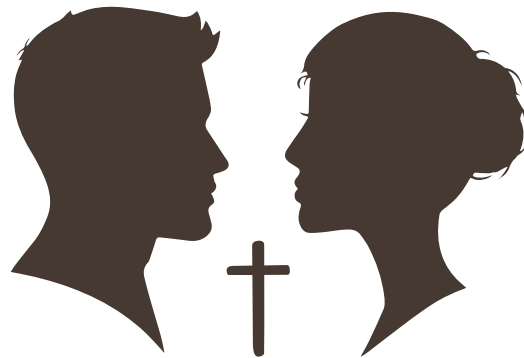


RELATING RIGHTLY

BEING A WIFE WHO GLORIFIES GOD

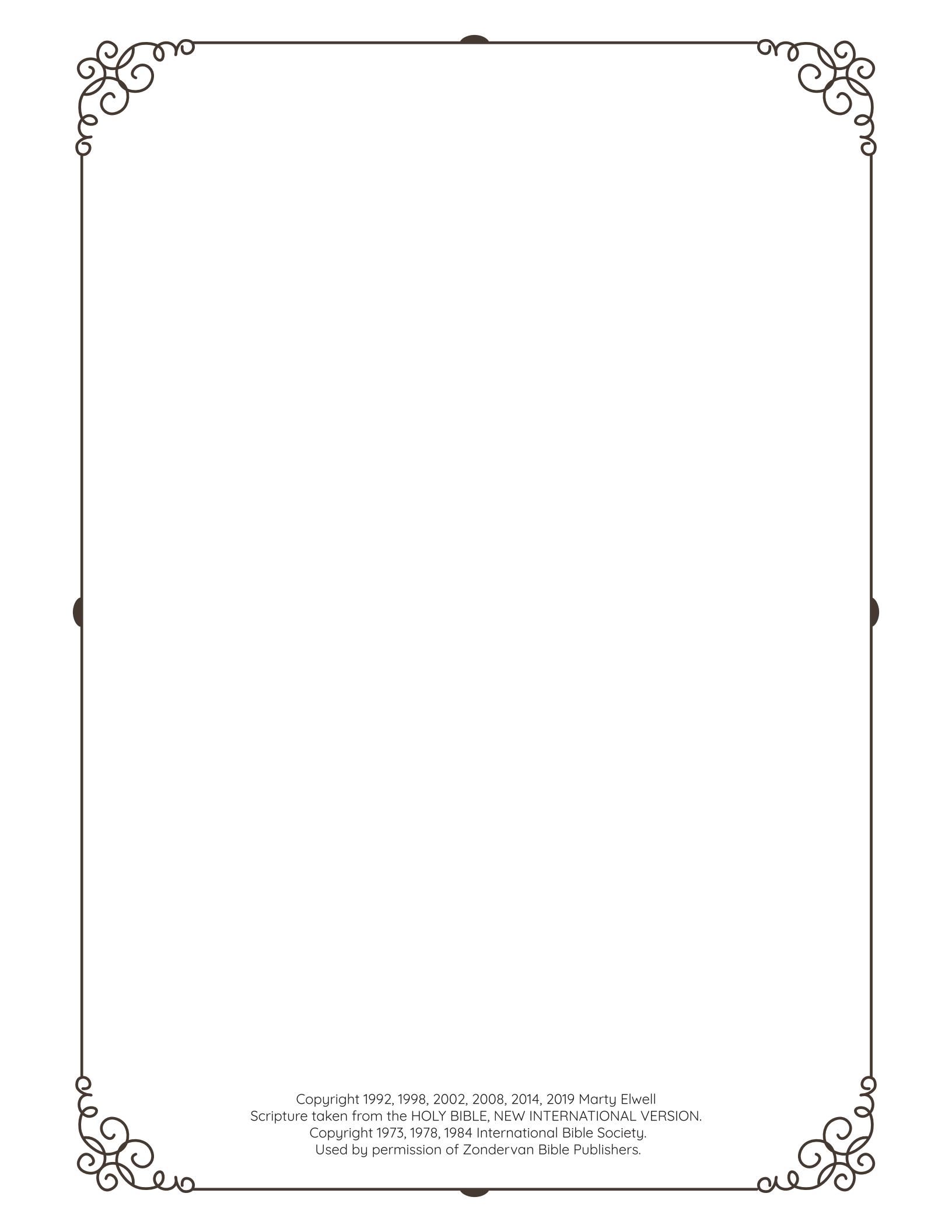
STUDY BY MARTY ELWELL



RELATING RIGHTLY

BEING A WIFE WHO GLORIFIES GOD

STUDY BY MARTY ELWELL



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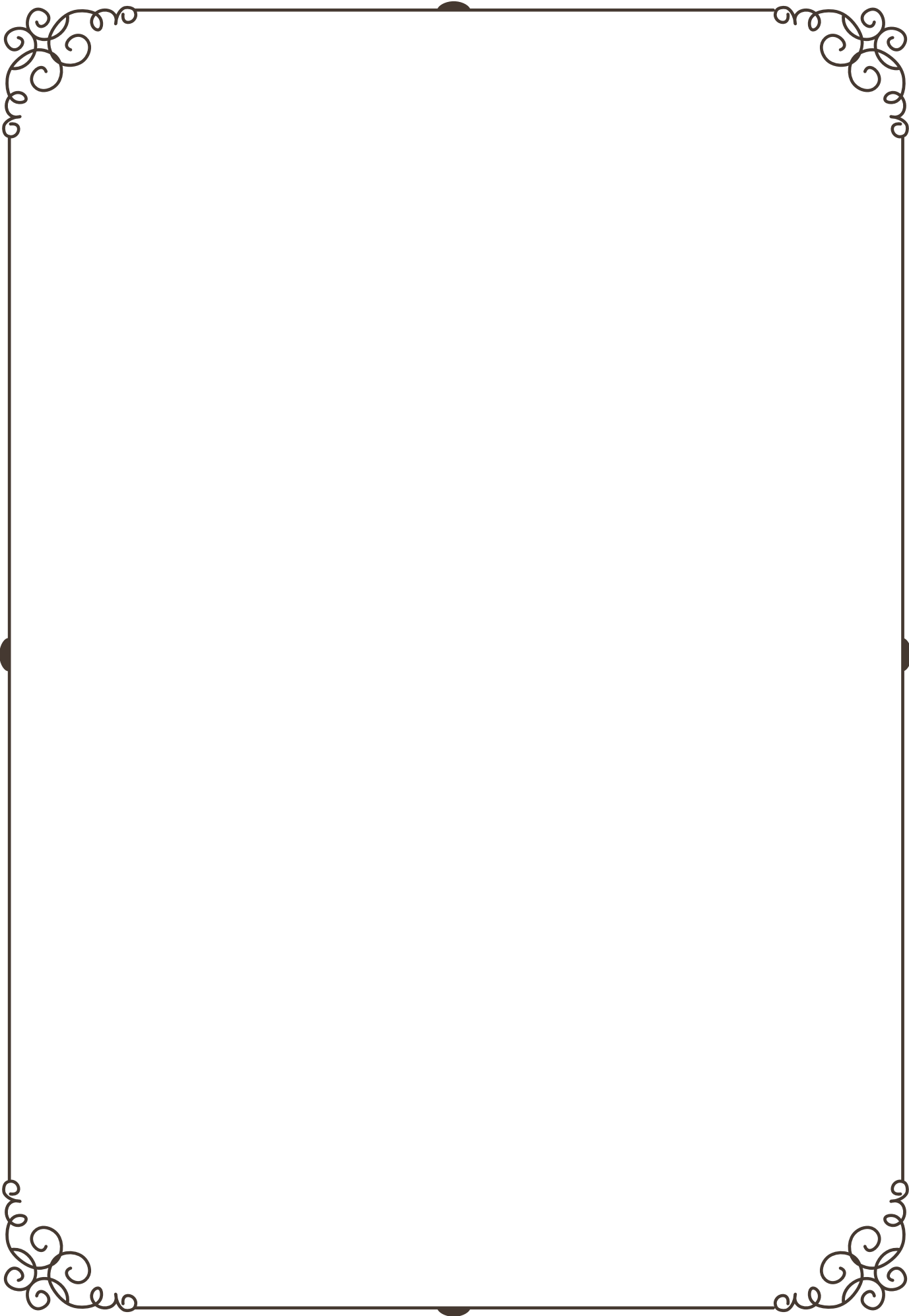


Ultimate Outcomes is a non-profit organization founded on the fruit of the 30 plus years Pastor Richard Elwell and his wife Marty spent in church ministry, developing studies that would help their congregants discern and apply God's truth. Richard was a firm believer that the outcomes in our lives are a result of what ideas we choose to believe and follow.

After Richard died of a rare liver disease in 2018, Ultimate Outcomes has taken on the mission of sharing the Elwell's insights with all people who desire to live a better life and are willing to look to God for understanding of the way they are to go. To that end it makes available for free download on its website: Bible studies, Sunday school curriculum, and sermon podcasts.

Richard earned a Master of Divinity degree from the International School of Theology and was the founding and senior pastor at University Park Church, San Bernardino, CA for over 30 years. His passion was always to make God's truth understandable and applicable to all who hunger for it. Marty holds a Master's Degree in Teaching Processes from Claremont Graduate University. Her passion has been to train women and provide curriculum for parents who want to raise up their children up in the ways of the Lord.

