries in the large group. Wait quietly as people gather their thoughts and begin sharing. This practice promotes group cohesiveness. Avoid having them break up into additional pairs or groups of four without giving the members a chance to share with the whole group.

The second learning activity in QUIET TIME FOR FOCUS is more personal. It explores more deeply where each member stands in relationship to the subject of the lesson. It is an important and integral part of the lesson. Since it is personal, it would be unwise to call on anyone to answer these questions. Ask for volunteers and make it easy by pulling all the questions together.

*"Activity 2 helped you discover your personal experience with our lesson's subject. Who would like to share what they learned in doing it?" You can even start the sharing by saying, "For example, I discovered that..."*

### *P*ersonal *S*tudy

The PERSONAL STUDY section gives a Biblical understanding of the topic and a basis for the rest of the activities. This segment prepares the student for personal application. As you go through the lesson, be alert to appropriate times to break your group members into pairs, or groups of four if you are in a larger group. Mark these sections clearly before leading the lesson, giving each an estimated time. This practice allows you to stay on target with ample time for discussion. Break into smaller groups often enough that everyone stays engaged.

## Follow Through

The FOLLOW THROUGH section provides a guideline for members to integrate learning into their lives.

The PERSONAL STUDY has prepared the student for this application section. Sometimes participants might choose not to complete the FOLLOW THROUGH because they aren't accustomed to Bible studies that call for specific application.

Your attitude as a leader becomes important. Lead this section with confidence. As you make time to go through it, your group members will soon decide that this section is *useful* and it is something they *can* do. If your group resists it completely, pull that out as an item for discussion.

*"I can see that some of you are struggling to complete this section, let's talk about why we find this difficult."*

You may find it beneficial to break into small groups of four in the FOLLOW THROUGH. A pair would be awkward for any who aren't ready to share. And since this section contains personal learning activities, you might want to approach it this way:

*"These questions are of a personal nature and I won't be calling on anyone to answer them, but do share with us any answer you feel comfortable sharing or what you learned as you worked through this section."*

## Group Learning

The GROUP LEARNING section provides experience to transfer and apply what the student has learned into a contemporary context. The case study will expand the student's understanding of the lesson topic through the insights of other group members.

The case studies are crucial in learning the lesson topic. When the group members show ability to solve the problem(s), they can *do* the aspect of courage the lesson covers. Case studies should be near enough to be relevant and far enough away to be safe. Break up into pairs or groups of four so each person can be engaged in this important exercise.

## Pray for Each Other

Remember to pray for each other. You won't find this section heading in the individual lessons, but make it your priority to include prayer in each class. The uniqueness of each group will determine when its members are ready to pray together. Try using different forms for prayer. Some groups are ready to pray together in their first meeting, others may need to meet a few times before they are ready to pray aloud together. Get to know your group, and respect the process that is required for them to take the important step of engaging in corporate prayer.

## WEEKLY LESSON GUIDES

### Lesson 1

## *Of Skyscrapers and Courage*

Prior to class, telephone every woman in your group to create a sense of anticipation. Encourage them to complete their lesson before they come to class, with the exception of the GROUP LEARNING section.

The introductory lesson includes a warm up which takes extra time. Plan accordingly.

## SUGGESTED SCHEDULE

### WARM UP

20 minutes for a large group *if* the detailed instructions in the Leader's Guide are used

<b>FOCUS:</b>	8 minutes
<b>QUIET TIME FOR FOCUS:</b>	8 minutes
<b>PERSONAL STUDY:</b>	20 minutes using the instructions in the Leader's Guide
<b>FOLLOW THROUGH:</b>	8 minutes
<b>COMBINED WISDOM</b>	1 minute
<b>GROUP LEARNING:</b>	25 minutes
<b>CLOSING PRAYER</b>	5 minutes

## Warm UP

Before beginning the lesson give each person the opportunity to meet each other and get ready for the small group experience.

Notice that *italicized* verbs are used throughout the lesson. Each *italicized* verb represents for the learner what they are *to do* in the learning task.

*Adults learn by doing. Christian adults also have to be engaged if they are to learn to be a disciple.*

Begin by introducing yourself and expressing enthusiasm for the learning experience you will share together. Then read the instructions for the WARM UP task. Show the group *your* symbol and *briefly* explain it. You are modeling just what you are asking them to do. Ask if there are any questions.

