

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR COUPLES**  
**for**  
***STORIES OF FAITH AND COURAGE FROM THE HOME FRONT***

**Week 1 January 1: Home Front Pleas**

- What have you done to feel safe in your home?
- Discuss any experience of calling the police or petitioning anyone for protection?
- How does this letter compare to the plea of a poor widow in Luke 18:1-8?
- Unfair treatment led to Indian aggressions. When have you seen unfair treatment cause anger and escalating problems? How do you resolve disputes between yourselves to prevent escalating problems?

**Week 1 January 2: Letters Home, 1755**

- As a couple, how do you keep in touch with one another during separations?
- How do you keep other family members informed?
- What rumors have caused you to panic, especially about your spouse?
- When has God provided miraculous protection for you?

**Week 1 January 3: Missionary Insights**

- When have you had great hopes of bringing someone to Christ only to find them turning away?
- How do you respond when you see people, especially those who profess to be Christians, taking advantage of others?
- During a difficult time what has given you hope? How can Romans 12:12 encourage you to persist in hard times?
- What can you do to treat others fairly?

**Week 1 January 4: Queen Aliquippa, Lifetime Ally**

- Who are key people who impacted your life and left a great impression?

- What are you doing to be someone who truly reflects Christ?
- As a couple how can you be accountable to one another?
- Psalm 34:14 reminds us to pursue peace. How do you resolve conflicts and help others live at peace in your home?

### **Week 1 January 5: A Farmer's Cannon**

- Chambers made friends before purchasing land? As a couple what did you first do when you moved to your home?
- We cannot always live at peace if others choose to terrorize us. How does Zechariah 9:8 inspire you to be on the offense in protecting your family?
- Would your neighbors defend your rights? How do you help build strong neighborhood bonds?
- What legacy would you like to leave and how do you hope to be remembered?

### **Week 1 January 6: Mary Jemison's Captivity**

- If you have children, what precautions do you take for their safety? What have you taught them about ever being lost or kidnapped?
- Tragedy and death are part of life and leave their sting. How have you coped with the loss of loved ones or other traumas?
- What do you recall of your childhood and memories of being taught faith and prayers, such as the Lord's Prayer?
- What do you do to pass on your faith to children in your family?

### **Week 1 January 7: Seneca Indian Life**

- How are chores divided in your home?
- What would you like to simplify? How can you do that?
- How do your different heritage influence your life as a couple?
- The choice to fight in a war was not compulsive. What choices have you made from pressure? What choices have you made by choice to create harmony?

### **Week 2 January 8: Camp Followers**

- What choice would you make if you could accompany a spouse on a deployment to a war zone?
- How do you “follow” your spouse during a deployment or business travel?
- How can you give support to people on the home front while a spouse is deployed?
- How can you reach out to someone experiencing sorrow, especially the death of a soldier?

### **Week 2 January 9: Happier Endings**

- When have you doggedly persevered during a hardship? What helped you stay calm and focused?
- How do you respond when people try to pressure you or debate you to accept other beliefs?
- Have you enjoyed a reunion with friends or family? What made it special?
- What long-term prayer are you still hoping for God to answer? What helps you remain faithful and at peace?

### **Week 2 January 10: A Captive’s Choice**

- The rebellion and taking things into his own hands by James Smith is considered to be part of the reason we have the second amendment (the right to bear arms). What do you think about defending yourself? About guns?
- James used his knowledge to help the settlers and later became a missionary to the Indians. How does that show forgiveness and desire for unity of people?
- How has God used your past difficult experiences?
- James showed his grief for his first wife. What deaths have you grieved and how did those people impact your lives?

### **Week 2 January 11: Across the Miles**

- What letters or cards have you kept that your spouse sent and why?
- How do you address your spouse in writing? What endearments do you use for one another?

- How do you express love to one another? What romantic expressions or actions would you like?
- What do you do when you have been parted by travel or deployment?

### **Week 2 January 12: Captives Freed**

- What are you doing for POWs?
- What familiar songs or passages do you share that would keep you connected over time and distance? What's your song and verse as a couple?
- What are your most memorable emotional scenes?
- How do you prepare your children for possible disasters or separations?

### **Week 2 January 13: The Road to Peace**

- Are there disputes that you have been involved in where you were unkind? What can you do to make amends?
- What do you do to live at peace with neighbors? With people who have very different beliefs?
- What does tolerance mean to you and what's the difference between acceptance and accommodation?
- Ludwig started witnessing with learning the native languages to show respect and communicate in their comfort zone. How do you approach witnessing to someone?

### **Week 2 January 14: Life on the Edge**

- Cabin life was simple. How can you simplify your life?
- Frontier life meant relying on trust in God. How have you partnered with God to build your home?
- What role do military chaplains play now and how can you support them?
- Military chaplains minister to people of many faiths. How can you minister to neighbors with different faiths?

### **Week 3 January 15: On the Death of Mister Christopher Snider**

- What events have marked your life as turning points? Have you responded by journaling or writing about the event?
- Is there a death that has greatly impacted you personally or politically?
- Are you swayed emotionally in a group, such as happens in a mob or flash mob?
- Have you ever felt you wanted revenge? What have you done to give those emotions to God?

### **Week 3 January 16: Gathering of Patriots**

- Is your home a place where people can drop in and voice their thoughts freely?
- How have you ever been involved in political meeting or rally?
- Have you encouraged each other's gift such as John Adams did for Mercy?
- Why is communication of ideas so important? How do we communicate our ideas with others?

### **Week 3 January 17: Play on Words**

- What shows have you viewed and realized were pushing a political agenda? How do you react to politics mixed with entertainment?
- How does the use of humor help people discuss politics or other tough subjects? As a couple how do you use humor? How did Christ use humor?
- Hope is seen in the closing words that the country will again revive. When have you seen hope in spite of political circumstances or war?
- The play reminded people of the blood and fighting in war, and yet the author would smile to see her country bleed. Consider Romans 8:28 and discuss when pain has brought something good.

### **Week 3 January 18: Brewing More than Tea**

- What groups are you involved in and why?

- Attitude played an important role for the women in supporting the revolution and the boycotts. How do you adjust your attitude to circumstances in your life?
- Creativity helped the women accept changes in life. How have you creatively responded to circumstances?
- What hand skills do you possess?

**Week 3 January 19: Tempest in a Teapot**

- Do you put one another down at times, as Tennent put down women?
- What causes are you passionate about? What are you doing about them?
- How can we respond to mobs? To bullies?
- When has a conflict escalated between you? How do you apply wisdom and the understanding of your heart to settle disputes?

**Week 3 January 20: Loyalist Conflicts**

- When have you been on opposite sides of an issue? How did you resolve it or agree to have different views?
- What is your view of obeying laws?
- What sermons have you heard lately that supported a political view?
- The war split the church. What struggles have you seen split a church or group of friends?

**Week 3 January 21: Colonial teas**

- How often do you sit as a couple over a drink of some type to relax and chat?
- How important is it for women to have friends? For men?
- What refreshments do you serve people in your home and why?
- How have email and social networks replaced people getting together? What are the advantages and disadvantages?

**Week 4 January 22: United in Love**

- What do you do to prepare for any separations?

- What are your impressions of heaven?
- How have you felt when you received a written expression of love from your spouse?
- Have you ever talked about the possibility that one of you could die and how that would impact life?

#### **Week 4 January 23: Divided Families**

- How do you stay close when you have different opinions in major categories (child-rearing, politics, theology)?
- How can you show love when you don't agree with choices made by family members (affairs, divorce, spending habits)?
- What words of your spouse do you always remember? How do the words inspire you?
- Have you ever had to distance yourself from someone because of choices made or to avoid evil?

#### **Week 4 January 24: Courageous Women**

- Write a statement of your faith and reason to belong to your church. Compare them.
- Betsey recycled well. What have you spent time repairing or recycling?
- What can you motivate yourself to be courageous in dangerous situations?
- How do you respond to someone who is being disloyal?

#### **Week 4 January 25: Petticoat Junction**

- How do you differentiate between rumors and information that should be shared?
- Where do you keep important papers and why?
- Identities and information are stolen too often. How do you protect your identity?
- What have you served as a courier of important information?

#### **Week 4 January 26: Sybil's Midnight Ride**

- What is the most courageous thing you have done?
- Do you have any special codes or ways to signal one another?

- How do you keep your loved ones as a priority in life?
- How do you show your patriotism? Your loyalty to God?

#### **Week 4 January 27: Neutrality Not an Option**

- Have you ever been falsely accused, even of something minor like eating the last piece of cake? How did you react?
- How have you come to someone's defense or supported someone in a struggle?
- When have you persevered in prayer and hope? What happened?
- Where do you turn when you need help (or an advocate)?

#### **Week 4 January 28: Petticoats and Colonial Dress**

- How much do you spend on clothing?
- What do you do with old clothes?
- How are you each clothed with strength or dignity as the woman in Proverbs 31:25?
- What outfits do you like best on your spouse and why?

#### **Week 5 January 29: Published Hopes**

- When has a newspaper article encouraged you?
- When have you noticed a newspaper slant that tries to sway people to a certain political view?
- How have you used words to persuade people?
- What do you like to read and discuss together? What writing has impacted your shared faith?

#### **Week 5 January 30: Eye Witnesses**

- What have you found interesting in this book that comes from primary sources? What's the value of eyewitness information?
- What parallels do you find in the eyewitness accounts in the Bible, such as the accounts of the crucifixion?

- What impressions do you recall from childhood and how did they impact your life?
- What do you do to give your children lasting impressions?

### **Week 5 January 31: Freedom of the Press**

- When is a lawsuit valid and when is it frivolous?
- How do you view judicial power verse the power of the legislative branch of government?
- Does government work as our founding fathers hoped?
- How has the Internet helped keep freedom of reporting information and how has it caused problems (such as misinformation and urban legends)?

### **Week 5 February 1: Music That Stirs the Heart**

- What is your song as a couple and why? Does it still move you?
- Today's verse encourages people to dwell on positive thoughts and truth. How do you discern truth and what helps you dwell on the positive?
- What music lifts your spirits and why?
- How do you respond to military marching music or patriotic music?

### **Week 5 February 2: Camp Women**

- Women now serve in many capacities in the military. What are your views on women in the military?
- How do you support military families in your area, especially enlisted ones who have less money?
- What women are looked down by society today and how can your church reach out to their needs and give them dignity?
- As a couple how do you model good relationship in marriage?

### **Week 5 February 3: Sounds of Freedom**

- When did you last read our founding documents and how do you feel when you reflect on the struggle for independence?

- What family traditions do you follow in celebrating the 4<sup>th</sup> of July?
- How do you think Abigail Adams would respond to our country now and why?
- How do you exercise your freedom as a couple?

#### **Week 5 February 4: Papers, Women, and Publications**

- How has freedom for women impacted life, careers, and families?
- Technology has made life easier but busier. How do you view the advances of technology and its impact on your life and relationship?
- How do you use computers, email, and texting to communicate with one another and record your thoughts? Is it helpful or does it keep you from having deeper conversations?
- What are your favorite publications and why?

#### **Week 6 February 5: War Orphans**

- What have you done to support children who have lost a parent in war? Or children who have parents in prison?
- How have you comforted someone who is grieving?
- What do you do if one of you must face danger? How do you help your children cope and how do you stay connected?
- What provisions (will, trust fund, etc) have you made in the event that one of you died?

#### **Week 6 February 6: Bread and Clothes for Soldiers**

- Have you sent care packages to a soldier? Why or why not?
- What needs do you think soldiers have that letters and packages can help?
- What hand skills/talents do you possess and how do you use them to help others?
- When do you go through your possessions and give some away?

#### **Week 5 February 7: Supply Shortages**

- Have you ever struggled with shortages or financial difficulties, such as job loss or after a hurricane? How did such times help you appreciate what you have?

- Who has been an example of generosity in your life and what have you observed of that person? Have you seen Psalm 112:5 take place for that person (good coming to generous people)?
- Are you unselfish to one another? How can you improve if needed?
- How do you feel and respond when someone is generous to you? Do you have problems expressing thanks or accepting help?

### **Week 6 February 8: Supporting Politicians**

- How do you exercise your right to vote and to contact politicians with your views? How informed are you before elections?
- What do you do to serve your country and honor people in office?
- Have you attended political rallies? If so, why and when?
- How much do you know about how laws are passed and implemented? How do you follow lawmaking?

### **Week 6 February 9: Supporting Soldier's Families**

- What military families do you know? Consider a way to express thanks for serving our country and do something to add joy to their life.
- How can you pray for soldiers and their families?
- Have do you promote unity in your community?
- How do you support your spouse on a daily basis?

### **Week 6 February 10: Women Defenders**

- What courage have you seen women demonstrate?
- How willing are you to put your country before your home and things?
- What gives you strength when faced with a sacrificial choice?
- What courageous women do you know and what o you admire about them?

### **Week 6 February 11: Colonial Breads**

- What are your favorite types of bread?
- Have you made bread as a couple? If not, try it. If so, discuss the experience.
- How is communion done at your church and what does it mean to you?
- When have you shared bread or helped out at a homeless shelter? How was the experience?

#### **Week 7 February 12: Sufficiently Scared**

- Sally wrote the journal to recall details to share with her close friend. What have you done to keep your spouse informed about events and circumstances he or she didn't share with you?
- When have you been sufficiently scared?
- How have decisions of leaders impacted your lives?
- What is your response if someone wants to be pushy or take advantage of what you own?

#### **Week 7 February 13: Battle on Home Territory**

- Ann liked her herb garden, James liked fishing on his land...what do you each like to do at home?
- What crisis have you faced together and how did it impact your relationship?
- What political or community problems are impacting your lives?
- How can you help one another remain steadfast or calm during a crisis?

#### **Week 7 February 14: A Ministering Angel**

- How has your faith helped you remain calm during difficult times or a crisis?
- What experiences have shaped your compassion?
- How have you responded to wounded people (emotionally or physically wounded)?
- Ann's life revolved around her family, the farm, and her faith. Where do you both spend your time and focus your efforts?

#### **Week 7 February 15: The Aftermath**

- Fights, even disagreements, leave wounds, often deep in our hearts. How do you reach out with healing words or actions after fighting?

- Today's wars are not on the homefront, yet many families face damages from domestic battles, natural disasters, and the ravages of drugs and abuse. Other times we face brokenness in relationships that need tender care to restore. When have you worked at restoration of a house or relationship?
- How do you work as a couple to maintain your home or make needed repairs? Do you work with all your heart as the people in Nehemiah 4:6?
- How does your church community support families and needy in the community? How are you involved in lending support?

### **Week 7 February 16: Battles Within The Faith**

- John Cooper tried to make peace through government. Have you actively worked at change through government or other actions?
- What clashes have you faced within your church? How have you handled the differences?
- Would you be willing to stand together for your beliefs even if it meant suffering loss of property or abuse? What would help you decide and stick to your decision?
- What past circumstances have caused divisions in your relationships and how have you responded?

### **Week 7 February 17: Close to the Battle**

- What do you do to make people feel welcomed in your home?
- Have can you show appreciation to a military family or soldier?
- We can get wrapped up in our own lives and forget about the pain of challenges others face. How can you make sure you take time to listen to others and their struggles?
- As a couple how can you extend a spirit of hospitality to people around you?

### **Week 7 February 18: Colonial Herb Gardens**

- Do you have a garden or plants? Do you take time to enjoy nature?
- What herbs and spices do you enjoy in foods?
- How do you help your spouse when he or she is not feeling well?

- How have you ministered to other people who are sick?

### **Week 8 February 19: Fundraising**

- What have you done to raise money for a cause? What causes do you support?
- How have you supported military members and families?
- When have you reaped from what you sowed?
- Look up the acts of Esther (book of Esther), Judith (Apocrypha book), or Deborah (Judges). How did these women show courage?

### **Week 8 February 20: Nimble Fingers**

- Read Psalm 90:17 and discuss how God blesses people who use their hands for good.
- What handiwork skills have you each developed and how do you use them?
- George Washington, a very busy man, took time to express appreciation and gratitude to people. Write some notes today to thank people who have blessed your lives.
- George Washington used a gracious tone and diplomatically asked the women for shirts instead of cash for soldiers. Examine his words to find new ways to discuss differences and ask one another to make changes.

### **Week 8 February 21: Espionage**

- When have you employed eavesdropping or spy techniques for good (perhaps in keeping a watchful eye on children)?
- What do you do to protect your sensitive information and protect against identity theft?
- Couples often develop coded ways of signaling one another with looks or gestures. What do you use and when?
- What would you do if you suspected someone of terrorism or suspected a friend's teen of using drugs?