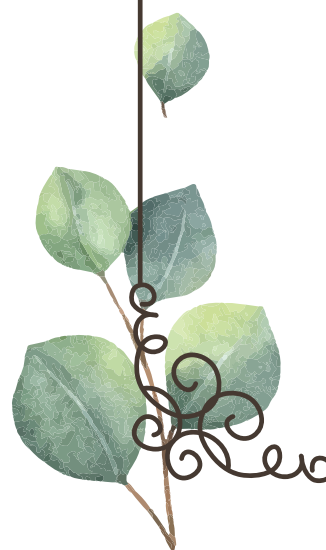
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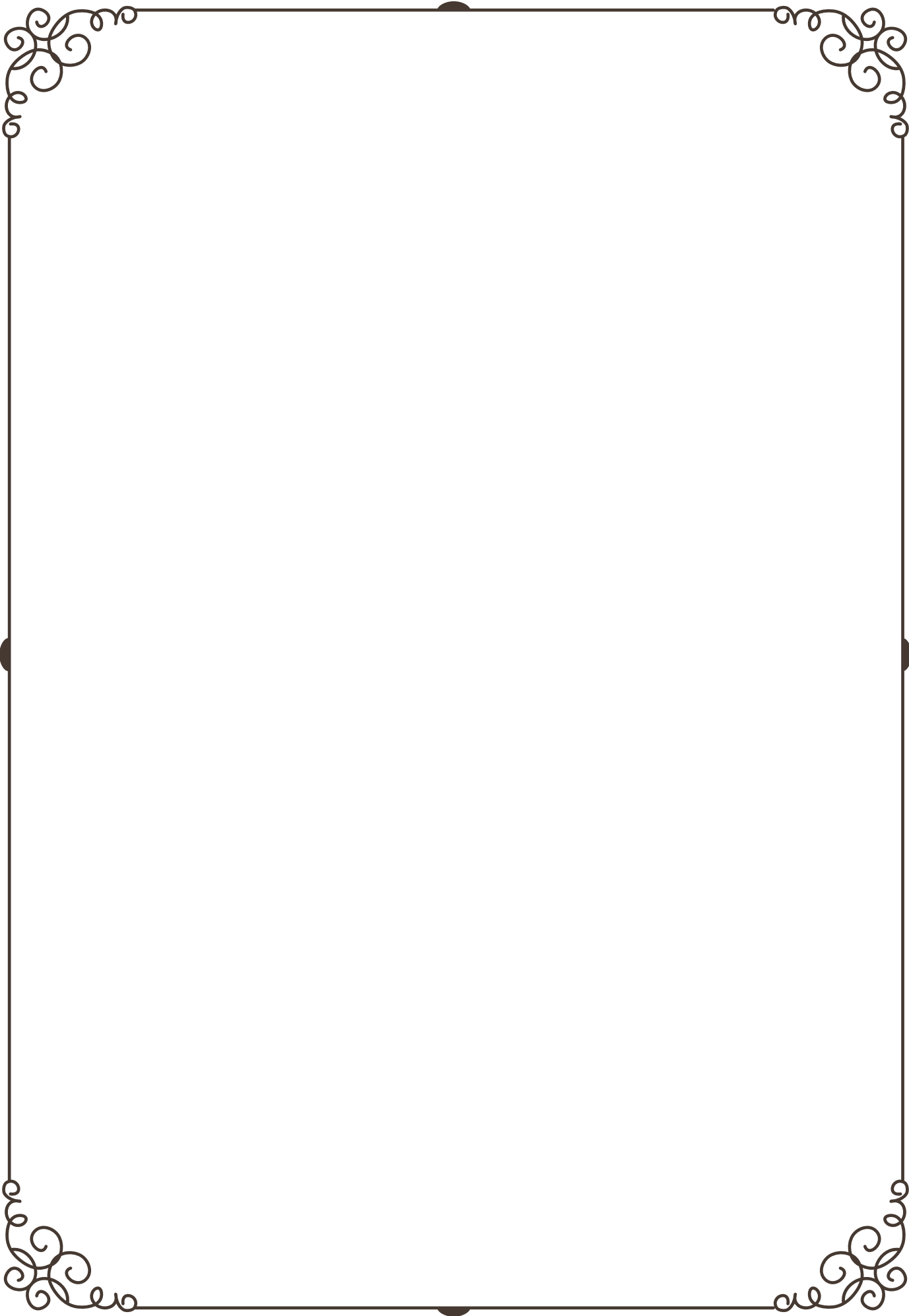


RELATING RIGHTLY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	7
SESSION 1.....	9
UNDERSTANDING THE DESIGN OF MARRIAGE	
SESSION 2.....	12
BECOMING VALUABLE AS A WIFE	
SESSION 3.....	17
BEING A TRUSTWORTHY SPOUSE	
SESSION 4.....	23
DOING GOOD TO YOUR HUSBAND	
SESSION 5.....	29
ACTING IN TRUE LOVE	
PERSONAL ACTION.....	33
PUTTING ON LOVE	





INTRODUCTION

When my oldest daughter was about twelve years old, I started an old-fashioned girls club for her and a group of friends. We would get together once a month at my father's old farmhouse to spend the night. The girls would cook, do crafts, play games, and practice proper manners. The focus, however, was for them to learn what it meant to be a woman of noble character according to the Bible. To that end I looked to Proverbs 31 and began to write a simple study for them. I soon realized that what I was learning was valuable for me and would be beneficial for the women of the church my husband was pastoring.