After any necessary clarification, ask students to *form* a pair with someone beside them, *introduce* themselves and *share* their symbol and one aspect of their lives that would benefit from the application of courage. Give them five minutes for this task. Alert them after about 2 ½ minutes that if their partner hasn't shared yet, it's time to do so.

Ideally, no class should exceed fifteen. It's the principle of *engagement*. If you have twelve or fifteen people in your group, you can say after the five minutes: *"Now please briefly introduce yourself to the group and share your symbol. Who will be first?"*

If you have more than fifteen in the class, you cannot, in the interest of time, have everyone introduce themselves. Instead, you will need to say, *"Now let's see a sample of the symbols you have chosen. We have time for about five people to introduce themselves and share their symbols."*

*Always* give your adult learners a chance to decide for themselves when to share. Avoid going in a circle. *For adults, the learning is in the doing and deciding.* If they are accustomed to proceeding around the circle and start that way from habit, then after three or four people have responded, say, *"Let's hear from someone on the other side of the circle."*

Please notice this order. First, they share in a pair before they have an opportunity to share with the whole group. Since everyone will be engaged in their pair, you will have more spontaneous sharing when you sequence into the larger group.

- With a small group of twelve, this warm up will take about twenty minutes. Don't be alarmed by this; your group might need this time to become comfortable with each other. Begin by setting an energetic pace and keep it moving.

## Combined Wisdom

Each lesson has a COMBINED WISDOM section. The first lesson has a small group covenant agreement. The students will have read this before attending the class. If women are added to your group in subsequent weeks, point them to this section to read prior to their first class. This first lesson is the only time you will cover the COMBINED WISDOM in class. When addressing this section in the first lesson you might say something like this:

*"As you read over COMBINED WISDOM I hope you were encouraged to think about the contribution you will give to our group. The learning group agreement provides the guidelines that will ensure safe participation in our group. What are your questions or comments?"*

Subsequent lessons will have a focused prayer in COMBINED WISDOM that will prepare the student for GROUP TIME.

- This section should take less than a minute!

## Focus

The initial FOCUS, that God has given us a foundation of potential on which to build our lives, will be emphasized throughout the study. And as noted earlier, *adults only learn what is useful to them*. What is useful to one might be old news to another, and not clear yet to another. Thus, you will get many potential ideas from your group members from this section.

Because this FOCUS is so important, and you want everyone engaged, have the participants form pairs so everyone will share. The objective is *maximum* engagement.

## Quiet Time for Focus

Introduce this section by saying, *“What insights do you have from remembering your experiences of courage as a child?”*

- The Quiet Time for FOCUS will take about ten minutes. *Think brisk without rushing!*

## Personal Study

### 1. Consent and Spiritual Growth

- Cover this segment simply by saying, *“Who will share their significant insights from what they marked in 1 a.?”* Many people can share in five minutes or less.
- Form new pairs to complete this portion. The more you change your smaller groups, the quicker your small group members will bond with each other.
- Include the entire group in this section. Limit sharing to 2-3 minutes.
- Offer the entire group the opportunity to share.
- This question involves personal insights. Consider asking, *“Who would like to share insights they gained from describing their partnership with God?”*

- It will easily take you about 15 minutes to complete all five sections of this learning task.

### 2. DAVID DEVELOPS TRUST FOR DECISIVE ACTION

If time is short, you might consider eliminating 2a-c from your small group discussion. In the introductory lesson you are accomplishing two important objectives:

- 1) Initiating bonding among group members
- 2) Introducing the concepts of living courageously.

If you reach this learning task and are straining from lack of time, what you really need is an understanding of 2d to do the important case study. Question 2d would work well in a small group of four.

- Allot five minutes for this section. Yes, you will have to be *brisk without rushing!*

## Follow Through

Introduce this part like this: *“The FOLLOW THROUGH is highly personal. Who would like to share their experience with it this week?”*

- Allot only 5 minutes for this section.

## Group Learning

All previous discussion is leading to this activity. The case studies in [loggingontocourage.calm](http://loggingontocourage.calm) help learners *do* courage in a safe context. If they can solve Carol’s problems, they can apply principles from this lesson to God’s vision for their life.

- You will need about 25 minutes for this activity: 15 minutes in small group, 10 minutes to share discoveries with the whole group.

It is possible to have more than one correct answer. Combined wisdom will truly emerge in sharing.

Close with a brief prayer, thanking God for the group interaction and asking for each person to demonstrate courage in the week ahead.

## LESSON 2

### *Destination.calm*

Lesson two does not include a WARM UP or COMBINED WISDOM that you will need to cover in class. Lessons 3-6 will continue this format.