### **Week 8 February 22: Home Front Challenges**

- When have either of you been burdened with doing more than your share of work? How does love and loyalty help you persevere while working so hard?
- What brings comfort during difficult times (not simply platitudes but real comfort)?
- At that time some people were afraid of the vaccination for small pox, yet more afraid of the disease. Today people debate about using some vaccinations. What are the pros and cons?
- What have you done to comfort suffering people?

### **Week 8 February 23: Loyalist Molly Brant**

- A loyalist to one person can be a traitor to another. Discuss when it has been hard to choose sides on an issue and how you chose?
- Molly displayed great loyalty to her husband. How do you show your loyalty for each other?
- A parent can show loyalty to the other with their children, such as correcting a child for talking back to the other parent and reminding the child that you love that person and want to see the person honored. How have you done this?
- How do you influence others and how wide is your sphere of influence?

### **Week 8 February 24: A Persistent Mother**

- Describe memories of your mother supporting you and how her support influenced your life.
- When have you labored to support a loved one?
- Kerenhappuch didn't seek fame but spent her time loving her family and extending help to others. How do you put others first in your lives?
- Supportive couples are the heart of a family. How do you honor your parents and support your family?

### **Week 8 February 25: Colonial Farming**

- Washington, a passionate farmer, continually studied his trade. How do you study/improve in your work?
- How has modern technology made life easier? How has it complicated your lives?

- All members of families worked together in farming and many still do. When have you worked together as a family and how does it build unity or cause factions?
- George Washington developed a concern for ecology and replenishing the soil. What do you do to help the environment?

**Week 9 February 26: A Woman Saves an Army**

- Timing can be critical. Discuss God's perfect timing of prayer answers in your life.
- When has a delay been a blessing for you?
- We don't always know the significance of a single action or decision or how God will use us each day, but God does. How can you listen as a couple and respond to God's direction each day?
- The continental army took the road less traveled. When have you chosen a road less traveled and how did that turn out?

**Week 9 February 27 Black-Eyed Rebel**

- God uses willing people, regardless of age. How have you encouraged young people to live significantly?
- The American Revolution inspired creative thinking. What inspires you to think creatively?
- What have you learned from children?
- When have you rebelled from people around you for your beliefs?

**Week 9 February 28: A Basket Case**

- Discuss baskets used to save people in the Bible (Exodus 2:3-5, Acts 9:24-26)
- Today worldwide there are twice the number of slaves than the entire 350 years of the slave trade in early America. How are people helping such people to escape and what can you do?
- POWs are consequence of war. What can you do to support families of POWs?
- Pensions help people face their later years. What do you do to plan for retirement years?

### **Week 9 March 1 The General Morale**

- When have you felt God encourage you to give to someone and then seen how much it inspired the person?
- How can words of encouragement inspire others and how do you use words to encourage one another?
- General Green felt comfortable sharing his discouragement with a friend who listened well. How can you improve your listening skills and encourage someone who is discouraged to share his or her burden?
- As a couple how do you encourage one another?

### **Week 9 March 2: Fulfilling a Dying Wish**

- Why is something like *Make a Wish Foundation* Good? What can you do to help a friend with a dying loved one?
- Anna invested years of love in her uncle's family after his death. What do you admire about Anna and how can you develop similar selfless virtues?
- How have you supported a widow or orphan?
- Anna continued on even though she didn't know what happened to her fiancé. How do you persevere when you face unknown situations and uncertainty about the life of a loved one?

### **Week 9 March 3: Family Sacrifices**

- How do you build family unity as a couple and then with other family members?
- When do you spend time planning activities together that nurture unity? What makes each of you feel more united?
- What does a person entering the military sacrifice today?
- Does your family have an escape plan for fire and emergencies? Discuss such plans.

### **Week 9 March 4: Simple Pleasures**

- Pleasure relieves stress. What do you do as a couple that's fun?
- When have you combined fun with helping others, as did Dr. Read?

- Music has always been part of social entertainment. What music do you enjoy together?
- What were your favorite childhood toys? Share memories of playing as a child.

### **Week 10 March 5: News of Peace**

- When have you heard news of a peaceful settlement and how did you react?
- How do you celebrate peace at home after a dispute?
- What does freedom mean to you and how do you celebrate the 4<sup>th</sup> of July?
- When have you prayed together for peace or joined in a church service for peace?

### **Week 10 March 6: Responding to Needs**

- What have been the most courageous actions you have done for your children or one another's safety?
- Family loyalty is a great legacy and inspires the next generation to succeed. What families have you known that influenced their children to live victorious lives?
- When have you negotiated or advocated on behalf of a loved one?
- What are you willing to sacrifice for one another? For your children?

### **Week 10 March 7: Ruined**

- Rape still impacts lives negatively. What can you do to support a rape victim?
- How can you show respect to all women and thus raise the dignity of women?
- Movies and television shows filled with sex and violence demean women. What can you do to counter such cultural influence?
- The grief-stricken girl in Connecticut showed low self-esteem as a victim of rape. What can you do to make each person you encounter feel valued?

### **Week 10 March 8: Consequences of Betrayal**

- The Arnolds faced shunning from former friends after their betrayal. Benedict never received a trusted position in the British government. In effect their greed hurt themselves. How do we cause our own problems with wrong intentions?

- When have you felt betrayed and how did you respond?
- When have you disappointed someone, not kept a confidence, or betrayed someone? How did you reconcile or repent?
- What steps do you take to consider your motives and the consequences when making choices?

#### **Week 10 March 9: Changing Views of Women**

- What are your views about women's roles and why?
- How did Christ treat women? Talk to them?
- How do you celebrate your differences as a man and woman? Are there times you react with a stereotyped response?
- What positive and negative impact do you see in society from women's liberation efforts?

#### **Week 10 March 10: Worthwhile Sacrifices**

- John Adams believed the sacrifices worth the effort. When have you made a sacrifice that was worth it?
- Mrs. Adams echoed her husband's view and added that she would have sacrificed more for the outcome if needed. How do you respond to sacrificing time, money, and effort for a cause you support?
- What are you giving up to help others enjoy freedom?
- Abigail did have regrets about lack of freedom for women and even slavery. What do you regret that has not been done for social justice? What can you do to bring more freedom to others?

#### **Week 10 March 11: A Thankful Nation**

- Why is it important to thank God for our blessings and successful outcomes of our own efforts?
- What sermons about gratitude for our country have impacted you and why?
- How do you cultivate an attitude of gratitude?

- Our country has people with divergent political views. What do we share in values and how can we come together to celebrate our freedom?

### **Week 11 March 12: Trouble Makers**

- How do you respond to various troublemakers (bullies, gossipers, agitators)?
- Newspapers added fuel to people's anger toward the British. How do papers today use the pen to stir emotions and agitate situations?
- How can you know news is fair or balanced?
- Proverbs 6:14 is a reminder that deceit and trouble begins in the heart. How can you guard your heart from evil desires?

### **Week 11 March 13: Bad impressions**

- The British government sanctioned impressments and believed anyone born British always remained British. Our country is arguing about citizenship of people who sneak across the borders to give birth here for US citizenship. How do you react to our laws of citizenship?
- How do you react to government laws that go against your faith?
- What can you do for families that suffer from a member's kidnapping?
- What safety procedures do you have to protect your family against kidnapping?

### **Week 11 March 14: Prayer and the Great Divide**

- When is war justified? When is it not?
- When have you used or noticed someone using Scripture for their own advantage?
- How is our nation divided now? What can be done to bring citizens together?
- Politics added to the division in 1812. How do politics continue to divide people?

### **Week 11: March 15: Unrest**

- How have you reacted to riots or news of riots or flash mobs?
- How do you react to peaceful demonstrations?

- How do you voice disagreements with your spouse? Do you ever sulk, throw a tantrum, or have angry outbursts?
- Discuss peaceful steps to resolve conflicts.

**Week 11 March 16: Harmonizing**

- When have you worked in harmony in a group? How did you feel about the results?
- How does your family harmonize? What improvements can you make?
- What can you do to encourage your government to work with its citizens?
- How can you foster harmony within your church?

**Week 11 March 17: A Couple's Struggles**

- What have you battled outside forces as a couple?
- How do you encourage one another during tough times?
- What do you do when you are apart to stay united?
- Family support and receiving a miraculous gift of some possessions must have greatly lifted the Healds' spirits. What has God done in your lives to lift your spirits during a hard time?

**Week 11 March 18: The White House Enters Society**

- How do you make guests feel comfortable?
- What do you do to help people with divergent views discuss things peacefully?
- Have you ever hosted foreigners? If so, how did the experience impact you?
- When has a social setting help you get along with people who have opposing views?

**Week 12: March 19: Prisoner of War Letter**

- When has the unknown safety of someone worried you? How did you handle it?
- Gardner found good within his situation. When have you?
- What would keep your love going if you were separated long term with no communication?
- When have you received a letter or email from a long lost friend? How did you react?

**Week 12 March 20: Women in Military Camps**

- Can you, like Lydia Bacon, say you have no regrets about your loyalty to your spouse?  
What helps you live without regrets
- How have struggles strengthened your bonds?
- How do you know your attachment is real or based on fantasy or dreams?
- When have you felt gratefulness to God over the safety of your spouse?

**Week 12 March 21: Heroines**

- Who has been a hero or heroine in your life?
- What heroines in history do you admire and why?
- How do you practice putting others first?
- When have you advocated for an elderly or needy person?

**Week 12 March 22: Precious Papers**

- Dolly set a fashion style in her day but didn't save any of her prized dresses or jewels. If you had to escape fast what would you take?
- Dolly's hunt for a second wagon focused on saving more important papers. How do you keep your documents safe?
- Dolly also faced the anxiety of her husband's safety. When have you anxiously looked for a spouse to arrive home safely? Have you thanked God for the safe arrival?
- Have you read the precious founding documents of our country? Have you read the precious documents of our faith-the Bible?

**Week 12 March 23: Stitches That Counted**

- When have you done something with your hands to foster patriotism?
- What does the flag mean to you?
- How do you make your faith visible?
- What activities do you do that really matter and why?

**Week 12 March 24: Francis Scott Key's More Important Battle**

- What led you to believe in Jesus?
- How do you live what you profess? Is it evident to others?
- Have you mentored someone who struggled with their faith because of secular arguments or persuasions from others? If so, what happened?
- How have you seen evidence of God's existence in nature?

**Week 12 March 25: Christmas in 1814**

- The mix of real joy over peace and commercialism of St Nicholas, gifts, and fancy foods is not new. How do you balance the two?
- What Christmas traditions do you enjoy?
- How do you send Christmas greetings?
- When have you not received good news until later? Did you continue a fight while waiting for the news?

**Week 13 March 26: War's Roller Coaster Emotions**

- When have you had a roller coaster of emotions? How did your spouse react?
- How has someone's bravery given you hope?
- What leaders have you admired?
- What leadership qualities do you admire in your spouse?

**Week 13 March 27: African Americans in 1812**

- When has someone broken a promise? Or not lived up to a contract? How did you feel?
- Have you been the victim or discrimination, or reverse discrimination? How does it make you treat others?
- We often judge by appearances. When have you wrongly judged someone by outward looks?
- When have you broken a promise and what did you do to make amends?

**Week 13 March 28: Privateering**

- The British used blockades to control shipping. How do people and nations use boycotts? Are they effective?
- Have you ever boycotted a product? If so, what and why?
- How do you act honorably and make sure you don't take advantage of the poor or needy?
- Have you ever sailed? If so, describe the experience. If not, talk about why not and if you'd like to try it.

**Week 13 March 29: Military Legacy**

- Do you know military families that have continued the legacy of serving our country? What impresses you about such families?
- In the past, moving included great physical difficulties. Even now, a move can be hard physically as well as emotionally. Share experiences of past moves.
- Would you want your children to serve in the military? Why or why not?
- Military children often gain a wide experience and meet interesting, and sometimes famous, people. Who do you know that grew up in a military family and what experiences have they shared?

**Week 13 March 30: Tricks That Saved Lives**

- Peter and Paul's friends hid them in baskets to save their lives. Rahab hid two spies to save them and lied to men looking to kill the spies. When is deceit justified, if ever?
- What have you done to keep thieves from attempting to break in??
- When have you used your imagination to keep someone safe?
- How can a group effort help in times of danger?

**Week 13 March 31: Facing New Challenges**

- How has a past challenge helped you grow or caused you to make changes?
- What changes have you seen in your lifetime that came from technology developed for war?
- How do you work as a team at finances and challenges of careers?

- What preparations have you made in case one spouse had to stop working or was away a long time for business/career?

### **Week 13 April 1: Shipbuilding and Ships**

- What impresses you about large ships and a naval fleet?
- What do you think of women serving on military ships?
- How do you think moving factories to underdeveloped countries has impacted our country and economy?
- How have you seen people reacting to circumstances, such as job loss, changes in economy, and modern war?

### **Week 14 April 2: “Be Our Friend”**

- The writer of the letter assumed her oppressors weren't Christians because of the way they treated the Cherokee Indians. Have you ever been surprised to learn that someone was a Christian after observing ungodly behavior?
- Think about your actions this past week. If someone didn't know that Christ was your Savior, would they have been able to guess it based on their observations of you?
- The Cherokee woman said she would rather die than go back to the darkness of living without Christ in a godless environment. If you were in her shoes, would you feel the same way? Why or why not?
- Psalm 82:3 tells us to defend the weak and oppressed. What is in your power to do that will help the cause of others less fortunate than you?

### **Week 14 April 3: Principles of Action**

- How do you feel when you think about how the U.S. government took land from the American Indians?
- Rather than trying to avoid personal suffering, what did Elizur Butler hope the Lord would do for him? (See the last line of his letter.) Is his attitude common among us today?
- If not, what is a more typical reaction to the threat of pain and suffering?

- Butler and other missionaries marched on the Trail of Tears even though they weren't required to. When has someone else walked alongside you in your own painful journey? Have you done this for anyone else?

#### **Week 14 April 4: Spirit Lake Massacre**

- If you had gone through what thirteen-year-old Abbie Gardner did, how do you think you would have coped with such tragic loss and gruesome memories?
- Would your view of God change from that experience, or just your view of mankind?
- Recalling the scene when she was led away from the scene, she wrote: "neither the gloom of the forest, nor the blackness of the night, nor both combined, could begin to symbolize the darkness of my terror-stricken heart." Have you ever been in a place in your life that felt darker than the blackest night?
- Job 13:15a says, "Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him." When you go through your own trials, are you able to still hope in God?

#### **Week 14 April 5: Supernatural Forgiveness**

- What impressed you more—the fact that Abbie Gardner forgave Inkpaduta and the Sioux people and became an advocate for their culture, or the fact that Inkpaduta's descendents worshiped the Lord in a Presbyterian church service?
- Are you just as impressed, less or more so, that while we were still sinners, and therefore the "enemy" of God, He forgave us and sacrificed His Son on the cross?
- Have you struggled with forgiving someone in the past?
- How were you able to forgive? How did it feel when you did?

#### **Week 14 April 6: April Blizzard**

- When have you felt blindsided by a storm you weren't expecting in your life?
- Did you feel isolated from help and resources, as Elizabeth Custer did?
- During the blizzard, "every minute seemed a day, every hour a year," to Elizabeth. Do your trials also seem endless, or can you tell yourself it's only temporary, that "this too shall pass"?

- After the storm, the Custers learned that help was near, even though they couldn't see it. Have you had a similar experience in your life where you felt alone, but soon found a supportive community? Or can you now see that God was near, even if you couldn't see or hear Him working at the time?

#### **Week 14 April 7: "Nearer My God to Thee"**

- In her memoir, Elizabeth Custer said that even though the Dakota winters were long and bitter, she would crush the first signs of spring—tender flowers pushing up through the dirt—with the heel of her boot, because it meant the men would soon leave on campaigns against the Indians. She would rather have lived through eternal winter together with her husband than watch him leave for battle. What seemingly good things would you willingly go without if it meant being together with your spouse?
- On June 25, 1876, Elizabeth and other soldiers' wives sought solace in classic hymns. What hymns, songs, or Bible verses bring you comfort in times of uncertainty and fear?
- The hymn that evoked the most emotion among the women was *Nearer my God to Thee*. The refrain says:

*Nearer, my God, to Thee, nearer to Thee!*

*E'en though it be a cross that raiseth me,*

*Still all my song shall be, nearer, my God, to Thee.*

- Have you come to the point in your life yet where you can sincerely say those lines? In other words, do you really want to draw closer to God, even though He may use a trial to do that?
- Read Psalm 23:4. What is the light that casts the shadow in the valley of death? What does that tell us?