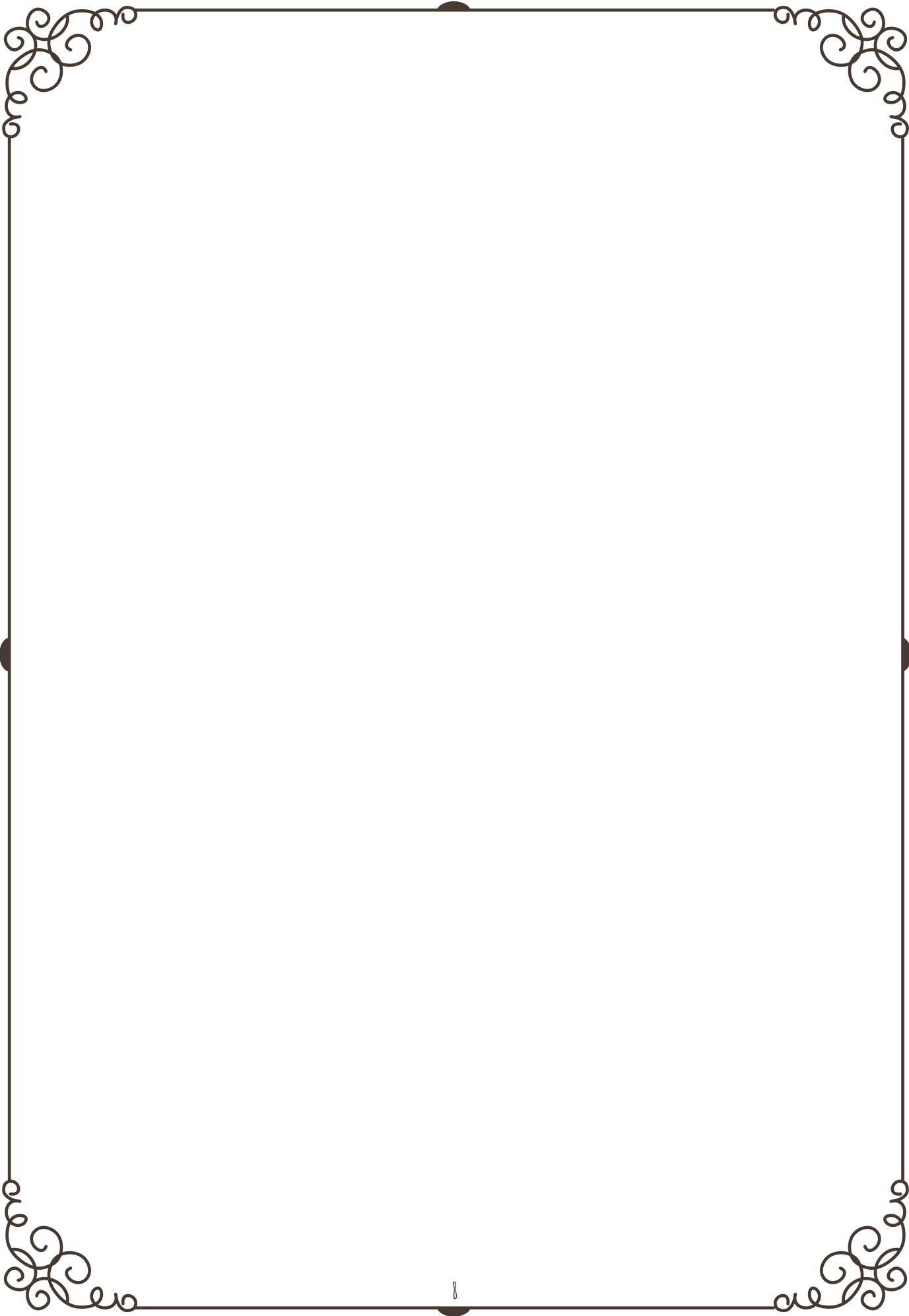
The outcome of my 25-year endeavor is a two-year discipleship program, "More Valuable than Rubies: Becoming a Wife of Noble Character." The study, affectionately nicknamed "Rubies," is designed to help women understand and live out biblical principles from Proverbs 31 and related scriptures. While the whole study is immensely valuable, I realized that the first three lessons are of the utmost importance as they teach a woman how to relate rightly to her husband. Learning those principles and applying them to my life took me from being a rebellious, unsubmitted wife to one who was truly a benefit and blessing to my husband and in being so brought honor and glory to God.

In the last year of my husband's life when he was suffering from the ravages of a rare liver disease, by God's grace I had become the wife he needed. I can say that when he died after 41 years of marriage, our relationship, while not perfect, was close to what God intended it to be. My only regret is that I didn't know when I was younger what I understood by the end of my husband's life. I have resolved to do what I can to fulfill the directive of Titus 2:3 which says for older women to train the younger women to love their husbands.

This is not a how to manual or a checklist on how to become a better wife. It simply examines what the Bible says and compares the outcomes of applying or not applying the biblical principles. When he opened a counseling session my husband would say, "God is smarter than we are and we do well when we understand what he says to do and apply it to our life." Then he would ask, "Are you willing to set aside your own preconceptions, look to God's Word and do what it says?" If you can answer yes to that question, this study will be of benefit to you. If your answer is no or you are unsure, take a step back, pray and ask God to open your heart before you proceed.

The focus of this study is on what you need to do to relate rightly to your husband, not what he needs to do. You are responsible for yourself and your actions, not your husband's. I pray that by working through this material, you will gain greater understanding of what it means to relate rightly to your husband and in doing so glorify God.

Marty Elwell



SESSION 1

UNDERSTANDING THE DESIGN OF MARRIAGE



BOTH MAN AND WOMAN WERE CREATED IN GOD'S IMAGE

Genesis 1:26-27

²⁶Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

²⁷So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

1. What is different about people from all other living things that God created?
2. Describe the character of God, the attributes that He has called us to reflect.
3. What is the only way we can truly reflect God's character?
4. What is the implication of God creating both the man and the woman in his image?
5. How should being created in the image of God affect the way we think about ourselves and live out our lives?

WOMAN WAS CREATED WITH A SPECIAL PURPOSE

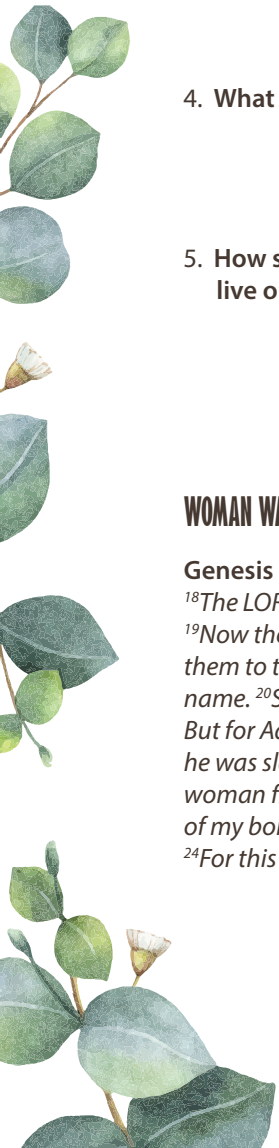
Genesis 2:18-24

¹⁸The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

¹⁹Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. ²⁰So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field.