The students should arrive to class having done the week's homework. Keeping them engaged during class time will be motivation for private study since they will not want to miss out on interesting conversations. It's very hard to participate if you haven't done the study beforehand. You can encourage completion of the week's work through phone calls, cards, E-mail or even coffee dates.

#### SUGGESTED SCHEDULE

FOCUS	6 minutes
QUIET TIME FOR FOCUS	5 minutes
PERSONAL STUDY	Learning Tasks 1- 5: 8 minutes each
FOLLOW THROUGH	4 minutes
GROUP LEARNING	25 minutes
GROUP PRAYER	10 minutes

- Estimating minutes for each section alerts you to the necessity of insuring that enough time remains for the important GROUP LEARNING section.

Remember that this study emphasizes the importance of small groups. We are engaging learners by using methods that will enable them to *learn* how to be a disciple.

It's important to know the needs of your group. You can skip any of the PERSONAL STUDY learning tasks your group may not need if you're pressed for time. *Mark* any task you're considering omitting before the lesson, but also be sensitive to the direction the Holy Spirit during your class time.

Avoid having students "report" what they've studied. Instead, aim for meaningful conversation. To encourage conversation, don't appear rushed for time. Avoid comments like "we're running late" or "we're behind schedule." Know which learning tasks are important for your group and design your time accordingly. But, and this but is very important, *always give the case study at least 20 minutes!*

### *Quiet Time for Focus*

Have the class divide into pairs to discuss what was useful for them in the FOCUS. Remember that everyone will share in a pair. By beginning this way you are preparing the class to participate throughout the small group. Have students come back together and offer them the opportunity to share with the whole group if they like.

Reread the *Leader's Guide* for the FOCUS section in Lesson 1 to amplify your understanding of how to get the most from this important first learning task.

Questions *a.* and *b.* under EXPERIENCING HIS PEACE are personal. See Lesson 1, learning task 2 in QUIET TIME FOR FOCUS for instructions on how to handle this section. You can skip this part altogether if you used up too much time in SUMMARIZING THE FOCUS. The real advantage to this question is to prepare students for the PERSONAL STUDY.

### *Personal Study*

We've identified some questions of particular importance and not as an indication that the others should be skipped over entirely.

1. 1 a. Consider having at least three people share their descriptions since the scenes will be very different, depending on personality. This will be a fun exercise for your class.
2. 2 b. This question is a crucial component of this lesson. You might have the class break into small groups of three or four for this task. The students will have more freedom for discussion in the small group, thus enabling them to grasp the significance more easily.

3. 3 b. Have participants turn to the person beside them and share how Jesus would complete this sentence. Allow for sharing with the whole group.
  4. 4 a. You can move through this learning task rather quickly. Get as many quick answers as you can from 4a by setting an enthusiastic, brisk tone of voice as you introduce it.
- 4 c. This answer is important because it's an emotional response to these marvelous verses. Emotions move us to action!

Therefore, it's important for you to create an environment that allows for conversation among peers. The FOCUS, QUIET TIME FOR FOCUS, PERSONAL STUDY, and FOLLOW THROUGH sections of the lesson prepare students for the GROUP LEARNING, and for solving the problem presented in the case study.

Review Lesson 3 to determine how you can create an environment that encourages relaxed conversation. Knowing the needs of your students will help you determine how the suggested time line below might need to be adjusted for optimal learning.

### SUGGESTED SCHEDULE

FOCUS:	8 minutes
QUIET TIME FOR FOCUS:	5 minutes
PERSONAL STUDY:	35 minutes, with sections 1-5 taking about 7 minutes each
FOLLOW THROUGH:	4 minutes
GROUP LEARNING:	25 minutes
GROUP PRAYER:	10 minutes

### *Follow Through*

Allot only 5 minutes for this section. Introduce it with a comment like this: *"The FOLLOW THROUGH segment of the lesson is highly personal. Who would like to share their experience with it this week?"* If you think it wise to break up in small groups of four, then do so. A pair is too threatening for this work.

### *Group Learning*

This is your first case study relating to deployment. Be sure you allow time for this segment because it has immediate relevance to so many women. After 15 minutes, go over all the questions briefly as a large group, asking them to share the most important ideas their group discussed.

### LESSON 3

### *Courage through Relationship*

The lessons in this study are directed toward making disciples. So what does developing disciples look like in a group context? *Adults learn best from their peers.* Therefore, a great deal of learning will take place during class discussion time. Your group members will utilize their life experience and their insights from the PERSONAL STUDY to answer the questions. Then they will share their observations in the GROUP TIME.