#### **Week 15 April 8: Protective Boundaries**

- How have you felt confined in your life?
- Where the boundaries ultimately helpful or harmful to you?
- Which of God's rules are most difficult for you to abide to by? What happens when you break them?
- Can you think of a time when you have seen someone break through the boundaries the Bible gives us, only to find themselves in dangerous territory? What happened?

### **Week 15 April 9: Remembering the Alamo**

- Susanna Dickinson was the bearer of bad news. Have you been in this position before? What happened?
- What has been the worst, or the most surprising news someone ever told you? How did you react?
- Read Habakkuk 3:16-18. How would you rephrase verses 17-18 to fit your own life? (For example, “Though the paycheck does not come in and there is no work to be found...” or “Though our children are still sick and the doctors have no solutions... yet will I praise the Lord.”)
- Now read verse 19. Where do you find your strength?

### **Week 15 April 10: Narrow Escape**

- Have you ever felt as though you were under attack before? What was the situation?
- Likewise, have you ever felt as though you were used as a shield, as Juana was? In other words, stuck in the middle of a conflict that may not have even involved you? What happened?
- Juana’s life was ultimately saved by an enemy. How has God surprised you with a creative solution for a problem?
- When was the last time you were part of God’s creative solution for someone else, that you are aware of?

### **Week 15 April 11: The View from Dallas**

- When was the last time you were in a situation in which panic prevailed? What caused it? What was the outcome?
- Share a time when you have felt defenseless and out of control. How did that situation resolve?
- The Texans asked, “What shall we do to be saved?” because they felt powerless and helpless to help themselves. When you feel that way, where do you turn?
- If someone asked you “What shall I do to be saved?” how would you respond?

**Week 15 April 12: The Angel of Goliad**

- Francita Alvarez acted as a Good Samaritan, tending the physical needs of her husband's enemies. Has anyone ever been a Good Samaritan for you?
- Francita could have considered the fate of the Texans a lost cause. What causes are you willing to fight for that might be considered as "lost causes" by others?
- She couldn't save everyone during the Goliad Massacre, and she struggled with guilt for that, even though it was out of her control and she did all she could. Is there anything you struggle over, even though you've done what you could about it?
- Dr. Barnard said God used Francita for good, even though she was technically on the opposing side. When have you seen God use someone for good who may not have been on "your" side—at least, not officially?

**Week 15 April 13: The Runaway Scrape**

- When the Alamo fell, ordering a retreat was the right thing for General Houston to do. When has a "retreat" been the right thing for you to do in your own life?
- Has there ever been a time when you felt forced to flee your home?
- Has there ever been a time when you had to run away from dangerous relationships in your life?
- When have you been surprised by chivalry or the lack of it?

**Week 15 April 14: Rebuilding a Life**

- Have you ever had to rebuild your life after either physical or emotional damage?
- Margaret had to do things she never had dreamed she'd be able to before the Runaway Scrape. What have you learned to do that surprised you?
- Margaret also asked for help when she needed it. Are you comfortable asking for help? Why or why not?
- Who do you call when you need reinforcements?

**Week 15 April 15: What to Expect from Texas**

- If you had to move but couldn't bring more than half of your household goods with you, what would you leave behind?

- What would you consider indispensable and bring with you?
- Read Matthew 6:19-20. How does one go about storing up treasures in heaven?
- What is the difference between owning possessions and allowing them to own you?

#### **Week 16 April 16: In Love and War**

- In what ways does “absence make the heart grow fonder”?
- On the contrary, how true is it that when something is “out of sight,” it’s “out of mind”?
- When you and your spouse are separated physically, how do you stay close emotionally?
- Do you think that email changes the way we communicate from when we only had postal letters? How?

#### **Week 16 April 17: A Marriage Worth Waiting For**

- Did you face any objections from family during your “courtship”?
- Grant offered to give up his career in the military for Julia’s hand in marriage. Do you think it’s critical for couples to love each other’s professions as much as they love each other? Why or why not?
- Julia’s father said that at eighteen years old, she was too young to be married. How would you measure whether someone is too young or old enough (or mature enough) to marry?
- If you had to be separated from your loved one for three years without seeing each other once, how would you handle it?

#### **Week 16 April 18: Bride on a Journey**

- Read again how Susan handled the birth of her stillborn child. What does her response tell us about how she viewed God?
- The newlywed bride was careful to pray that her love for her husband would be only a fraction of the love she felt for her Savior. What happens when one loves one’s spouse more than he/she loves God?
- When Susan felt trapped and possibly doomed to die in January 1847, where did she focus her perspective?
- What is Paul referring to in 2 Corinthians 5:1 when he says “the earthly tent we live in”? Where will your life’s journey end?

**Week 16 April 19: Enlistment Surprise**

- How would you feel if your spouse made a life-changing decision, such as going to war, without asking or talking to you about it first?
- How do you, as a couple, make decisions that affect your entire family?
- Share with each other how you felt during the most recent decision-making process. Did you feel insecure? Did you trust the other person's heart? Were you fearful of change?
- Do you also commit to pray before making major decisions?

**Week 16 April 20: A Lover's Pursuit**

- Do you find Eliza's actions to be with William foolhardy or romantic? Why?
- Eliza defied both her parents and society's rules about gender roles when she pursued William so desperately. How do you know whether its right or not to go against your parents' wishes?
- When is it right to go against your culture's expectations?
- Eliza gave up wealth and, at least for a season, the approval of her parents to be with William. What have you had to sacrifice for your own marriage?

**Week 16 April 21: Reintegration**

- After a long absence, Robert E. Lee deeply hurt his son by mistaking another little boy for him. Have you ever hurt your child deeply, by accident or intention? What did you do to make things right?
- Is there anything else that can be done to make sure the relationship has been restored?
- Are there any changes taking place in your family that you find difficult to adjust to?
- What would make the changes easier to accept?

**Week 16 April 22: On the Sante Fe Trail**

- Think about a recent trip you made. What was the worst discomfort you experienced? How does that compare with Susan's story of the mosquitoes?
- Now think about a figurative journey you have taken, to get from one season of life to another. Perhaps it was going from being childless to being a parent, or the journey to an

empty nest. Maybe it involved a move or career change. What uncomfortable experiences did you have along the way?

- Were those unpleasant experiences on your journeys worth it to reach your destination?
- What did you learn from the discomfort on the journeys?

### **Week 17 April 23: Pioneers**

- We all benefit from the previous work of “pioneers” on a daily basis. Which “pioneers” are you most grateful for?
- Do you feel you are pioneering something with your own life? If so, what?
- Do hardships tend to make you want to turn away from a situation, or do they spur you on as a challenge?
- Read James 1:2-3. Think about some recent trials. Have they tested your faith and produced perseverance?

### **Week 17 April 24: The Path of Duty**

- When have you had second thoughts about a responsibility you had already committed to? How did you handle that?
- When have you had second thoughts about a responsibility you had already committed to? How did you handle that?
- Alcott let cold air in the hospital even though it was uncomfortable for the shivering patients. Share an example of when you did something that was appropriate, but still made you or others uncomfortable. What was the ultimate result of your actions?
- The boy at the end of this story relived painful memories which affected his behavior. Do you still cling to any memories which affect how you live your life? How does sharing painful memories with your spouse help you understand one another and grow as a couple?

### **Week 17 April 25: In the Line of Fire**

- Clara Barton did not want to remove bullet from the soldier’s face, but she did it anyway. When was the last time you did something you were afraid to do? How did you feel afterward?

- Do feelings of inadequacy ever keep you from trying something new? What would be the possible outcomes of making an attempt?
- None of the nurses who were injured caring for soldiers left the service because of it. What does this tell us about how they viewed their work?
- What tasks do you believe God has called you to do?

**Week 17 April 26: War on the Doorstep**

- Have you ever felt trapped, like Emma Balfour? What was the situation?
- When has your “faith and courage [risen] to meet the emergency”? In other words, when has God given you courage in an especially trying circumstance?
- Those who took shelter in caves still never felt wholly safe. When we are afraid and under attack, where is our best refuge?

**Week 17 April 27: Loving the Enemy**

- When have you been called upon to care for, or work with, people who don’t share your views? How did you respond to the challenge?
- How can God use our enemies to refine us?
- Share an example of when someone surprised you with kindness when you least expected it. How did this affect you?
- Who can you share God’s love with this week?

**Week 17 April 28: Compassion**

- In order to survive as a Civil War nurse, the women had to harden themselves to a certain degree to be able to be productive. In your own life, what difficulties have you had to “get used to” in order to do good work?
- How can you cultivate an attitude of compassion for those around you?
- When you are grieving or very upset by something, what is the best thing your spouse can do for you to comfort you?

**Week 17 April 29: A Woman’s Place**

- Where do you see gender roles today (workplace, church, home society)?

- Are you comfortable with these, or do you feel they are misplaced in some areas?
- When you disagree with someone, what is the best course of action to take?
- Read Colossians 3:23. Who are we ultimately working for?

### **Week 18 April 30: Notes to the Soldiers**

- Thousands upon thousands of women donated goods for the benefit of soldiers they would never meet. Do you think it is easier to minister to strangers, or to people you know in your own community? Why?
- The first note in this story seeks to encourage the soldier with thoughts of the end of the war. The second note comforts with a reminder of eternity in paradise at the end of a life. Both of them prompt a shift in perspective from the short-term to the long-term. Where do you place your long-term hope?
- Read Matthew 25:40. What can you do for someone less fortunate this week?

### **Week 18 May 1: Sanitary Fairs**

- Mary Livermore's big idea was met with criticism and disbelief, and yet, she succeeded so much she shocked them all. What do you feel prompted to try, even though some might not understand?
- The success of the Sanitary Fairs (indeed, the entire Sanitary Commission) was dependent upon the work of thousands of volunteers. Mary Livermore could not have accomplished anything by herself. Who could you recruit to be your own support network for what you want to accomplish?
- Mary left the care of her children to other people while she made an indelible mark in history during the Civil War. Where do you find the balance between working for a great cause and caring for the family God has given you? How do you know when you are giving too much time to one of them, or not enough?

### **Week 18 May 2: Hard-Handed Heroines**

- How would you describe the attitudes of the "hard-handed heroines" in this story?

- These women were supporting their family by doing “men’s work,” which would make them seem unfeminine in some eyes. Have you had to take unusual measures to support your own family? Did you meet with any surprise for doing so?
- Where did the women in this story find their motivation to work so hard?
- Where do you find your own motivation when long hours are required of you?

### **Week 18 May 3: Southern Hospitality**

- Sharing food with one another has always been a hallmark of hospitality. When was the last time you shared a meal with someone in need?
- When you have people in your home to share a meal with you, what else is shared besides the food? What doors to ministry could this open up?
- Southern women gave to their soldiers, often very sacrificially. Do Americans today tend to give only out of their abundance, or do you think we give when it means tightening our own belts, too?
- How can you stretch yourself to share with someone else this week?

### **Week 18 May 4: Sorrows to Try Our Faith**

- Kate Cumming believed that sorrows were meant to try our faith. Do you see purpose in sorrow, or does it all seem senseless?
- Kate quoted Bishop Wilmer when she wrote, “May the trials through which we are passing serve to wean us from the world, and move us to set our affections on things above!” Do you find this is true in your own life?
- How did Kate ward off discouragement?
- How can you follow her example?

### **Week 18 May 5: The Authority of God**

- What do you do when you witness injustice in your own community?
- What are right ways and wrong ways to defend the oppressed?
- Have you ever suffered a negative consequence for standing up for what was right? What happened?
- How did that influence you?

**Week 18 May 6: Morality and Mortality**

- Can you think of an event in your lifetime which made America more receptive to talking about God? How did that event affect you personally, and your spiritual life?
- Organizations like the YMCA, Christian Commission, and today's counterparts have had a huge role to play in the spiritual health of the country. What role do individuals like you and me have?
- What difference can your church make in your own community?
- Even if your church doesn't organize itself for a community effort, where can you volunteer your time to invest in people locally?

**Week 19 May 7: A Plea for Private Property**

- If you were forced out of your home at short notice, what would you take with you?
- The woman who signed her name "A granddaughter of Mrs. Washington" did so to give herself credibility and to align herself with a name that was clearly universally revered (Washington). Which name do you align yourself with? A family name? A political party? A pastor or author? How often do you think of yourself as "A child of God"?
- What difference would it make in your life if you more often viewed yourself as God's child?
- Read Hebrews 13:8. Is there anything else that is as constant and unchanging as Jesus Christ?

**Week 19 May 8: The Lord Will Provide**

- How did Sarah comfort herself?
- Share some examples from the Bible with each other of other people believing in God's provision even before they could see it for themselves.
- What happens when we speak or sing aloud our confidence in God?
- Is there any loss so great that God would be unable to provide in spite of it?

**Week 19 May 9: A Fig for Your Religion!**

- In an instant, the course of a life can change. Do you only trust God when life is easy, or do you trust Him also when life is hard?
- Look at all that Sarah Morgan lost. And yet she blesses God and calls herself “spared.” What can you bless God for today? From what has He spared you?
- Read Psalm 13:2,5. Do you think David truly felt like rejoicing, or was he simply reminding himself of truth as a matter of discipline?
- What happens to our attitudes when we find something to rejoice about in the face of hardship?

**Week 19 May 10: Picket Line Push-Back**

- When has humor been a ray of light in your life?
- Some use humor to cope with a tough situation while others feel guilty laughing if times are difficult. Which end of the spectrum do you gravitate toward?
- How can you be more understanding of how your spouse uses (or doesn't use) humor?

**Week 19 May 11: Sharing the Perils**

- In her letter to her brother, Mary Ann Gay wrote: “If I were willing to enjoy the fruits of your valor and sacrifices without also being willing to share your perils, I would be unworthy indeed.” What similarities can you draw from this concept for the Christian life?
- The protection of winter coats very likely was the difference between life and death for many soldiers. What protection can we wrap ourselves in before we face the chilling effects of life's hardships?
- Mary Ann put her life at risk for her brother and his fellow soldiers. How do you calculate how risk to take as a family, and for what reasons?

**Week 19 May 12: General Starvation**

- When war ravaged her homeland, Mary Ann “never questioned the wisdom or goodness of God” in permitting it. Today, it seems as though many more people abandon their faith when tragedy strikes close to home. What is the difference? Why does hardship cause one person's faith to crumble and not another's?

- When we experience pain today, how do most people pray? Compare that to Mary Ann’s prayer as she dug lead from the earth: “God of mercy, if this be Thy holy will, give me fortitude to bear it uncomplainingly.” Why don’t we pray this way more often today?
- Trading lead for food was an unusual method for God to provide for Mary Ann and her family. What unusual ways has God provided for your family in the past?

**Week 19 May 13: Living with Less**

- What have you learned to get along without that you once considered a necessity?
- Re-read the newspaper notice from Cedar Falls, Iowa. This community was one of many that took responsibility for the families at home. What do you do as a church and as an individual for the Blue Star families (those with a loved one at war) in your area?
- What possession or standard could you give up—even if your finances didn’t require it—and still have an enjoyable life? Is there anything you *should* give up in order to have a better quality of life?

**Week 20 May 14: For Love and Valor**

- Do you admire or disapprove of the women who served as soldiers in the Civil War? Why?
- Many female soldiers sought war as a refuge from a terrible home life, not realizing how dangerous their service would actually be. What are some ways we try to escape our own problems?
- What are some examples of trading one fearful situation for another today? Have you ever done this?
- Many times these female soldiers’ motivation was misunderstood. When has your own motivation for doing something been misjudged?

**Week 20 May 15: Detour on an Errand of Espionage**

- How can you be more understanding of how your spouse uses (or doesn’t use) humor?
- Caring for the sick Confederate soldier was an interruption to Sarah’s plans, but ended up making a profound impact on her. When has God used an “interruption” in your plans to show you something?

- Have you ever had to work with (or against) another Christian who held an opposing viewpoint on a certain issue? How did you both handle it?
- The Confederate soldier in the story claimed allegiance first to Christ, then to Jefferson Davis and his country. Whether or not you believe his sincerity, think about the importance of these priorities. What happens when we place our patriotism above our allegiance to God?
- The more Sarah got to know this dying soldier, the easier it was to serve him with genuine compassion. Have you ever been surprised at how you were able to get along with someone who didn't share your own point of view?

### **Week 20 May 16: A Dying Confession**

- The dying soldier had no idea she was sharing her secret with someone who could completely understand—another female soldier in disguise. Have you ever reluctantly shared a secret, only to find the person you confided in could understand perfectly? How did that feel?
- If someone asked you to keep a secret from your spouse, what would you say?
- This female soldier was one of tens of thousands of people whose graves went unmarked and unmourned. How important do you think a “proper” burial is? Is it more for the benefit of the dead, or of those who love him or her?