But for Adam no suitable helper was found. ²¹So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. ²²Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. ²³The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man."

²⁴For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.





1. Why did God create Eve? (vs. 18-20)

2. The word helper, which is used to describe the role of a woman in relationship to her husband, is the same Hebrew word used in two other ways in the Old Testament: a king coming alongside to help another king and God coming alongside to help man. Thinking about this use of the word helper, what then does the word mean in terms of the wife's role?

/

3. What is the equality that both men and women have?

4. What is the inequality between men and women?

5. Why is it important to understand the difference between equality of status and equality of function?

6. How can a woman be a good helper to a man?

7. What will being a good helper do for a woman?

8. What is the problem if the helper wants to be the leader?



Illustration: To illustrate the different roles and their value, Richard would have couples picture a beautiful cathedral likening the man's role to the outside roof and walls which cover and protect and the woman's role to the beautiful inside pillars which support and stabilize the roof and walls.



9. What does it mean that a man and a woman become one flesh? (vs. 24)

10. Why isn't a one-flesh relationship between a husband and wife to be broken?



Illustration: *In premarital counseling Pastor Richard always used the illustration of mixing clay together to demonstrate the one flesh relationship. If you mix a yellow and blue ball of clay together you will end up with a new color, green. If you break the ball apart you will only get green, not yellow and blue again. Once joined in marriage, a couple cannot be what they were before, two separate individuals. They are linked together in a way that is not to be broken.*

11. Why is it important for you to remember that marriage is a one-flesh relationship?

While imprisoned by the Nazis, Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote down a beautiful sermon for the wedding of his niece: "Today you are young and very much in love and you think that your love will sustain your marriage. It won't. But your marriage can sustain your love!" Eric Metaxas, *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy* (Thomas Nelson, 2011), page 458

12. How do priorities within a marriage change when a couple has children?

13. What happens if a wife places a higher priority on her children than on her husband?

PERSONAL PRAYER

Write out a prayer for the work you would like God to do in you as you go through the study.

SESSION 2

BECOMING VALUABLE AS A WIFE



A WIFE OF NOBLE CHARACTER IS MORE VALUABLE THAN RUBIES

Proverbs 31:10

A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies.

1. What makes rubies so valuable?

It is interesting to note that some inclusions (flaws) in a ruby can make it more valuable because of the beauty of the reflection when it is cut, while other inclusions lessen its value.

2. What does noble mean?

3. Why is a wife of noble character worth far more than valuable jewels?

4. Why isn't a wife of noble character easy to find?

Proverbs 12:4

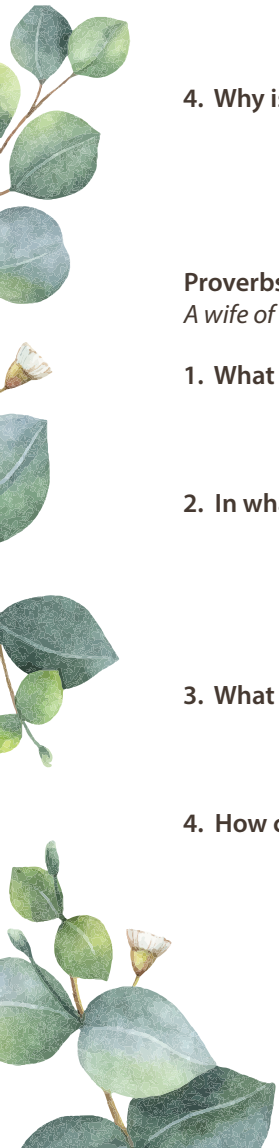
A wife of noble character is her husband's crown, but a disgraceful wife is like decay in his bones.

1. What does a crown do for a person?

2. In what way would a wife be a crown to her husband?

3. What does it mean that a disgraceful wife is "like decay in his bones"?

4. How can a wife bring disgrace to her husband?





A WIFE OF NOBLE CHARACTER SUBMITS TO HER HUSBAND'S LEADERSHIP

Ephesians 5:22-24

²²Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. ²³For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ²⁴Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

1. What is submission?

2. Why are women to submit to their husbands?

Note from Marty: I remember very clearly when I finally chose to submit to my husband's leadership. I was standing at the kitchen counter in the first house we owned. Everything in me was rebelling at the idea of having to submit. I had been a radical feminist before becoming a Christian and marrying my husband. Standing there, I knew I needed to change my attitude and said to God, "You know Lord that I don't want to submit, but because you say that is what I am supposed to do, I am going to do my best to do it with your help and by your grace." At that moment, my life and marriage took a huge leap forward. Did I submit perfectly from then on? Of course not, but my heart's desire became to do what is right and a lot of struggle and conflict between my husband and me came to an end.

3. Why do women view submission as a negative thing?

4. What does it mean that a woman is to submit to her husband in everything? (vs. 24)

Illustration from Marty's life: I remember one time in particular when I didn't feel good about a plan Richard was making and gave my opinion and an alternative idea. The problem was that I felt very strongly that I was right and didn't let it go. I continued to emphatically repeat my thoughts to him. After a few days, Richard finally said to me, "Marty I can see your point and I think you are right, but because of the way you dealt with me I can't follow your suggestion. The shock of him saying that caused me to modify my behavior. I learned to state my opinion once and then let it go. I stopped living under the illusion that I had to say something over and over to be heard.