### *Focus*

The student discovers in this lesson that courage comes through a relationship with God and through the impact of godly, affirming people. Remember to start the discussion by allowing participants to form pairs, thus engaging them in discussion from the start. Also, give them the opportunity to report back to the large group. To further encourage class interaction, ask students to form *new* pairs each time you use this technique.

- In order to have a relaxed conversation in five minutes, after two and a half minutes, announce, so everyone can hear, that they have only a couple more minutes to share. That will be their signal for the other person to share their summary. This is a non-threatening learning task, so it is fine for you to be this assertive.

## Quiet Time for Focus

Check the LEADER'S GUIDE notes for Lesson One for a review on how to lead this very personal section in a non-threatening way. If you are having trouble with time, you can even skip this portion because its value is that it prepares people for the PERSONAL STUDY. Just be sure to point out its importance first. This section helps the learner gauge how their personal lives line up with the Focus of the lesson.

## Personal Study

Decide which questions are most important for your group and make sure to cover them

## Follow Through

Again, review the notes on how to lead the FOLLOW THROUGH from Lesson One. It is imperative to take time for this section because if you don't, the students will be tempted not to do this at home. Perhaps the best way is to break them into small groups of four to share. In this case, four is safer than a pair.

## Group Learning

In this lesson we have another kind of deployment case study. You will need to allow about 25 minutes for this segment.

For the three remaining lesson, you can follow the detailed instructions in lessons 1-3, keeping in mind the following principles:

1. Time your lessons according to *your* group's need
2. *Always* begin with partner sharing for the Focus so each participant will be engaged.
3. Keep the personal questions safe by phrasing them in general terms. The Quiet Time for Focus and FOLLOW THROUGH are personal.

4. The PERSONAL STUDY prepares for the GROUP LEARNING, but some question could possibly be eliminated from group discussion if you run short on time.
5. *Always* allow appropriate time for GROUP LEARNING. Twenty minutes is the minimum; twenty five minutes is better.

## LESSON 4

### *Bravery Accompanied by Love*

This lesson emphasizes the importance of love in acting courageously. Not all courageous things done in God's name have been accompanied by love. The stakes are high in this lesson since our culture is rife today with religious discussion that is often not tempered with love. The story of Ruth stands in contrast for it shows the wooing love of God. We are also introduced to Ruth's love for God that was somehow birthed in a less-than-perfect Hebrew family, and also the love that God brought into her life through Boaz.

The case study is based on all-too-common events. Beneath all of the serious difficulty Leticia is facing, is a loving God who is inviting her to go deeper. Maintain an emphasis on God's love being the foundation where Leticia must begin.

## LESSON 5

### *The Clarity of Courage*

Clarity is hard for some women because it is not necessarily an accepted or appreciated virtue in women. It should be. Courage requires it. Look for the questions that will help your students think through the issues surrounding clarity – clearness of thought, emotion and action. In the Personal Study, 4d pulls out the four dimensions of clarity. Question 4e is an open question to which we do not have an answer. Be sure to cover it because it prepares your learners for the important case study.

The case study of Marissa involves the dilemma of rivaling religious beliefs. Encourage them to think through how Marissa might respond with clearness of thought, emotion and action.

## LESSON 6

### *Persevering Courage*

Intensify your communication with the students to insure they will attend this final, important lesson. This lesson focuses on Peter and his life. Peter persevered in his calling and matured in godly character. We are called to do the same. For that reason, we can find mutual encouragement in his story.

The case study on Pamela is more common than it should be for women of God. You could insert any character flaw — anger, fear, etc. — and have a version of the same story. The point is that we behave as we are taught unless we are intentional about changing. And we can change. Peter is our glorious example of that truth!

### *Bringing Closure*

To bring closure to this study, you might consider planning an activity in keeping with the personality of your group. For example a simple closing prayer of commitment to live a life of courage might work best for some groups, other might also want to share lunch or go out for coffee to end the time they've spent together. Use your creativity. You will be the best judge of what will be most effective for your group.

### NOTE FROM THE AUTHORS

Please let us know how this study has impacted lives, and any suggestions for improving this study. If you have questions concerning the adult learning and small group methods of leading [logginontocourage.calm](http://logginontocourage.calm), contact Becky Shirey at [couragestudy@aol.com](mailto:couragestudy@aol.com).