### **Week 20 May 17: River Raid**

- What are the mines that threaten to debilitate your spiritual life? How can you avoid them?
- What (or where) are the mines that could harm your marriage? What steps can you take to stay away from them, or disable them altogether?
- If something does happen that causes pain in your marriage, what will both of you do to begin the healing process?
- Who are some people in your lives who could come alongside you and strengthen your marriage?

**Week 20 May 18: Richmond Lady for the Union**

- What are the various external voices that you hear everyday (cultural influences)? What do your internal voices tell you?
- How do these voices influence how you view yourself and your marriage?
- How do you sort through all of these voices and decide which one(s) to listen to?
- How will we recognize the voice of God, as referred to in John 10:27?

**Week 20 May 19: Paper-Lined Petticoat**

- At great personal risk, Mary Ann tried to warn Confederate officers in Atlanta of their coming demise, but they chose not to believe they were in danger. Has anyone ever tried to warn you of something? Did you heed their words or dismiss them? What happened?
- The Confederates in this story refused to believe their great city of Atlanta would ever fall. What happens when we also view ourselves as invincible to spiritual or emotional attack?
- Can you recall a time when you felt like your marriage was under attack? How did you respond?
- What can you do to reinforce your marriage now before something happens that might threaten it?

**Week 20 May 20: Fashion during the Civil War**

- We laugh at hoop skirts and corsets today, but what is popular in women's fashion that is also bad for their health? Why do most women wear them anyway?
- Just as we try to improve our bodies with fashion, how do we try to improve or cover up our personalities in artificial ways?
- How can we concentrate more of our efforts on developing inner beauty (for women)?
- What is the counterpart for inner beauty for men? How can we develop that?

**Week 21 May 21: Somebody's Darling**

- Did any lines in this poem strike a chord with you? What were they? How did they make you feel?
- When have you done something for someone else for the sake of that person's loved one?
- How does this poem compare and contrast to the parable in Matthew 25:31-46?

**Week 21 May 22: Choosing the Right Words**

- Share an example of when your spouse's encouragement, though it may have been painful for him/her to give, really supported you when you needed it most.
- What is the best way for your spouse to encourage you?
- Where did Susan Anna direct her husband's attention by the end of the letter in this story?
- How can we help each other focus on God during times of uncertainty?

**Week 21 May 23: Conquering Her Affections**

- When have you struggled "between affection and duty" while making decisions in your own marriage/family?
- How do we keep our emotions in check while making decisions together?
- When is it best for duty to win over emotions? Vice versa?
- In what areas can we practice more self-control?

**Week 21 May 24: Family Loss**

- Experiencing the death of a child can wreak havoc on a marriage as spouses handle grief in different ways. Share with each other how you have handled grief in the past, and what your reaction might be to death of a close loved one if it should happen in your family.
- Judging from the woman's letter to her husband, what was her foremost concern at the time?
- As believers, this family had the hope of being reunited in heaven one day. What difference does this hope of heaven make in your own lives?

**Week 21 May 25: No Distance Too Great**

- Other than physical distance, what comes between spouses in a marriage?
- Which barrier seems to be the biggest obstacle to developing closeness in your own marriage?
- What can you do to overcome that "distance"?
- Decide on one thing you will do this week to grow closer together as a couple. It could be as simple as praying together or going on a date night or anything in between.

**Week 21 May 26: The Way Out**

- Do you think Julie was justified in being dishonest with her employer by disguising herself as a boy? Why or why not?
- Julia was concerned that her husband would be upset with her for making a big decision without his prior consent or approval, something that was impossible to get at the time.
- How do you, as a couple, make decisions? How do you make decisions when you don't have the luxury of talking to each other about it first? Do you have a set of guidelines that govern the choices you will make regarding your family?

**Week 21 May 27: Etiquette for Ladies**

- What makes hand-written love letters so special?
- Do you think we are more willing to share our hearts in writing than we are in person, even today? Why or why not?
- What happens in the heart of the person writing the love letter? What happens in the heart of the person receiving it?
- When was the last time you exchanged love letters? (Don't wait for the next holiday to try it again!)

**Week 22 May 28: Sweet Battle Cry**

- Hearing a hymn of faith in the aftermath of battle was powerful for those suffering from injury. When you are in pain (emotional, spiritual, or physical), what affect does listening to or singing hymns or praise music have on you?
- Nurse Helen Gilson effectively drew attention away from the negative with a reminder of the positive—the worthy cause for which they suffered. Where do you find your sense of purpose amidst your own suffering?
- One of the lines in the hymn says, “As He died to make men holy, let us die to make men free.” Is there a cause for which you would willingly lay down your own life?

**Week 22 May 29: “Call Us All Yankees”**

- The townspeople of Gettysburg displayed a surprising amount of courage. When have you surprised yourself with how much courage or strength you had in a given situation? To what do you attribute that?
- Share a time when you admired the courage demonstrated by your spouse.
- Fannie Buehler coped with the hardships of the battle and its aftermath by realizing it was just a small portion of the suffering the soldiers had to endure. What challenge in your own life can benefit from a similar perspective?
- Have you yet had to participate in the sufferings of Christ? Explain.

**Week 22 May 30: A Schoolteacher’s Summer Vacation**

- The fact that Sallie couldn’t stand blood didn’t keep her from tending the wounded. What personal objections or aversions have you had to overcome in order to do what you felt called to do?
- What was the most frightening experience you have lived through? How did it affect you?
- How have you overcome a fear that used to plague you?
- What is your worst fear today? How can you help each other cope with those fears?

**Week 22 May 31: Suspense in the Cellar**

- Is there anything you feel in suspense about now?
- Sarah and the others in hiding felt completely helpless about their circumstances. When have you felt similarly helpless or out of control about events that drastically affected you?
- What can you do as a couple when life throws you challenges you neither predict nor feel adequately prepared to handle?
- As Christians, what is the end of our story?

**Week 22 June 1: A Field for Profound Thought**

- Tillie thought she was escaping to safety but actually put herself in a place of more danger than her own home had been. How do we sometimes run toward what we think is safety, only to find out it’s more dangerous?

- At age fifteen, the battle of Gettysburg couldn't help but be one of Tillie's formative experiences. Share with each other a formative experience in your own life, whether it happened as you were growing up or later in life. How did that even change who you are?
- Being a witness to the gruesome scenes at Gettysburg did not cause Tillie's faith in God's sovereignty to waver. Instead, what did she say about God? Does her perspective surprise you or not?

### **Week 22 June 2: Friendly Enemies**

- What causes divisions within the church?
- What causes the most dissension in your family?
- Are there any external influences which make the divisions in your family worse?
- What can you do to break down barriers between family members?

### **Week 22 June 3: Amputations**

- Matthew 5:29-30 says, "If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell." How does this teaching from Jesus compare to the practice of amputation?
- What types of sin can cause infection in your spiritual life and irreparable harm?
- How would you go about performing a spiritual amputation to cut off the problem completely?
- Is there anything causing infection in your marriage that needs to be removed?

### **Week 23 June 4: Whittier's Hymn for the Children of St. Helena's Island**

- Have you ever felt like you were enslaved by anything- sin, an expectation, a person?
- How did you break free of it?
- In your personal life, who is the Master you are serving? Self? Work? Money? God?
- Who is the Master of your marriage? Is it governed by convenience, God, the kids, something else?

**Week 23 June 5: Fitted for Freedom**

- Charlotte Forten wrote in her journal that she wanted the newly freed children to be fitted in every way to enjoy the blessings of freedom. What are the blessings of spiritual freedom in Christ?
- How might we abuse those freedoms? (See Romans 5:20-Romans 6:11.)
- How can we enjoy our spiritual freedoms the way God wants us to?

**Week 23 June 6: Mary Lincoln's Dressmaker**

- Think about your circles of influence. What might God want you to do within them?
- Is there a ministry you and your spouse could invest in together?
- Talk about what you have been together as a couple. Could you use the lessons you have learned from those experiences to mentor other people you know?

**Week 23 June 7: No Condemnation**

- How did you react when you read Susie King Taylor's words about Caucasians and God's timing?
- Have you ever struggled in your own life with God's timing for a particular event or season?
- Looking back, can you see how God orchestrated the timing for a bigger purpose?
- Susie had hope for an equality she knew she would not witness in her lifetime. What hope do you have, even if it's something that may not come to pass in your life?

**Week 23 June 8: Where Slavery Still Reigned**

- What are you waiting on the Lord for right now?
- Share with each other an example of when waiting on the Lord finally produced what you were hoping for, in God's timing.
- Read Isaiah 40:31. What does it say will happen to those who wait for the Lord?

**Week 23 June 9: Untold Stories**

- When have you felt unseen and unappreciated?
- Think about the members of your family, church, and community. Who can you encourage and thank for their work behind the scenes? (If you don't know what they are doing, take the opportunity to ask them, so their stories don't go untold!)

- Read Genesis 16:13 and Hebrews 6:10. How does it make you feel to know that God sees you, your trials, and the work you do?

### **Week 23 June 10: Race Relations in the North**

- Most Christians know and believe that we “are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28). Yet we remain divided. What divides us from other believers?
- Now think about your church. What divisions are there, and how can you personally help mitigate them?
- What about divisions among your immediate family and in-laws? Are there any rifts keeping your relationships on hold? How can you help overcome those?
- Is there anything preventing oneness in your marriage right now? What can you do to fix that?

### **Week 24 June 11: The Soldiers’ Petition**

- Has anyone ever told you, like the soldiers told the women, that their efforts at helpfulness was appreciated but mis-directed?
- How did you respond?
- The main concern for the children of these orphans was meeting their physical needs. What is your main concern for your children?
- How will you go about meeting those needs?

### **Week 24 June 12: The Civil War’s Youngest Nurse**

- Sadie grew up much faster than most children her age. Was there anything in your childhood that caused you to grow up quicker? What was it?
- Some would say the doctor in this story took a risk by asking a child to help. She could have become hysterical and added an extra burden. He would say he had no choice but to try. When have you made a decision that seemed risky to others, but you felt compelled to make anyway?
- Have you been surprised by what your heavenly Father has asked you to do?
- How has he equipped you for the tasks?

**Week 24 June 13: Cheerful Givers**

- What can you give your spouse that would bring him/her joy? (If you aren't sure, ask each other!)
- How can you instill a spirit of generosity into your children?
- If you were to lead by example, what would you do to exemplify generosity? (This could be sponsoring a child, putting together care packages for troops, helping at a shelter, giving tithes at church, etc.)

**Week 24 June 14: Under Siege**

- Has there ever been a trial in your life so great that you felt it had God beaten too?
- The caves were the only shelter the Vicksburg families had during the siege. What is the cave you run to when you feel you are spiritually or emotionally under siege?
- The pastor of Christ Church held services every day during the siege, and people came. What keeps people away from church today? Is there anything keeping you from attending church right now?

**Week 24 June 15: "We Could See Her No More"**

- Nettie pointed out that burdens are greater when they are borne alone. How can spouses help each other bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2)?
- When Nettie's mother went so far out in the field, the children cried because they couldn't see her, even though she knew she was out there. When was the last time you knew God was working, but you still were distressed because you couldn't see Him in your life?
- Do you feel that your spouse appreciates what you do for your family? Take a moment to express gratitude to each other for the work and efforts put forth by each of you.

**Week 24 June 16: To Pray or Run**

- How do you know when it's a time to pray, or a time to act? Or both at once?
- The Union soldier mentioned in the beginning of the story did not agree with causing harm to women and children, yet he still had to follow his orders. When have you been instructed to do something you didn't agree with? What happened?

- If you had been Mother Superior, do you think you would have forgiven General Sherman when he asked for it, even as your city blazed and smoldered around you? Is there anything for which you need to ask forgiveness from your spouse?
- Could God be asking you to change your behavior as an answer to one of your prayers?

### **Week 24 June 17: Inside the Soldiers' Orphans' Home**

- It's far easier to start a project than to see it through to completion. Have you and your spouse begun any routines or initiatives that fizzled out? (Such as a weekly or monthly date night, a family vacation that never happened, or a joint ministry opportunity left unpursued?)
- Are any of those unmet goals worth revisiting?
- If so, why did they fail the first time?
- How can you make sure they succeed this time?

### **25 June 18: Victory Overshadowed by Mourning**

- Have you ever experienced a personal victory in life, only to have it overshadowed by a loss shortly afterwards? Share that with your spouse.
- When have you felt like a task you were charged with was insurmountable?
- Read Proverbs 21:1. Do you think this verse applies to America's leaders, too? Why or why not?

### **Week 25 June 19: Equipped for Freedom**

- Have you ever been given a responsibility without being equipped for it first? How did you manage that?
- As a Christian, what have you been set free from? Sinful habits? Feelings of guilt, shame, pride?
- What is our responsibility now that we have been set free from these things?
- Read 2 Peter 1:3-4. What do you think it means to "participate in the divine nature"?

### **Week 25 June 20: Carrying Light and Knowledge**

- When was the last time you faced opposition for doing right?
- Edmonia was in physical danger and yet felt safe. How do you explain this?

- How can you carry light and knowledge into dark places in your own communities?

### **Week 25 June 21: Poverty in Company**

- When you face hardships, do you tend to isolate yourself or reach out to your community?
- How does your response compare or differ from your spouse's?
- What will you do next time you have differing opinions about how to cope with life's challenges?
- Even if you don't feel like sharing your burdens with a large group, who are the few people in your life you would be able to trust enough to confide in and ask for prayer?

### **Week 25 June 22: Trusting God's Providence**

- How did Mary Custis Lee react to the fall of the South? To Jefferson Davis's imprisonment? To her husband's death?
- If you were in her place, do you think your faith would be strong enough to make the same statements?
- Read Isaiah 55:9. What does this verse mean to you?

### **Week 25 June 23: Resurrection Hope**

- Frances points out that many people were so "wedded to the fancied prosperity of the old system" that they couldn't imagine success with a new way of doing things. How do you feel about change in your life? Are you reluctant or eager to embrace it?
- How does your spouse feel about change? Share with each other.
- When has God brought beauty from ashes in your life?
- Is there something (a hope, dream, relationship) that you feel is "dead" right now? Can you pray with your spouse for God to breathe life into that?

### **Week 25 June 24: Starting Over**

- Have you ever felt like you have had to start over in some area of your life?
- What precipitated that point?
- How did you go about starting over?

- Is there anything in your marriage or family life that could use an overhaul?

### **Week 26 June 25: Poetry of War**

- The poet speaks of putting on a brave face for the sake of her son as he goes to war. What are other instances in life in which it's important to steel our emotions for the sake of someone else?
- What difference does it make when your spouse is brave or cheerful to support you?
- How can you show support for your spouse or family this week?

### **Week 26 June 26: Women Rally for a Cause**

- One woman's letter persuaded the Pope to take a stand. How do our letters make a difference today?
- What else can we do to rally behind a cause?
- Women who were previously on opposite sides of the Civil War joined together for Evangelina Cisneros. What common ground can you find with people with whom you have previously disagreed?
- What common ground do you and your spouse share? What are your most important priorities as a couple?

### **Week 26 June 27: Rescue Plan**

- God has taken up your case and redeemed you. What do you suppose your life would be like without Him?
- The *Journal* went beyond the normal boundaries of a newspaper's role in order to free Evangelina. Do you go beyond the normal boundaries of your own role somehow? Share with your spouse.
- Tell your spouse how you see him or her going above and beyond his or her own duties.

### **Week 26 June 28: Leaving a Legacy**

- What legacy do you hope to leave?
- What legacy do you see your spouse creating?

- If you have your children, ask them now what they think they will remember about their family and growing up in your home. Are you pleased with their responses? Do you need to make any course corrections in how you manage your family, based on what they said?

### **Week 26 June 29: A Coward at Home**

- When has peer pressure persuaded you to make a decision you otherwise would not have made?
- Did you keep that commitment or discontinue?
- What are some guiding principles that might help you decide whether or not to accept a new responsibility?
- If you don't have a mission statement for yourself, consider writing one now that will help you decide whether new opportunities for your time and energy are the best fit for your life.

### **Week 26 June 30: A Mother's Love and an Unknown Soldier**

- Does compassion come naturally to you, or do you tend to feel more strongly about justice than mercy?
- Do compassion and justice ever work together? How could you have both in the same situation?
- Do you ever feel you could use a little more compassion from your spouse? Share this with each other, respectfully.

### **Week 26 July 1: Yellow Journalism**

- Do you ever sensationalize the stories you tell to capture your audience's attention?
- Are there certain environments in which you are more vulnerable to gossip or exaggeration? Can you avoid those situations?
- If not, what can you do to help make sure you don't sin with your words?