5. What would happen if the church weren't submitted to Christ in everything?



6. What are indications that a woman is not submissive to her husband?

7. What is the result when a woman is not submissive to her husband?

8. What is the result when a woman is submissive to her husband?

Remember: To be willing to do something that one is not naturally inclined to do demonstrates a real connection to God and strength of character. Submission is an act of the will that comes through a position of strength and reliance on God. Submission requires dying to self and being alive in Christ so that Christ would be glorified.

JESUS IS OUR EXAMPLE OF SUBMISSION

Philippians 2:1-13

¹If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ²then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. ³Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. ⁴Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

⁶Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross! ⁹Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

¹²Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed--not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence--continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.



1. According to the following verses, what should we be like if we are united with Christ?

Vs. 2

Vs. 3

Vs. 4

2. How do the characteristics of being united with Christ relate to your relationship with your husband?

Vs. 2

Vs. 3

Vs. 4

3. What are not to be the motives for anything we do? (vs. 3)

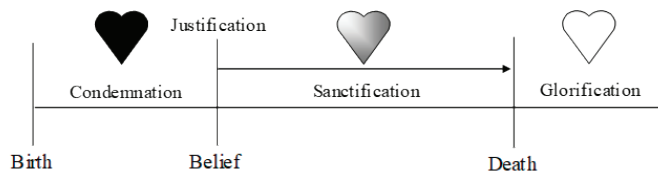
What do those motives result in?

4. Even though Christ is God, what did he do? (vs. 6-8)

What was the result of Christ doing that? (vs. 9-11)

5. Because of what Christ did, what are we to do? (vs. 12)

Salvation consists of two parts: justification and sanctification. When we confess faith in Jesus and what he did on the cross, we are justified, saved from the penalty of our sin, and no longer in a state of condemnation. Sanctification begins at the point of justification and is the process of being made holy by the work of the Holy Spirit in us; we are being delivered from the power of sin. Glorification is the end result when in death we enter into Christ's eternal presence, completely free from the power and presence of sin.



Keeping in mind the two parts of salvation and that salvation isn't based on works (Eph. 2:8-9), what does it mean to work out our salvation with fear and trembling?





6. What do you need to learn and apply from Philippians 2:1-13?

7. Why does God do that work in you? (vs. 13)

8. What will be the result of God doing that work in you?

Matthew 20:25-28

²⁵Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles exercise authority over them. ²⁶Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ²⁷and whoever wants to be first must be your slave – ²⁸just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many.

9. If we want to be truly great in the kingdom of God, what do we have to become?

PERSONAL EVALUATION

Rate the degree to which you demonstrate the following characteristics in the way you relate to your husband. The symbols mean: -- (minus sign) I don't do this at all, 0 (zero) I do this some but not a lot, + (plus sign) This characterizes my behavior

		-	0	+
1	I don't go my own way or make major decisions apart from my husband.			
2	I don't badger or try to manipulate my husband when I want something he doesn't.			
3	I don't bad mouth my husband to my children or other people.			
4	I don't make snide remarks or give nasty looks to my husband.			
5	I don't try to hide things I am doing or have done from my husband.			
6	I don't undermine my husband's decisions, either subtly or overtly. I don't question my husband's actions or motives.			
7	I don't do things I know my husband doesn't like for me do to.			
8	I don't let my children do things I know my husband doesn't like for them to do.			
9	My husband can ask me to do legitimate things that I really don't want or like to do and I will readily do them for him.			
10	I daily seek conviction of sin in terms of how I may be relating wrongly to my husband, confess, and repent of it.			

My evaluation of myself is:

My prayer for myself is:



SESSION 3

BEING A TRUSTWORTHY SPOUSE



A WIFE OF NOBLE CHARACTER IS TRUSTWORTHY

Proverbs 31:11

Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value.

1. What is a definition of confidence?
2. What causes a husband to have full confidence in his wife?
3. How would a man lose confidence in his wife?
4. What does it mean to lack nothing of value?
5. Why does a man lack nothing of value when his wife is trustworthy and submitted to God and his leadership?

HAVING NOTHING IS BETTER THAN HAVING A QUARRELSOME WIFE

Proverbs 21:9, 19

⁹*Better to live on a corner of the roof than share a house with a quarrelsome wife.*

¹⁹*Better to live in a desert than with a quarrelsome and ill-tempered wife.*

1. Why is it better to live in poverty than with a quarrelsome wife?
2. What are signs that a woman is quarrelsome and contentious?
3. How does a wife become quarrelsome and contentious?





4. What will be the outcome for a wife if she is quarrelsome and contentious?

Note: A quarrelsome and contentious wife wants a good husband and home but she will never get it because she tries to make it happen on her own apart from submission to God and her husband.




FIGHTS AND QUARRELS COME FROM A WRONG FOCUS

James 3:13-4:6

¹³Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. ¹⁴But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. ¹⁵Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. ¹⁶For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

¹⁷But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. ¹⁸Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.