### **Week 27 July 2: Wilson Proclaims Neutrality**

- When have you tried to remain neutral in a disagreement but failed? What pushed you to another side?

- Peace reigns when we control what we say and do. How do you work at speaking and acting kindly to one another?
- How does daily reading Scriptures help you maintain peace? Do you read together?
- How do you curb your sentiments, your selfish desires?

**Week 27 July 3: YMCAs Offer Hope for the World**

- One lecture and scripture changed John Mott's life. What scripture has most impacted your lives?
- How does volunteering help you be more people focused?
- How do you seek God before volunteering and when?
- What decisions have you made with and without seeking God. What resulted?

**Week 27 July 4: A Canteen Girl Quenches Her Thirst**

- When has the sight of someone relieved stress or been especially welcome?
- How do you feel when you return home and see one another? How do you greet each other?
- What have you witnessed that aroused compassion similar to Katherine seeing the demolished towns? How did you respond?
- When has one of you risen early to prepare a drink or breakfast for the other? How did it feel to have the day welcomed that way?

**Week 27 July 5: Propaganda**

- When have you been swayed by words without checking the facts, especially by the media?
- How do you discern truth?
- When someone is stirring up animosity or trouble how do you respond?
- Words are powerful. Share words that have hurt you and words that have inspired you.

**Week 27 July 6: Boy Scout Help Enlisted**

- Did you belong to a group, such as scouts, as a child? If so, how did that impact your life?
- What organizations do you want your children to be involved in and why?
- How can you encourage young people to be patriotic supporters?

- Discuss the words of *God Bless America* and what you can do for God's blessing on your community.

### **Week 27 July 7: Pershing's Orphans**

- Do you sponsor a child as a couple? Why or why not?
- How do you react to children in your community who are fatherless from divorce or death?
- What have you studied because of compassion for a group of people?
- Pershing experienced loss and went extra lengths to become involved with his orphans. How have past tragedies or losses increased your compassion and actions?

### **Week 27 July 8: Fashions Reflect the Era**

- What clothes do you like your spouse to wear?
- How have you seen fashions change according to politics or Hollywood?
- What styles make you feel more comfortable?
- How do you determine your clothing budget?

### **Week 28 July 9: Last Words Home**

- How do you part from one another? Do you have special goodbye words?
- Have you saved letters, cards, or emails from one another? Which one is most memorable?
- What do you ordinarily talk about? Are there routine topics?
- What do you do to make sure you really listen to one another?

### **Week 28 July 10: The Word to the World**

- How do you combine doing the word with sharing it?
- When have you shared a Scripture or Bible with another couple?
- How does your church contribute to spreading the gospel or missionary work? How do you help?
- What places near you accept books, including Christian literature (cancer wards, hospices, USOs, church)? Where do you pass on books?

**Week 28 July 11: Factory Girls**

- What choices have you made regarding both of you working or one staying at home?’
- What are today’s problems in the work force?
- What can you do to foster a Christian environment in your work place?
- Are you happy in your career choices? If not, what can you do to change or find new opportunities?

**Week 29 July 12: United Hands**

- When have you seen a community or family unite to help one another? What inspired the unity?
- A shared purpose brings unity. What purpose do you share?
- When do you talk about family goals and missions?
- When you make something for someone else what goes through your mind? Do you pray for the person while working on the gift?

**Week 28 July 13: Women in the Military**

- What are your thoughts on women in the military and in combat?
- How is serving in war, at the frontline a privilege?
- What people in your past serve you with kindness and how did you express your appreciation?
- How do you express appreciation for one another? What helps you be kind to one another every day?

**Week 28 July 14: Persistent Hello Girls**

- Has someone ever pleaded for your assistance and then forgotten to recognize or appreciate your service? How have you responded?
- When have you been persistent and how long did you need to persist?
- Dancing and music provided a break and stress relief. How do you relieve stress?
- How do you show or express appreciation for one another or friends who have helped you?

**Week 28 July 15: Victory Bread and Rations**

- What breads do you make or enjoy sharing?
- What do you do to give sacrificially?
- Where do you give money and why?
- When have you substituted ingredients in recipes or experimented with new ones? How did some turn out?

**Week 29 July 16: War Songs**

- What war songs do you know? How do they make you feel?
- What songs motivate you to action?
- What songs stir your emotions?
- What are your favorite songs as a couple and why?

**Week 29 July 17: Farmarette Josephine**

- When have you grown vegetables or fruits?
- Do you have land where you could grow crops to give to the poor? What would prompt you to grow food?
- What do you consider feminine or masculine work and why?
- What do you do to relax after work?

**Week 29 July 18: Somber Home Front**

- When has the death of a soldier moved your emotions or spirit?
- When has tragedy overshadowed a holiday and how did it impact the day?
- How do you comfort others when they experience grief?
- What national tragedies stirred your emotions? How did you respond?

**Week 29 July 19: Choctaw Code Talkers**

- Do you use secret codes or signals as a couple? Do others understand them?
- What other contributions have Native Americans made?

- Have you noticed someone's special talents and encouraged them to use them to benefit others?
- How do you cooperatively help others as a couple?

**Week 29 July 20: More Valuable than Rubies**

- What women do you admire/respect and why?
- How do you perceive the role of a woman? A wife?
- How do you appreciate one another's gender?
- What women have made a difference in your life and how?

**Week 29 July 21: Revolving Doors**

- How have government decisions affected your job status?
- In what ways do you practice self-sacrifice?
- What makes America great?
- How can you make the most of every opportunity? What opportunities do you have now?

**Week 29 July 22: Christmas in 1918**

- What have you or your community done for military troops and families at Christmas?
- How have you contributed to toy drives? Reached out to the poor?
- What are your favorite Christmas carols and why?
- How do you enjoy celebrating Christmas as a couple?

**Week 30 July 23: Germany Invades Poland**

- People in Poland watched the invasion as though it was unreal. When has something bad seemed unreal and numbed your emotions?
- The Polish pianist/leader inspired his people to hope. What words have inspired you to hope in spite of circumstances?
- War changes lives and separates couples. What can you do when you hear someone will be deployed?
- When has news or a message that interrupted a show shocked you?

**Week 30 July 24: Neutral but ready**

- What news has caused you to feel compassion? How did you respond?
- Pickett questioned whether the American people would lose their soul if they denied the docking of Jewish refugees (and they did vote against it). How do you think abortion has impacted the soul of America?
- FDR called the Bible a fountain of strength. How have you found strength in the Bible?
- Compassion is an understanding of the suffering of someone else and a desire to relieve that suffering. When have you been moved to want to relieve someone's pain and what did you do?

**Week 30 July 25: Life and Death**

- What stories have you heard about Pearl Harbor and how do they stir your patriotism?
- When have you experienced the contrast of life to death or tragedy?
- What birthday had the worst memories for you and why?
- What acts of terrorism have impacted your life and how?

**Week 30 July 26: New Connections with Home**

- Have you made any videos that will leave your voice record for descendants?
- What voices make you smile and why?
- Communication is so important. How do you work at improving your communication skills as a couple?
- What do you know about the USO and have you helped support it?

**Week 30 July 27: The Real Rosies**

- What women held an unusual career that inspired you?
- Norma Jean got an amazing break as she worked in an airport factory. How did the changes help her and hurt her?
- What breaks have changed your life?
- How can you protect yourself from making bad choices if you gain fame or money?

**Week 30 July 28: Girls Played Ball**

- What sports do you enjoy playing and/or watching and why?
- How can a popular sport help unify the country or a community?
- Charm school and etiquette also helped the women's image and self-esteem. What do you do to stay balanced and enhance looks and manners?
- Today's verse reminds us that we can sharpen one another. How do you do this as a couple??

**Week 30 July 29: Home Front Entertainment**

- What music and TV stars do you enjoy? Why?
- Discuss how entertainment has changed during your lifetime.
- What entertainment helps you relieve stress?
- How do you respond to war movies? To battles in the Bible?

**Week 31 July 30: Ernie Pyle's News from the War**

- Ernie Pyle brought realism mixed with humor. How does humor help soften difficult news?
- Describe an act of heroism you witnessed? What do you admire about the heroism of Christ?
- When have you rejoiced because of good news from a distant land?
- What do you like in the way your spouse talks or provides humor?

**Week 31 July 31: Decoding Secrets**

- What are some Bible passages you ponder about and wish you could decode?
- How well do you keep confidences?
- Why might God be keeping the time of the judgment hidden?
- Theories abound that FDR really knew more about Pearl Harbor before the attack, including that his people had decoded messages, but the Japanese never sent messages about it. Why do you think people bring up such conspiracy type theories that counter evidence?

**Week 31 August 1: Day-Care Centers**

- Did you go to daycare as a child? If so, what memories do you have of it?

- How has daycare changed lives?
- When have you followed a passion even when others oppose it?
- How do you live out the thought that we are all brothers on earth?

### **Week 31 August 2: Military Moms**

- How have you reached out to a military mom?
- Blue Star Moms spend time serving others. When have you helped others during hard times?
- When have you found support among people experiencing similar problems?
- How do you relate to your mothers?

### **Week 31 August 3: Carrying On**

- When have you seen families move beyond a tragic death to bringing hope to others?
- What can you do to foster close relationships with your siblings?
- What is the hardest tragedy or loss you have dealt with as a couple and how did you respond and carry on?
- As a couple to what cause do you give your time and energy?

### **Week 31 August 4: Women in the Air**

- What do you enjoy about flying in an airplane?
- What do you think about when you watch birds?
- What dreams have you realized? What dreams do you hope to realize?
- How do you encourage one another to shoot for the moon?

### **Week 31 August 5: Fireside Chats**

- What presidential talks have impacted you positively?
- Do you know people who still recall FDR's fireside chats? If so, what do they remember?
- A chat is a friendly conversation. What do you like to chat about?
- What helps you remember God is with you wherever you go?

**Week 32 August 6: Sermon: Tears Over America**

- Why did Christ weep over Jerusalem? (Luke 19:41)
- When have you cried for your community, city, or country?
- The British leader King George worked beside his people. When has someone important surprised you by working humbly beside others? How did that impact you?
- When do you pray for your country or leaders? When do you pray for one another?

**Week 32 August 7: Faithful Warriors**

- When have you felt God's presence in a dangerous situation? What happened?
- Gen. Patton was a strong man, sometimes coarse and sometimes harsh. What do you think of his request for prayer and his discussion about prayer?
- How have memorized scriptures helped you?
- Discuss the words of Patton's prayer that the chaplain wrote?

**Week 32 August 8: War Horrors: Concentration Camps**

- How do you respond to Corrie Ten Boon's comment that there is no pit for which God's love isn't deeper?
- What do you know about concentration camps and how does it make you feel?
- It's difficult to acknowledge there is great evil in the world. What has made you realize evil exists?
- How did your parents protect you from knowledge of evil? What have you done to shield children from evil?

**Week 32 August 9: Japanese and German American Citizens**

- Have any events caused you to feel prejudiced or cautious around certain people?
- Have hidden facts about your heritage ever surprised you? If so, how?
- How can we defend democracy at home and yet be wise about terrorist cells?
- What have you done to make life better for underprivileged children or to curtail bullying?

**Week 32 August 10: Rationing and Recycling**

- What items do you recycle?
- How do you creatively conserve energy and material goods?
- What do you do to build mutual edification?
- How do you build community in your home, church, and community?

**Week 32 August 11: Pursuing Postwar Peace**

- How do you try to overcome evil with good and actively pursue peace?
- Share memories of how your churches made you feel welcome in your childhood. Discuss how to reach out to a family relocating to your area?
- When a new pastor moves to a church, in some denominations, the family still does pounding. Have you ever pounded a church or family in need? Is there someone you'd like to pound?
- Exchange programs are similar to Operation Kinderlift. How can you help someone in an exchange program?

**Week 33 August 12: Battle Fatigue**

- PTSD is not limited to war. When has an event left you with similar reactions as PTSD?
- How can we show compassion for people suffering from invisible illness such as PTSD?
- What have the Psalms of David, a mighty warrior, taught you about coping with stress?
- What recurring nightmares have troubled you?

**Week 33 August 13: A Mother's Letter**

- A child's death at any age is difficult for parents. When have you offered comfort to a grieving parent?
- What letters have touched you?
- How have you developed relationships with parents of friends?
- What losses have you experienced and what brings back the pain of that loss?

**Week 33 August 14: Lifelines**

- What letters have been special to you?
- Take time this week to write a letter to one another. Then chat about how the letters made you feel.
- Consider adopting a soldier from your town or church to write to and follow through.
- Discuss how you share good and bad news.

**Week 33 August 15: Kindness to German Youths**

- How and when do you interact with youth?
- How do you greet and talk with a youth?
- The children only knew the world in which they lived. How did you view life as a child?
- When have you sent a care package, or Christmas shoebox, and what did you include?

**Week 33 August 16: Restoring Japanese Relationships**

- What have you done to bridge relationships with foreigners?
- The Japanese are the only ones to experience an atomic bomb. Now they have faced a catastrophe with nuclear power plants. How would you talk to a Japanese person about God in light of such great difficulties?
- What can you do to foster peace?
- How have you experienced generosity among people who own few possessions?

**Week 33 August 17: Answers for a Fatherless Girl**

- How have you passed on the legacy of family members who have died?
- When have you felt embraced by a community or church?
- How do you stay close to extended family?
- What have you done to leave a legacy for your children or other loved ones?

**Week 33 August 18: A Town Remembers**

- How does your town celebrate famous citizens or occasions that helped the town?
- How does a town or church celebrating their history help unite a community?

- How often do you pray as a couple for freedom in our country?
- Discuss stories of courage and faith of members of your family/ancestry.

### **Week 33 August 19: New Lives for GIs and Their Families**

- How does the GI bill differ from entitlement programs such as welfare?
- How do you feel about benefits given military vets?
- When have you thanked someone for serving our country? What have you done to show appreciation?
- What new opportunities do you have in life and how do they bring hope?

### **Week 34 August 20: Korea and Difficult Questions**

- What are your thoughts about Christians in the military?
- What scriptures have reinforced your career and life choices?
- What steps do you take to protect your family?
- Discuss what causes war and terrorism.

### **Week 34 August 21 Officer's Christian Fellowship**

- How can leaders with a lot of responsibility support one another?
- Why is it important to study the Bible, especially with people who have common goals or careers?
- Scripture reminds us that more is expected of those who have been given more. What are some responsibilities of officers, especially during war?
- What fellowship do you enjoy related to your career?

### **Week 34 August 22: God in the Battle**

- Discuss people you admire who live up to Christ's command to love one another.
- When have you realized God protected you? What happened?
- How does putting others first help people act courageously?
- Bill Tolar shared a powerful testimony. Share a testimony with one another of a time God worked in your life.

**Week 34 August 23: Blood Shortage**

- When have you given blood? Does anything keep you from donating?
- How can you be intentional, rather than casual about helping others?
- Discuss a time you saw what resulted from your generosity (or your spouse's).
- How does the routine or busyness of everyday life keep you from reaching out to help others? What can you do to streamline your life and make time to serve people?

**Week 34 August 24: Different Perspectives**

- Martha Wilson and Katherine Tabor shared common goals for peace and defeating communism, but they had different perspectives about Korea. How do you handle your opposing perspectives?
- What is the worldwide struggle for the minds of people? How can we battle and overcome the evil?
- When you argue who usually makes the first offer of peace and why?
- What do you see as significance in your spouse's life?

**Week 34 August 25: Houseboys, Spies, and Orphans**

- Finding out someone has betrayed you can be very painful. Discuss a time of feeling betrayed.
- What moves your heart to compassion?
- What motivates you to act on the compassion?
- What ministry in your church or community pulls on your heart and how do you respond?

**Week 34 August 26: Christmas in 1952**

- Life Magazine encouraged people to send practical gifts to soldiers because of their needs and lifestyle. How do you choose gifts?
- What examples of Christian leaders do you admire and why?
- How do you respond to disabled people? What can you do to reach out to them?

- Discuss an unusual Christmas that blessed you.

### **Week 35 August 27: Letter to Boy Scouts**

- What childhood experiences or training provided skills you use as an adult?
- What discipline from God has produced peace in your lives? What discipline can you work on or implement?
- How have you witnessed to youth with your testimony?
- What skills or knowledge from childhood impacts your life today?

### **Week 35 August 28: African Americans**

- Discuss your possible prejudices and what can help you overcome them.
- How do you show respect to people of various races, economic status, and other differences?
- Why and how do African Americans still struggle in society for equality?
- What comments have you heard on media that show prejudice and how do you respond?

### **Week 35 August 29: Story Behind a Notable Prisoner of War**

- Lee felt motivated by one man's example of loyalty. Who has motivated you to develop character?
- How firm is your faith in the possibility of persecution?
- What keeps you loyal and honorable?
- Looking back on a tough time what helped you persevere?

### **Week 35 August 30: Pillow Talk**

- John's example shows it's never too late to reach out and help others. What would you like to do someday? What holds you back?
- How do you respond to children?
- What helps you sleep peacefully? What troubles your sleep?
- What can you do for military children to bring them comfort?

**Week 35 August 31: The Soldier's Wife**

- How do you comfort someone sick or wounded?
- What helps you serve others with humility?
- What words of encouragement did you give one another this week? Other people?
- When have you called and simply listened to encourage someone who lives with pain?

**Week 35 September 1: Foxhole Letters**

- What legacy or final words do you want your spouse to remember about you?
- How do you practice always parting on a positive note?
- When someone close died what comforted you?
- What actions do you do for one another that demonstrates love, including providing financially?

**Week 35 September 2: Bob Hope Welcomed**

- When has humor lightened your heart in a difficult situation?
- How do you overcome tears to provide encouragement for someone else?
- If you ever watched a Bob Hope Christmas special with the troops discuss it and how his talent brightened many lives.
- How do you share your talents with others?

**Week 36 September 3: Pastor's Corner**

- How do you seek truth in controversial issues such as wars or global warming?
- What do you do when you have different opinions as a couple?
- What readings from a pastor have you enjoyed and why?
- When has God's truth helped you make a decision?

**Week 36 September 4: Goodbye Honey, Hello Change**

- How do you manage finances? Which person pays the bills? What problems does money cause?

- When have you had a financial difficulty and called to talk it over with a financial institute or the business owed? How did that work out?
- What changes have been difficult in your marriage?
- How do your children or other family members respond when you are stressed? When you trust God in spite of circumstances?

### **Week 36 September 5: War Talk**

- How do you each feel about war? How do you react when you see someone in military uniform?
- How do you talk with children about difficult topics, such as war?
- Donna and her Dad talked on a walk. When do you find it easiest to talk and why?
- How have you faced upcoming changes, especially when it involves the unknown?

### **Week 36 September 6: Stateside**

- Where is home for you and why?
- What events or years of violence are impressed in your memory? How did you feel and how did it impact your life?
- What year was the most difficult one for you and why?
- When have outside forces interrupted your life and feelings of peace?

### **Week 36 September 7: Riotous Chicago**

- How do you respond to local news that shows natural disasters, riots, or violence?
- How do you calm your children's fears?
- How do you respond to bullies or people who are forceful in wanting their way?
- When have you discovered God's strength?

### **Week 36 September 8: Home Front Challenges**

- What propaganda do you hear in the news and what problems does it cause?
- How have you ministered to someone experiencing a loss?

- What families are you friends with who share a common lifestyle? What do you do together?
- How have experiences helped you become more compassionate?

**Week 36 September 9: Woodstock and Moratoriums**

- When have you become angry when trying to be peaceful about a difference in opinion?
- How do you control your anger?
- What music groups did you listen to as teens?
- What can you do to encourage peace amid differences of opinion?

**Week 37 September 10: Letters to Dad**

- When has a child left you hanging, without divulging enough details to understand a situation? How did you respond?
- Consider writing to your children and discuss what you'd write about.
- How do you work on communication with your children or other children?
- What milestones do you recall celebrating with your father?

**Week 37 September 11: Praying for Her Man**

- When have you seen God answer prayers you said for your spouse?
- What Christmas do you recall when God filled you with a special prayer answer or took away loneliness or other low emotion?
- When have you lived where people around you held opposite views from you politically or spiritually? How did you handle that?
- What ministry do you do together?

**Week 37 September 12: War Bride**

- Why and when did you decide to get married?
- How have you studied the Bible together and how has it impacted your relationship?
- What have been some stressful times in your marriage and how did you cope?
- How does it help to know each other well or for a long time?

**Week 37 September 13: Angels on the Move**

- When has God sent someone to minister to you or prepared your way before a move?
- How did you tell your spouse you were pregnant and how did you each feel?
- When have you experienced car troubles and found unexpected help?
- How has God guided you in where to live?

**Week 37 September 14: Hurricane on the Home Front**

- What storms or other problems have occurred while you've been apart and how did you each cope?
- When have you focused on other people's needs instead of your own? How did that strengthen your faith?
- How willing are you to share your home when you are away? What neighbors do you trust with your key and possessions?
- When has helping other people made you feel good and why?

**Week 37 September 15: Green Beret Saved**

- How have you responded to God's call?
- Paul's wife prayed for him and he believes God answered her prayers when he saved him. When have you realized the impact of someone's prayers for you?
- Discuss how you each became Christians and times God spoke to you or impressed something on your minds.
- How do/did people react to your being a Christian?

**Week 37 September 16: Prisoner of War Bracelet**

- Green Beret Paul Longgear considers Kathy Strong a hero for her faithful prayers. Who are prayer heroes in your life?
- What helps you persist in a prayer that has seemed to go unanswered for a long time?
- Kathy says that as she prayed for James she also cared for him and loved him. How has prayer helped you love others?

- How faithfully do you keep promises? What helps you remain faithful?

**Week 38 September 17: Sad News, Encouraging Words**

- How has someone encouraged you when things looked bleak?
- What recent news shocked you and how did you respond?
- How have you encouraged someone when you felt they faced a hopeless situation?
- How do you encourage your spouse?

**Week 38 September 18: Missionary Wife**

- How do you stay connected with past passions now that you are married?
- What do you do when your spouse travels or is tied up in work?
- Anne moved locations to communicate better with her husband. What effort do you make to stay connected with one another?
- Do you have a network of friends who will support you, especially if your spouse is away?

**Week 38 September 19: Loving Her Wounded Man**

- How have you reacted when you've seen someone disabled or injured?
- When has it been hard to love your spouse and what helped?
- What is your testimony as a couple?
- Do you keep a list of contacts? If so, how do you use it?

**Week 38 September 20: Over the Edge**

- How do you cope when one of you feels depressed or other negative emotion?
- What do you like about your church and the people?
- What's the atmosphere in your home like? What can you do to improve it?
- What deep questions do you ponder?

**Week 38 September 21: Women in Vietnam**

- Men, what are some of the hardest things you've seen your wife do?
- Women, what gives you courage in difficult situations?

- How do use prayer as a weapon of defense?
- How do you show compassion to others and each other?

**Week 38 September 22: Operation Babylift**

- When have you traveled with fear of something happening? How did you cope?
- Discuss questions you've had about your own heritage.
- How have you as ordinary people done extraordinary things?
- Discuss a time someone rescued you or you helped rescue someone in need.

**Week 38 September 23: Movies and Reality**

- What movies seem controversial or appear to promote an agenda? How do you respond to such movies?
- What famous people have you met and how did that impact you?
- Separation from family is difficult. When have you felt alienated from a loved one and what happened? What brought peace?
- What war movies or patriotic movies do you enjoy and why?

**Week 39 September 24: Continued Service**

- Jane Denton founded an organization when her husband went missing. When your spouse is in trouble how do you respond?
- When has prayer comforted you?
- What helps you continue praying when the answer seems to take too long?
- How do you serve your community or country and continue when you feel weary?

**Week 39 September 25: Homeless Veterans**

- When has a responsibility seemed too much to bear? How did you respond?
- How do you show others unconditional love?
- How does it help to know you are forgiven?
- What do you do to ease your burdens and responsibilities to make life manageable?

**Week 39 September 26: Vietnamese Daughter**

- How have children drawn you closer to God?
- What inspired your choice to get married?
- How did people react to your marriage, especially mothers-in-law?
- How have past experiences guided current choices, including ministry?

**Week 39 September 27: Veterans Helping Veterans**

- How has it helped to receive advice or comfort from people who shared similar experiences?
- How do you reach out to people who may have similar experiences that you survived?
- How do you follow up after meeting someone, especially if the person or couple appeared to need a friend?
- What reason can you give for why you reach out to help others?

**Week 39 September 28: Recognizing Daddy**

- What do you do to help your children know your spouse and honor him or her?
- When has a wait seemed forever and how did you cope while waiting?
- Sarah created activities to help her children know God and recognize his love. What have you done to help children know God?
- What exhausts you in family life? What refreshes you?

**Week 39 September 29: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Impacts Lives**

- What happens if your spouse reacts in a very different emotional way?
- How do you resolve angry outbursts or other unexpected emotional reactions (tears, silence)?
- When did something happen after your wedding that made you wonder about the person you married? What happened?
- What do you do daily to continue building family relations?

**Week 39 September 30: Belated Thanks**

- How do you express appreciation to other people?

- Is there someone you need to thank now? If so, how can you do it?
- How do you express and show appreciation to your spouse?
- Make plans to honor Vietnam vets next March 30<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Week 40 October 1: Warding Away Fears**

- Could you relate to Kathleen's initial instinct to run from her fears and deny the source of them? When have you been tempted to do the same thing?
- In the end, Kathleen determined to face her fears head on. When have you done the same thing? What makes it easier for you to face your fears?
- What can your spouse do to support you? Vice versa?
- Which Bible verses help you deal with fear?

#### **Week 40 October 2: Deployment Time**

- When have you had to be strong for someone else when you just didn't feel like it?
- Tom and Kathleen had very different experiences after saying goodbye. When have you and your spouse had widely varying responses to the same event?
- Was either response "right" or "wrong"?
- Talk about why you handle things differently.

#### **Week 40 October 3: Learning to Manage**

- Re-read Mary Frances' three pieces of advice. Why is it helpful not to dwell on our own problems?
- What is the benefit of helping other people?
- How can humor help?
- Can you think of Bible verses to support all three pieces of advice?

#### **Week 40 October 4: Single Parent Duty**

- Exercising made Kathleen feel mentally stronger. What helps you?
- Small problems seem bigger to children who are missing a parent. Does loneliness affect adults the same way? How does it affect your day when you don't feel close to your spouse?

- A change of scenery and atmosphere also helped Kathleen and her boys. Is it time for a change of scenery for you and your spouse, as well? (It could be just dinner out, a day trip or an overnight stay somewhere else.)

#### **Week 40 October 5: First Time for Everything**

- What have accomplished that you never before believed you could do?
- Take a moment to compliment your spouse for stretching himself or herself to do something outside their normal comfort zone.
- Kathleen was moved by her husband's letter. When were you really touched by the thoughtfulness of your spouse?

#### **Week 40 October 6: Prevailing Sense of Hope**

- Have you ever worshipped God in a country where you had to keep it a secret? What do you think that would do to your faith?
- When you and your spouse are separated by physical distance, what do you do to feel close?
- Do you have a prevailing sense of hope? If so, where does it come from?

#### **Week 40 October 7: Symbols of Support**

- Symbols in our homes say a lot about us, our priorities and beliefs. What symbols do you display? (yellow or pink ribbon, cross, ichthus, name brand logos, etc.)
- When someone comes to your home and looks around for the first time, what will they think is important to you, based on what they see?
- Will their assumption be accurate? If not, are there any changes you'd like to consider making?

#### **Week 41 October 8: Support Military Dependents**

- Do you believe that if you love and respect one person, you should extend the same respect to his or her family members?
- If so, how can you show appreciation and love for your in-laws this week?
- Where do you set boundaries between your own family and your in-laws or parents?

**Week 41 October 9: The General's Wife**

- What is one easy thing you can do to make it even more so? It could be as simple as adding a nice-smelling candle to the living room, getting an ottoman for the family room, or decluttering a room. Ask each other what you think.
- Re-read how Alma Powell uses prayer to cope. Do you tend to ask God to take the problem away, or to equip you to deal with it?
- Does your home feel like a sanctuary?
- What is one easy thing you can do to make it even more so? It could be as simple as adding a nice-smelling candle to the living room, getting an ottoman for the family room, or decluttering a room. Ask each other what you think.
- Re-read how Alma Powell uses prayer to cope. Do you tend to ask God to take the problem away, or to equip you to deal with it?

**Week 41 October 10: The Miracle Baby**

- What miracles, large or small, have you experienced together since you've been married?
- Do you pray for miracles with confidence? Why or why not?
- This week, where have you seen the presence of God in your lives?

**Week 41 October 11: The Great Pyramid**

- Have you ever experienced betrayal from a family member or someone very close to you?
- How has it affected the way you interact with people? Are you hesitant to develop close bonds because of this experience?
- How does it feel to think about God welcoming you as an adopted son or daughter into His family, His kingdom?
- Read Romans 12:18. What does the phrase "so far as it depends on you" seem to indicate?

**Week 41 October 12: Blackout Mystery**

- When was the last time your thoughts ran away to a worst-case scenario conclusion about a certain situation?
- Did things turn out as badly as you had feared? What happened?
- What did you learn about worry or control or prayer in the process?

**Week 41 October 13: The Deployment That Saved her Marriage**

- Brenda tells us that dysfunction during her past caused her to make unrealistic demands of her husband. Has something in your past caused you to do something similar to your spouse?
- Sometimes it takes a loss or absence for us to appreciate one another. If someone were to tell you right now that within 24 hours your spouse would move half a world away for an indefinite period of time, how would you react?
- Brenda did not want this deployment to take place, but ultimately it saved her marriage.
- When has a hardship been the best thing that could have happened to you, as an individual or as a couple?

**Week 41 October 14: The Battle of the Mind**

- When has fear become a daily part of your life? Has it ever been so pronounced that it interfered with normal activities, such as going to church or work?
- How did you learn to cope with that level of anxiety?
- Share with each other what your worst fears are, and how you respond to fear.
- Read Matthew 7:25. What is the solid rock in your life that will uphold you when storms come crashing down?

**Week 42 October 15: Letter to a New York Police Officer**

- Have you ever been helped by a stranger, as Ann was helped by the police officer? What happened?
- Who in your life has picked you up and run alongside you, away from physical, emotional, or spiritual danger?
- Talk with your spouse about what you can do to be that lifeline to each other.
- Have you felt the presence in God in your life, urging you to keep going when you wanted to give up? When has He been the strength upholding you?

**Week 42 October 16: “You Need to Get Here”**

- Have you ever had a phone call that changed your life? What was it?

- Mel wanted to be at her husband’s side in an instant, but outside factors made the journey painstakingly tedious. When have you felt hindered from what you wanted to do to support your spouse?
- Read Psalm 73:26. When has your heart and flesh failed? How has God proven to be your strength in the midst of it all?

**Week 42 October 17: Flight 93**

- Todd Beamer and the others aboard Flight 93 knew their lives were about to end, and chose to act heroically with their final moments. If you knew your time on earth was limited—that you had only a month left to live, how would you spend your time? Would you do anything differently than you already do?
- Did you answer to the previous question prompt you to rethink how you spend your time now, even though you may have decades of life in front of you?
- Todd’s prayer, “Jesus, help me,” was simple, but clearly God answered. Are you ever tempted to believe our prayers will only work if they are long and use fancy words?

**Week 42 October 18: Fighter Jet Lullabies**

- Knowing the plane that hit the Pentagon first circled the White House must have felt like a very near-miss for Mrs. Bush and others. When have you experienced a close call that shook your sense of safety?
- The fighter jets overhead reassured Mrs. Bush that they were being protected and watched over. What reassurance of protection do you have when you are afraid or feel yourself in danger?
- Read 2 Kings 6:17 and Ephesians 6:12. Can you imagine spiritual warfare being waged around you?

**Week 42 October 19: Emergency Landing**

- It was easy for the passengers on the planes to think “it could have been us” about the planes that were hijacked. When have you been spared a fate that could easily have befallen you?

- Even though waiting on the plane was tedious, the passengers did not complain because they were grateful to be alive. What are some minor irritations that cause us to complain, which are really trivial?
- The flight attendants were appreciated during that time period, when usually their services are taken for granted. Take a moment to express appreciation to your spouse for things which you may normally take for granted.

**Week 42 October 20: Stranded among Strangers**

- Have you ever been stranded anywhere?
- Have you ever felt stuck, symbolically, in a place you didn't want to be? (a job, stage of life, emotional state, etc.)
- In either situation, did you have any Good Samaritans extend a helping hand?
- How could you be a help someone out in a similar way?

**Week 42 October 21: Forgiveness at the Foot of the Cross**

- Is there any bitterness or hatred lodged in your heart right now?
- Would you pray that God will help you learn to forgive, as He has forgiven us?
- Grief for the loss of a loved one affects us in different ways. Ask your spouse the best way to support him or her, in the event of a loss.