¹What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? ²You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. ³When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. ⁴You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. ⁵Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely? ⁶But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

- 
1. What demonstrates a good life? (vs. 13)
 2. What is a simple definition of wisdom?
 3. Psalm 111:10a says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." A summary of Psalm 34 shows that the fear of the Lord is knowing who God is, that he knows and sees everything we do, and we will be held accountable to him for our thoughts, words and actions. Why is the fear of the Lord the beginning of wisdom?
 4. What creates a disordered life and what do those things mean? (vs. 14)
 5. What is a woman like who harbors bitter envy and selfish ambition?
 6. What is the wisdom like that comes from heaven? (vs. 17)
- 
- 



7. What is the result of being full of that wisdom? (vs. 18)

8. What do quarrels and fights come from? (vs. 1-2)

9. Why don't we receive when we ask? (vs. 3)

10. What happens when we choose friendship with the world? (vs. 4)

11. In what ways do women choose friendship with the world?

12. Why do women choose friendship with the world?

13. Why do we become an enemy of God when we choose friendship with the world?

14. What is the ultimate cost of women choosing friendship with the world?

15. Who does God give grace to? (vs. 6)

16. Who are the humble?

17. Why is humility a critical character trait for a follower of Christ to have?

A WIFE OF NOBLE CHARACTER PURSUES PEACE

Proverbs 12:20-21

²⁰ There is deceit in the hearts of those who plot evil, but joy for those who promote peace. ²¹ No harm befalls the righteous, but the wicked have their fill of trouble.

Psalms 34:12-14

¹² Whoever of you loves life and desires to see many good days, ¹³ keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking lies. ¹⁴ Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.

Romans 12:17-18

¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. ¹⁸ If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

Romans 14:19

Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.

1. What makes something evil?
2. What happens to those who do evil?
3. What happens to those who pursue peace?
4. How does a wife do evil?
5. How does a wife pursue peace?
6. Why does pursuing peace make a wife trustworthy?
7. What can you learn from these Scriptures?



Remember: If you don't respond in the flesh when your husband does or says something that hurts you, you protect both of you. You need to do what is right regardless of what your husband is doing. It is important to remember to do the following when in conflict:

- Don't raise your voice or interrupt.
- Don't say anything you can't take back.
- Don't make accusatory statements or use hyperbole. ("You always..." "You never...")
- Use the pronoun I instead of you. Say "I feel hurt when ..." instead of "You hurt me when..."
- Don't try to defend or justify yourself.
- Acknowledge and apologize for anything he says that is true.
- Stick to the issue at hand. Don't bring up other problems or past issues.
- Don't point out your husband's shortcomings.

Note: It is often best to schedule a time to talk, rather than try to work out a problem in the heat of the moment.

PERSONAL EVALUATION

Evaluate how you are doing in your role as a wife by rating how well you demonstrate the personal characteristics of a trustworthy wife.

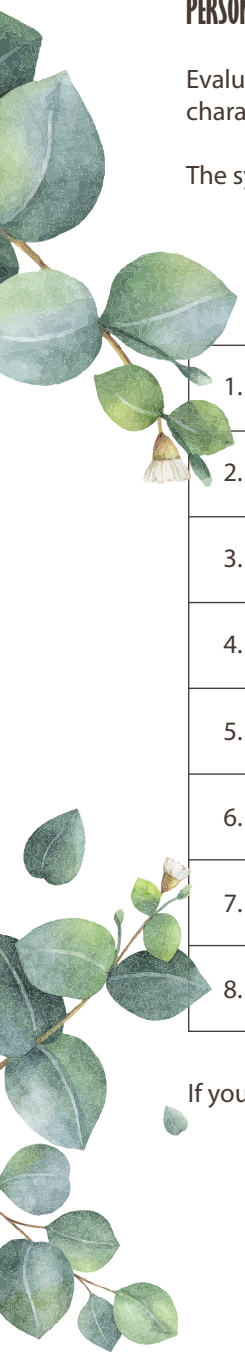
The symbols mean:

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| - (minus sign) | hardly at all |
| 0 (zero) | some but not a lot |
| + (plus sign) | a lot. |