**Week 43 October 22: How Firm a Foundation**

- Billy Graham said, *“But now we have a choice: whether to implode and disintegrate emotionally and spiritually as a people and a nation -- or, whether we choose to become stronger through all of this struggle -- to rebuild on a solid foundation.”* What choice do you think America made?
- What choice did you make?
- There seemed to be a revival and renewed interest in God immediately after 9-11-01. Why do you think that interest faded?
- Have you ever been at a crossroads in your life when you had to make a similar choice: allow a traumatic event to crumble your spirit, or rise out of it stronger? What was the situation that caused the crossroads, and what was the outcome?

**Week 43 October 23: What if He Doesn't Come Home?**

- Is God trustworthy?
- If your spouse were to die, do you believe God would still take care of you?
- Are there any fears you have had to lay down and trust God with? If so, is it difficult to leave them with the Lord?

**Week 43 October 24: Beauty for Ashes**

- How did 9-11-01 affect your life, and the life of your family?
- What challenges have you had to work through as a couple (regardless of whether they relate to 9-11)?
- Have you seen God give you beauty for ashes yet? If so, how?

**Week 43 October 25: He Is Faithful**

- When have you pulled away from your spouse and/or God?
- What happened to cause this distancing?
- How did the Lord draw you back to Himself? (Or how is He doing it now?)
- How can you and your spouse connect and foster the bond between the two of you?

**Week 43 October 26: Trusting God in Life's Circumstances**

- When have you been stretched beyond your comfort zone? How did you adapt?
- What is something one of you does that requires the involvement or sacrifice of the other?
- When was the last time you felt out of control of your life?
- Where do you place your trust?

**Week 43 October 27: "The Lord Is My Husband"**

- Do you agree with Cheryl that we don't need to be married to be complete as individuals?
- Then, what are the benefits of being married?
- Do you encourage your spouse's individuality (interests, goals, dreams)? Talk to each other about how you can do this better.

- Re-read Cheryl's prayer she said on the beach. Which name for God resonated with you? Why?

**Week 43 October 28: Care Giving for a Burn Victim**

- When has your emotional stamina been tested?
- How can we do "strength-training" for our emotional and spiritual well-being?
- Brian was the one who was burned, and yet it affected Mel directly too. When has a dramatic event on one of you affected the other?
- What did you learn as you journeyed through that together?

**Week 44 October 29: A Hero Coming Home**

- Bria is impressed with how her children handle the sacrifices required of having a deployed dad. What impresses you about your children? Tell them today.
- Do you believe in the calling God has on your spouse's life? Affirm that in him or her right now.
- Express appreciation to your spouse for the sacrifices they make to support you, as well.

**Week 44 October 30: Boarding the White Bus**

- When do you call on God to sustain you?
- Do you wait until the problems are really big, or do you ask for His help in smaller, daily things, too?
- Jill told herself, "This is only temporary." Why is this an important reminder in a variety of circumstances?
- How did Jill's analogy of Jesus boarding the bus make you feel?

**Week 44 October 31: "The Day My Dad Left"**

- Katelyn showed remarkable awareness of others who were sacrificing for their country. When has your child demonstrated a selflessness or compassion that surprised you?
- Do you ever struggle with internalizing your concerns to the point that it makes you physically ill, as Katelyn previously did? How do you now cope so that you don't get sick?
- What struck you about Katelynn's story?

- Read Isaiah 49:15. What does this tell you about God's love and compassion?

#### **Week 44 November 1: A Father's Arms**

- Could you relate to Jill's daughter? Whose love have you craved?
- When was the last time you spent time quietly with the Lord, just reveling in His love and steadfast presence?
- It's possible for our children to miss us even when neither parent is physically absent. What can you do to spend special time with your children this week?

#### **Week 44 November 2: Missing Daddy**

- Do you ever cope with a problem by denying its existence?
- What is the short-term result? What about long-term?
- Has this ever hurt other people?
- What might a better coping mechanism be?

#### **Week 44 November 3: A Homecoming Story**

- Do you feel like there is a distance between you and your heavenly Father?
- If you used to be closer to Him, when did you begin to drift away? Was there a specific event that caused it?
- What is keeping you from throwing yourself upon His love, like Libby threw herself on her daddy in the airport?
- Read Acts 17:27. What does this verse mean to you?

#### **Week 44 November 4: Staying Connected with Children**

- Whether you are near or far from your children, how can you be deliberate about fostering the bond with them?
- If your children are adults living on their own, what can you do to express appreciation for the people they have become?
- What can you do today to invest in your relationship with your heavenly Father?

### **Week 45 November 5: Patti's Diary**

- Patti had to be strong and reassuring for her children in the midst of her own fear. When have you had to reassure someone else when you were afraid yourself?
- Many friends had been killed and Patti helped with their funerals. When have you shared grief with a friend? With each other?
- There were so many difficult roles Patti had to play at one time it is hard to imagine being in her place. How do you get through your most difficult roles?
- The rest of the world does not comprehend what a military family goes through. When have you felt you were alone and no one could relate?

### **Week 45 November 6: Terrorism on Base**

- After an uneventful day of running errands, Kellie came home to a panicked phone call.
- What is the range of emotions do each of you experience every day?
- Military families have felt secure on their own bases in the past. Has your sense of security changed since the Fort Hood shootings?
- The news had varying information about the shootings. How have news reports affected you? What is your most trustworthy source of information?
- Kellie does not live in fear, but she has a keener awareness that we don't know the time or place our lives will end. What feelings do you have now?

### **Week 45 November 7: Home Invasion**

- What physical reactions do you have when you are afraid, and how do they affect your reactions?
- Rachel's reaction time had been slow. But she and her spouse had prepared for this scenario. Have you prepared for possible situations? Take a moment to name possible situations to prepare for.
- We must prepare to defend not only our homes, but also our hearts and minds. How do you defend your heart and mind?
- Which Bible verses help you guard your heart and mind?

**Week 45 November 8: Beautiful Lessons from a Bad Day**

- Several difficult situations affected Rebekah's life daily, often leaving her overwhelmed and worried. When have you felt overwhelmed and worried?
- Rebekah cared for one of God's creatures with consoling words and a hymn. What words and songs are stored within you for the difficult times in life?
- When have you felt helpless in the world?
- What do you know about God that makes you know you are not without help?

**Week 45 November 9: Supported**

- While her husband was deployed Rebekah was thankful for friends to share in her son's milestone. When have friends shared milestones in your spouse's absence?
- After all of the activity of the party was over, a quiet moment released an overwhelming longing for her husband. Have distractions helped you? Have they kept you from allowing yourself to feel?
- Has there been a time when friends showed their care for you with unexpected acts of kindness? Have you showed your care for each other in this way?
- God comforted Rebekah through military wives who understood. When has God comforted you through other members of His family? When have you comforted someone else?

**Week 45 November 10: Letting Go**

- April liked to be in control, but military life showed her she had little control. Has this been something you have also had to learn? How do you respond to lack of control?
- Multiple losses made April's life so far out of control that she could do nothing but let go. When have you experienced being forced to let go? What helped you?
- Have you experienced a time when so many things happened you could only choose to laugh or cry? Which did you choose? Was anyone else affected by your choice?
- Strength came for April by letting go of being in control. How could letting go of control make you strong? How could it make your marriage stronger?

**Week 45 November 11: Combat Spouse Day**

- Sherrey chose to “walk a mile in her husband’s boots” to understand what his job is like. Have you tried to think about or do what your spouse does for a day? What did you learn?
- When have you communicated to your spouse how much you appreciate what he or she does? Take time to do that now.
- What do you think is the toughest part of your spouse’s job? Of your own job?
- A soldier for Christ is a soldier for life. How are you training to be all you can be for Him?

**Week 46 November 12: Lessons from This Deployment**

- What does the statement, “You are only as tall as the shoulders you stand on, and you are only as strong as the ones you cry on” mean for you? How has this been true in your life?
- Bria said her children are strong, resilient, and true examples of sacrifice. When have you seen evidence of these qualities in children?
- The general population cannot begin to conceive of the challenges military families face. People say and do things that cause hurt or anger unwittingly. When has this happened to you? What feelings remained in you after the fact?
- Living one moment at a time, everyday prayer, little things like love letters from a child...these give us strength to keep going. What helps you each day?

**Week 46 November 13: Pre-deployment Diagnosis**

- In 2001, the War on Terror was just beginning, with support and patriotism from the people high. By 2010, people were war weary, making it emotionally harder on military families. How did you feel, both then and now?
- Cindy received a devastating blow as her husband’s deployment loomed. When has something happened to you at a time that was already difficult?
- With a better prognosis Cindy began to look at the deployment with a new perspective. When has change affected your perspective as individuals? As a couple?
- When has suffering helped your roots grow deeper, allowing you to grow?

**Week 46 November 14: Embracing Weakness**

- There are countless challenges that can occur, but sometimes a challenge is not what we expect. When has a challenge presented itself that caught you off guard? Was it something you felt you should conquer, but it lingered?
- God says His grace is sufficient for us, and His power is made perfect in weakness. When has this been true for you?
- Have there been times when one of you needed extra grace from the other in your weakness?
- Did God allow others around you to grow because of your weakness?

**Week 46 November 15: The Hermit**

- Living among people who cannot understand your situation can be lonely and exhausting. How do you stay connected to others who can relate?
- Stephanie isolated herself because it was easier to live waiting to hear from her fiancé than trying to interact with those not involved with the military. Have you isolated yourself? What effect did it have on you?
- How can interacting with others bring good into your marriage?
- Stepping up to help teach new military couples became a beautiful unplanned endeavor for Stephanie. When have you been blessed by taking a risk for others? Who has blessed you?

**Week 46 November 16: The Power of Grace**

- When have you asked yourself, “Why is this happening to me? Why couldn’t this be easy?”
- Have you been taught that being a Christian leads to being immune from trials? Do you feel that having enough faith should take away the suffering? Why or why not?
- Erin learned that even when her life was hard, God had a covering of grace over her. When have you keenly felt a covering of grace over you? Over your marriage?
- Which people in the Bible cried their real needs and feelings out to God, with both struggle and praise? If you were to write a Psalm about a hard time in your life, what would it say?

**Week 46 November 17: Help Is Always Near**

- After ten months, Kailynn was still having a hard time adjusting to Hawaii. What has been your hardest adjustment? Why?
- Kailynn was trying hard to be happy in her new home, but she couldn't put a finger on why she was feeling so unhappy. When have you had feelings you couldn't understand?
- It took another person (her mom) to help her figure out some of the reasons for her feelings. Who helps you sort through feelings? Are there feelings you sort through with each other?
- Every move includes a range of feelings. Some of them may be depression, sadness, frustration, and feeling overwhelmed. There may be learning, growing, and excitement. What have been your feelings? Are they different or the same for each of you?

**Week 46 November 18: Hold the Phone**

- Military families are expected to appear strong and positive, and often negative feelings remain hidden. When have you hidden your feelings or felt guilty about them?
- Is there a "safe place" or a "safe person" to help you, allowing you to be honest without judging you? Who has been a mentor to you?
- Learning that her husband just needed to hear her voice changed the way Brenda felt about otherwise mundane calls. Do you believe just hearing your voice helps your spouse? Take a moment to talk about this with each other.
- The challenge to communicate can be hard under normal circumstances and magnified when you are separated by distance. Setting realistic expectations helps. What are your expectations of each other?

**Week 47 November 19: A Proclamation of Prayer and Fasting**

- Chaplain (Maj. Gen) Carver proclaimed a day of prayer and fasting for protection, preservation, and peace for soldiers and families. Have you prayed specifically together as a couple for this or another issue? Fasted?
- On the day of prayer and fasting there were no suicides, U.S. casualties, or motorcycle accidents. Make a commitment now to pray regularly for peace and specifically against the spirit of suicide.

- If you are a spouse who has now, or in the future, determined that suicide could be a possibility, determine now what you will do and who you will call.
- Have you suffered and been depressed to the point that you considered taking your own life? If you have, those who love you have lost, and the enemy has won. Determine now who you will call if you come to that place.

#### **Week 47 November 20: The Power of Prayer**

- When you think about prayer, what do you think your prayers should be like?
- Sherrey didn't know until later that a group of people was praying for her and her family. It turned out to be a great gift. When have the prayers of others helped you?
- Have you asked others to commit to praying for you regularly as prayer partners?
- Is there someone you do – or can – pray for regularly?

#### **Week 47 November 21: Suicide Intervention**

- Has someone you know talked about suicide before? What did you do?
- Have you learned to recognize the signs of someone who is suicidal? Would you recognize signals in yourself? Talk about those signs together.
- Carrie prayed for help and responded with the knowledge she had. If the soldier had died, what would you say to Carrie?
- If someone has, or does, take their life, would you say those same words to yourself?

#### **Week 47 November 22: A Promise to Bring Her Home**

- The first morning of his wife's deployment Wayne felt anger, then fear. When have you felt those feelings?
- Wayne began to pray intensely in response to his fear, and he heard God speak to him. When have you experienced encountering God in a very personal way?
- When God spoke He said, "Do not be stuck in a dwelling place over her life as her life is in fact Mine." Have you been "stuck in a dwelling place"? How?
- Talk with each other about your ability to trust God with each other's lives and what that looks like for you.

**Week 47 November 23: The Tornado**

- Carol thought she was prepared for her son's deployment, and the emotions that tore through her took her by surprise. When have you been surprised this way?
- For days Carol disintegrated when she tried to pray. Do you see disintegrating as a position of strength or weakness?
- One by one God revealed something that helped. When have you experienced strength that came in small pieces at a time?
- Everything that Carol felt during her emotional tornado was "returned, recycled, or renewed." Talk about any emotions you have had and which of these categories applied.

**Week 47 November 24: "God Is My Strength"**

- After an enormous loss, Cathryn had to ask God to give her mercy and courage for each day. When have you grieved a loss and depended on God to help you with each day?
- Cathryn's pregnancy was extra hard because she had already lost a child. When have you had to go through a situation that affected you because of a past experience?
- Did you have a different outcome from the past?
- What have you experienced that rendered you capable of more than you thought you could be?

**Week 47 November 25: Delivering Baby Showers**

- America has recognized and acted on the need to support military members and families. When have you felt encouraged by someone you didn't know?
- How do you feel about celebrities that support the military and their families?
- How have you, or can you, show support to other wives expecting babies when their spouse is deployed?
- If stories like those in this devotional lift your spirits and encourage you, what sources can you tap into to read more stories like these?

**Week 48 November 26: "A Prayer for My Son"**

- Carol's asked God to protect her son's heart, his mind, and his relationship with Him. Which Scripture can you write that pertains to each of these parts of a person?

- Her prayer asked God to guard her son's emotional, spiritual, and physical state. Why is it important to pray for each of these specifically?
- Her prayer asked that her son be able to see God in the faces of all he met, including his enemies. Talk about how a person could see God, even in a face full of hatred.
- This mom who had lost a son prayed for the people of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Iran, When have you prayed for someone who has hated or hurt you?

#### **Week 48 November 27: Courage**

- Do you feel God really understands what it means to send a child to a place that hates and wanted to kill him? Can He really relate to your feelings?
- LuAnn thought she was supposed to be courageous, so she faked courage. When have you faked an emotion to make yourself look as you think you're supposed to?
- Read Psalm 91 and talk about what it means for each of you.
- Courage turned into action for LuAnn. Her action helped others find courage and healing. When has someone used their own experiences and acted upon them to help you?

#### **Week 48 November 28: To Send a Son**

- There was only a minute to tell Marshale news that buckled her knees. When have you had a phone call that gave you hard news with no ability to discuss it further at that time?
- How did you process your emotions from the time of the call to the next conversation?
- Marshale had to congratulate her son and show her support, even though it was painful for her. When have you had to do something similar?
- Luke 2:35, 51 say Mary, mother of Jesus, would have a sword pierce her own soul, too. What does this mean? How is it similar to your situation?

#### **Week 48 November 29: Perfect Provision**

- Kathleen collapsed to the floor when she got the call her son had been wounded. Was there a time when news leveled you immediately?
- Talk with each other about that moment and the process you went through to recover.
- Turning back her fears to God kept her from being consumed by them. When have you taken fear and turned it back to God.

- How does a person literally “turn back fear” to God?

#### **Week 48 November 30: Finding Peace in War**

- For fifty-three days Kathy had not heard from her son. What has been the longest you have waited to hear, and what was it like for you?
- How did you get through those silent days?
- Kathy realized she had been focusing on what could have happened to her son instead of seeing the miracle of how God protected him. When have you had a change in perspective like this?
- Kathy says she now chooses faith daily. How would each of you go through an internal process of choosing faith daily? Would it be specific Bible verses, prayer, devotionals, a regular personal plan of action, etc.?

#### **Week 48 December 1: From Seed to Harvest**

- Kathy did not expect a phone call from a chance meeting at a veterinarian’s office. When have you experienced God working through you or another person unexpectedly?
- Her son’s second deployment led Kathy to start a ministry for women with loved ones in the military. Has an experience inspired you to start something to help someone else?
- How does answering the call to help others help you at the same time?
- How does being involved and giving of yourself to others benefit your marriage?

#### **Week 48 December 2: A Mother’s Perspective**

- Remembering a list of reasons she has learned to embrace through the years has helped Linda. The first is that God is sovereign and good. Deep in your heart do you feel the same?
- Because she loves and trusts God she submits to His plan. What feelings do you have about submitting to God’s plans? Have you each responded differently at times?
- Do you believe God is patient and loving with us, even when submitting is a struggle? Why?
- Included in Linda’s list are personal growth, believing in the cause, faith in training and equipment, and strong support back home. What would be on your list?

### **Week 49 December 3: A Father's Eulogy**

- Paul spoke at his son's funeral. What has been the most difficult thing you have ever had to do? How did you find strength to do it?
- When a loved one dies, he or she no longer suffers. It is we who remain behind who grieve. In the event that a loved one should die, describe what heaven might look like for him or her.
- The vision of his son being welcomed into heaven gave Paul strength to go through his grieving. Why is grieving necessary? Talk about how each of you processes grief.
- Helping to bury their son, brother, and friend was part of grieving and closure for many of those present. When have you grieved and eventually found closure? How did this happen?

### **Week 49 December 4: Birthday Nightmare**

- No one who has a loved one in the military wants to see military uniforms at their door. Have you lived in fear of the doorbell?
- Is there any way to prepare yourself for a message like the one delivered to the Houses?
- June 23 changed from a birthday to a day of tragedy on the calendar for Deanna. Are there specific days or times of year that are hard for you for some reason? What are they?
- Though memories, a song, or a smell could bring floods of tears, Paul felt extremely close to God in the first months after their son's death. When have you felt very close to God?

### **Week 49 December 5: A Hero's Mother**

- Deanna's son was gone, but she still greeted his unit upon their return, trying to affirm to herself that it was real. When was there a time when something did not seem fully real to you?
- In her blog entry Deanna quoted Psalm 23:4...*though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death*. A line that followed was, "Surrender it all to Jesus and walk the last shadow with Him." What do you think she meant?
- Deanna made a choice to honor her son's life by living her own to the fullest potential she has been given. Is this a perspective you have considered? Why or why not?
- How does a life lived fully honor a life given in sacrifice? Talk about what living a life to its fullest potential would mean should you lose each other or someone you love.

**Week 49 December 6: House in the Woods**

- Paul and Deanna House went to a memorial service with eighteen other families who had lost soldiers. When have you mourned a loss with others?
- How does mourning with others help? Is it different or the same for each of you? How?
- Paul believes blaming God for their loss keeps people from healing and being used to help others. Do you believe this? Has this been an issue in your own life?
- Creating House in the Woods Military and Family Retreat was one way God used Paul. What does “being used” mean to each of you? How do you feel about it?

**Week 49 December 7: The Search**

- The Kiehl’s television was tuned to the news constantly in the hopes of hearing something about their son’s unit. Does watching the news help you or make it harder for you? Why?
- Randy used all of the means available to him to find out what happened to their son. What means of getting information have been most helpful to you?
- Do you stay connected to sources of information or do you tend to avoid thinking about things? In what ways are you the same or different on this subject?
- After days of searching, a video confirmed their son was gone. Janie said she knew the Lord was near every day. When have you felt the Lord’s presence, even in the face of searching the unknown?

**Week 49 December 8: Decision in the Desert**

- When their son left for war, Randy and Janie did not know where he would spend eternity. Have you experienced having a loved one who hadn’t accepted Christ? When?
- Had it not been for a television reporter following through on their son’s request to share his acceptance of Christ, they would not have known. When has someone gifted you with an act of care and kindness?
- It was just ten days before his death that James asked the reporter to convey the message. The message arrived before the funeral. Do you think God was working an act of mercy for the Riggs’ comfort? When do you believe He has done this for you?

- James' baptism story was not only a balm for his parents, but it was a testimony to thousands when it was reported. His dad believes this was a reason for James' life and death, and says that saves his sanity. Has God used someone you know in a sacrificial way? What did each of you feel about it?

**Week 49 December 9: Mourning in a Town Called Comfort**

- One email about a community's support and respect ended up being circulated around the world. How has technology helped our soldiers and their families?
- How has technology made it harder in some ways?
- How have each of you been impacted by technology such as cable news, email, Face book, cell phones, etc.?
- There was a time in our nation when veterans and military funerals were not widely shown support and respect. People from every stage of life in Comfort, Texas, came out for the Kiehls. Why is our country different now, and how does that make you feel?

**Week 50 December 10: A Little More Each Day**

- Wayne chose to focus on growing closer to his wife while she was deployed. In what ways could you grow closer while you are apart?
- What are other ways he could have chosen to focus? What has been your focus when you are not together? How did that impact your marriage?
- When have you been intentional about investing and growing in your marriage? What are you doing now?
- Wayne recognized that his wife probably could not take away her focus from the mission to be as intentional as he was in growing together. When have you grown in different ways or at different times? Did you view this as healthy and normal?

**Week 50 December 11: Fake It Till You Make It**

- Beverly put on a good appearance of not struggling, but she was in pain physically and emotionally. When have you put on good appearances that weren't real?
- Beverly believed if she didn't look like she was struggling, then she wasn't struggling. Who have you known that you suspected was in denial about his or her own struggles?

- Have you lived in denial at any time? When? Did it impact either of you in your marriage?
- Relying on pills, not seeking others, giving help but not accepting it, and not seeing herself as “weak and wonderful” in God’s eyes damaged her body and her mind. How would you describe yourself as being weak – and wonderful?

### **Week 50 December 12: Answering Duty’s Call**

- After 30 years, Rebecca thought her dad would be retiring from the military. But he accepted an offer – not orders – to go to Iraq. Has one of you chosen to do something hard or dangerous that was an option, but not a requirement?
- Have you made a choice that you believed was the right thing to do, but a hard thing to do?
- Rebecca knew her dad was scheduled to come home for important events, but pondered, “what if” something happened? When has a “what if” gotten a hold on you?
- Years later, Rebecca felt called to a mission, knowing others were concerned about her going. When have you felt called to do something others were concerned about?

### **Week 50 December 13: Another’s Hands**

- Michelle’s husband was her best friend and hero, but her friend Kiersten was her battle buddy, helping her through some of her hardest times. Who has been your battle buddy?
- When has God helped you through another’s hands?
- Because of their shared experiences Michelle and Kiersten have a special bond. Have there been others with whom you share a bond because of life experiences? Who and when?
- Which experiences have forged an even closer bond between the two of you?

### **Week 50 December 14: “Mission Trip”**

- Staying longer in Afghanistan was a sacrifice for both Jessica, her husband, and family. Initially they wanted to say no. Has there been a time when you were asked to make a sacrifice you didn’t want to?
- Though they wanted to say no, they both prayed and believed staying longer was what God wanted. When have you felt God was leading you to a specific action?

- As the deployment went on Jessica's husband began to feel like he was on a mission trip, ministering to young marines. When have you known God was working through you to teach others about Him?
- How do you feel about saying, "Here I am, Lord send me."? How do you come to an agreement in your marriage when you believe one or both of you is called?

### **Week 50 December 15: I Was Alone**

- Stuck in a hotel room in Japan with no way to talk with other adults she knew, Melissa felt completely alone. When have you felt like there was no one to tell how you were feeling?
- Melissa had to take care of two small children by herself. Has there been an extended period of time when you had to care for children alone?
- Whether you were the one deployed or you were the one at home, did you feel your spouse could not possibly understand exactly what you were going through? How did that feel?
- The long time "alone" made Melissa make many new friends. She realized she was never really alone. When have you had to intentionally reach out to others or remain alone?

### **Week 50 December 16: Electronically Married**

- A month into the second deployment Melissa already felt emotionally exhausted. Have either of you felt this way early on? If you have had multiple deployments, was one different from another? How?
- Though she looked forward to phone calls she hung up disappointed. They were short and difficult with voice delays. What have been your joys and frustrations about communicating?
- Talking by email made communication better for Melissa, but she found she didn't know how to talk with her husband anymore. When have you had to adjust – and readjust – to different ways of communicating?
- Unlike other wars, technology has helped spouses communicate. What has worked for you? What hasn't? What ways of communicating work best now?

**Week 51 December 17: Haley's Testimony**

- When Haley lost her dad, church family and friends came to comfort her family, but she only wanted to stay locked up in her room. Have there been times when you wanted to grieve alone? Do you believe both grieving alone and grieving with others is needed? Why?
- Haley asked God why He had done such a dramatic thing to her. When have you felt God allowed something you did not understand?
- Do you believe God understands our anger, our questioning, and our grief? Knowing what you know about God, what do you think He would say about those feelings?
- It has been several years since Haley lost her dad. She has come to a place where she has found some peace and experienced some blessings. With this great a loss, would you continue to have feelings of many kinds that varied throughout life? Is this okay?

**Week 51 December 18: Christ Is the Focus**

- Christy did not want her pastor husband to become a chaplain, but ultimately she did not want to stand in God's way. When have either of you made a choice that was hard for the other?
- It was six months before her husband asked again and Christy was able to say yes. How much time, and what decision-making process, do you give to each other?
- If you struggle over coming to a decision together how do you work through it?
- Dale led one soldier to Christ and said there were two hundred and ninety-nine to go. Both Dale and Christy were convinced he was where he needed to be. When have you known without a doubt you were where God wanted you to be?

**Week 51 December 19: The Best Place to Be**

- Christy had to face a moment no military spouse or parent wants to face. Her first response was, "The Lord gives and the Lord takes away." Have you thought about what your first response would be if you faced a great loss like hers?
- Before she answered her children Christy asked them a question that helped them through what she had to tell them. Her question was, "Where's the best place to be?" How did putting her children in this frame of mind help them hear the hard message?

- Have you thought about how you would tell your children if the worst happened to either of you?
- Christy later said, “That is why we live. To glorify God and enjoy him.” Talk about what she meant and your own perspectives on why we live.

### **Week 51 December 20: Message of Peace**

- Another military wife showed Christy an email her husband had written about Dale. The email gave her comfort. People want to hear about their loved ones in their time of grieving. Do you find it awkward or hard to talk with someone who has lost someone?
- When has another person shared some information about someone you loved that gave you comfort?
- What are comforting and appropriate words to share? What words would not be helpful to either of you or someone else?
- Dale told his assistant he knew he would not be going home. When have you known something inside of you even before it happened?

### **Week 51 December 21: Parenting Through Grief**

- Grieving is a necessary part of being able to move forward in life after loss. Sheila helped her children celebrate their father’s life and talk about his death. Is there a loss you have not grieved?
- Is there a loss you have helped another person grieve? Is there a loss you may need to help someone else in your life grieve?
- Sheila recognized that she could not help her children with their grief alone, and involved Christian counselors. Would you do the same? What is your opinion on counseling?
- Is there something a Godly Christian counselor could help you work through? Improve on?

### **Week 51 December 22: Survivor’s Guilt**

- Only God chooses how long we stay on this earth, but because we are human and care about others we can feel guilt when others suffer and we don’t. When have you felt happy for yourself, but guilty because someone else was hurting?

- Kathy felt like her presence would only be a reminder to bring pain to her friend. Have you experienced these kinds of feelings?
- Has one of you experienced survivor's guilt while the other has not? How can one spouse help the other if this experience occurs?
- Kathy ultimately realized that she could not work through her conflicting emotions and questions. She could only give them to God. When have you tried hard to sort out inner conflict, but had to give up and give it to God without resolving it yourself?

### **Week 51 December 23: The Anniversary of Compassion**

- The year had been full of anniversaries of the deaths of soldiers from the battalion. Amy felt those anniversaries deeply, especially the last one. Are there anniversaries that mark sadness for you?
- How do you communicate and share your feelings over them in your marriage?
- When have you felt emotions over what has happened to someone you didn't even know?
- Amy felt inspired to be less like her tendencies to be like Martha, and more like Mary, stopping, touching, crying, and loving. What are your tendencies, and how do they affect your marriage and other relationships?

### **Week 52 December 24: The War Comes Home**

- In an attempt to make Christmas special for her daughter, Amy accidentally set the apartment on fire. When have you had a day you tried your best to make special and it just fell to pieces?
- Friends and neighbors poured out help, even attempting to save Christmas presents and furniture. When has extraordinary care been poured out for you?
- When have you showed someone else extraordinary care?
- When have you poured out yourselves in an extraordinary way for each other? How did it feel for each of you?

### **Week 52 December 25: Immanuel: God with Us**

- Once people found out Amy's husband was a deployed soldier they poured out even more care on her. When have you experienced civilians who have shown care and support?

- People chose to give up their own holiday to give help to Amy and her daughter. At first Amy was embarrassed and hesitant to receive their gifts of time and toys. How do you feel when you are in need and someone wants to help you? Do you let them?
- Is it easy for you to give, but hard to receive? Or vice versa? Are you able to see others being blessed by giving? Why?
- Is God with us through other people? When have you shown the love of God to each other?

### **Week 52 December 26: Not the Man I Married**

- With repeated and extended deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan PTSD has affected more soldiers and families than ever. Have you experienced the effects of repeated or extended deployments?
- Marshale wrote a letter to express the feelings she was having about the effects of deployment on her husband and marriage. Writing can help us work through painful or confusing feelings. Have you tried writing to each other to talk about hard issues?
- Whether you have had one deployment or many, how are you different than you were before?
- Marshale said she and her husband had to find ways to rebuild their marriage which had been changed by the effects of war. What are some ways to start building on – or rebuilding – your marriage?

### **Week 52 December 27: Love Is Patient**

- Teresa's husband came home from war extremely negative and a with a short fuse. What negative characteristics have either of you encountered at any time in your marriage?
- Teresa recognized her hurt was natural. Instead of feeling guilt or trying to just live with it, she chose to show her husband the love God describes in 1 Corinthians 13. When have you shown each other love, patience, and kindness when it was hard to do so?
- After her husband's injuries Teresa chose to adjust to "a new normal" in their marriage. When have you gone through a significant change in your relationship that caused you to reassess what was "normal"?

- Initially it could have been easier to give up on the marriage. They chose to work on it instead. When have you experienced hard times and made it, or witnessed someone else who did?

**Week 52 December 28: Advocate of Hope**

- Patti wanted to be a nurse, but the path of her life changed to include care giving and patient advocacy for her husband. How have dreams been realized or changed for each of you?
- Although it has been incredibly difficult, Patti says she would not trade her life for one free of trials and heartaches. When have trials and heartaches ultimately made your life better?
- Because of their experiences, Patti says they can witness to others in a way they would not have been able to otherwise, making it all worth it. When have you been able to witness to others because of your own experiences?
- Which trials or heartaches have drawn you closer in your marriage?

**Week 52 December 29: “It’s Not His Fault”**

- In an interview Megan described what it was like to have a father with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI). If you have children, in what ways has your military experience affected their lives?
- What do you realize about your own struggles as individuals that affect your children or each other?
- What do you realize about your own strengths as individuals that affect your children or each other?
- The people in your life, whether children or adults, can understand and adjust better to things that impact them if there is a safe, open process of communication. What is a method of communicating you can, or do, use that explains, reassures, and is open for questions?

**Week 52 December 30: Hope for Wounded Warriors**

- Gina’s faith in God’s sovereignty anchored her, but she was still exhausted physically and emotionally. When have you felt the same?
- As an individual family it was difficult for anyone not in their circumstances to relate to their life situation. When have you been in a situation that others could not understand?

- The Wounded Warrior Getaways put the Paxton family together with others like them, and gave them joyous time together. Would you – or have you – participated in a program created for those whose needs and situations are similar?
- What does living victoriously mean to each of you as individuals? In your marriage?

**Week 52 December 31: Secondary Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder**

- Rahnella says Secondary PTSD has become recognized in the military. What are your feelings about a diagnosis of either PTSD or Secondary PTSD?
- Are any of the PTSD or Secondary PTSD symptoms affecting one or both of you? If you have any of these symptoms at all, what are they?
- When have you had the discussion about PTSD and Secondary PTSD so you are aware these could be happening to you now, or even in the future? If you haven't had it, do it now.
- What will you do if one of you is showing symptoms, but is in denial that it is happening?