Personal Characteristics of a Trustworthy Wife

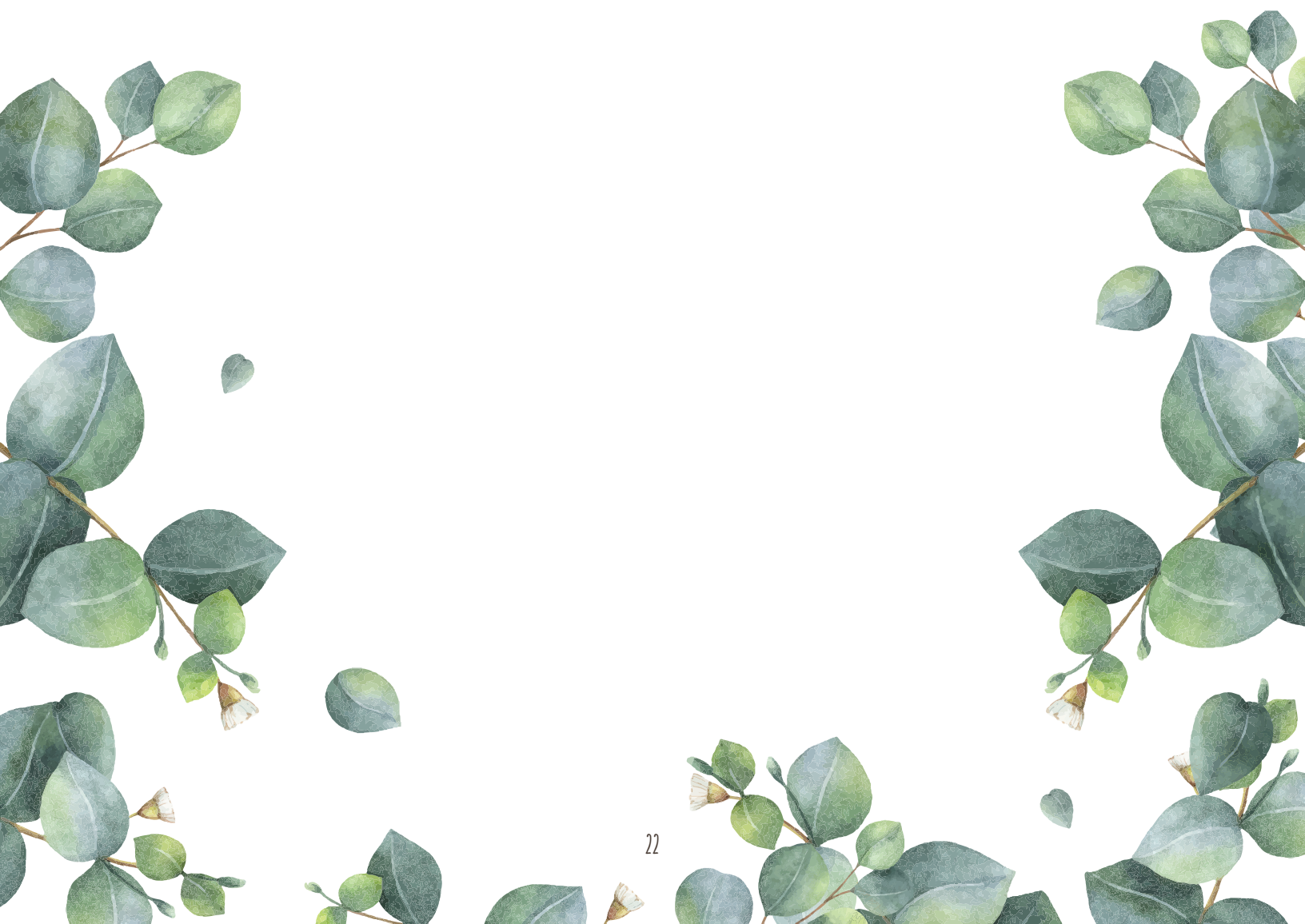
		-	0	+
1.	I have worked to create a peaceful and harmonious spirit in our home, which makes my husband glad to be home with me.			
2.	I know what pleases my husband and I seek to act in accordance with his desires. I don't do things in opposition to him.			
3.	In my mind I focus on what is good about my husband, not what needs to be changed.			
4.	I think of my husband as being smart and capable; I don't question his actions.			
5.	I treat my husband as a responsible adult; I don't tell him what he should do or how he should do something like I would a child.			
6.	When my husband corrects me or gives me a suggestion, I listen and receive it without defending myself or accusing him of something.			
7.	The things I say to my husband encourage him and lift him up, not tear him down and belittle him.			
8.	When in conflict I don't say hurtful or demeaning things.			

If you would be able to accept the outcome, you might have your husband fill out the chart for you.



My evaluation of myself is:

My prayer for myself is:



SESSION 4

DOING GOOD TO YOUR HUSBAND



A WIFE OF NOBLE CHARACTER BRINGS HER HUSBAND GOOD

Proverbs 31:12

She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life.

1. How does a wife bring her husband good?
2. What does "all the days of her life" mean?
3. What do the days when we don't bring our husbands good show about us?
4. What is the only way a woman can bring her husband good all the days of her life?

LOVE IS THE FULFILLMENT OF THE LAW

Romans 13:8-10

⁸Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. ⁹The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁰Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

1. What is a debt?
2. What is our debt to others? (vs. 8)
3. What is the law that verses 8 and 10 refer to?
4. How can the commandments as to how we are to treat others be summed up? (vs. 9)

What does that mean?



5. Why is love the fulfillment of the law?

6. What does that mean in terms of how you treat your husband?

Remember: You can't love your husband the way God calls you to on your own. You can only love him the way you should through surrendering to Jesus and abiding in his love.

LOVE NEVER FAILS

1 Corinthians 13:1-9

¹If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ²If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

⁴Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

⁸Love never fails. But where there are prophecies they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.

1. Looking at 1 Corinthians 13, how do you know love is an action rather than a feeling?

2. How does love respond to other people? (vs. 4)

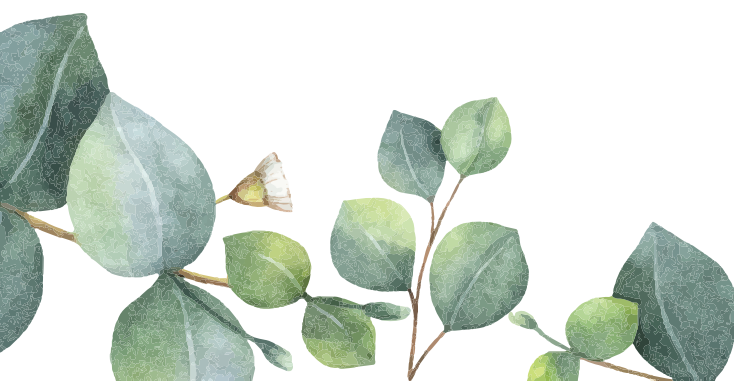
3. What doesn't love do when it is hurt in some way? (vs. 5-6)

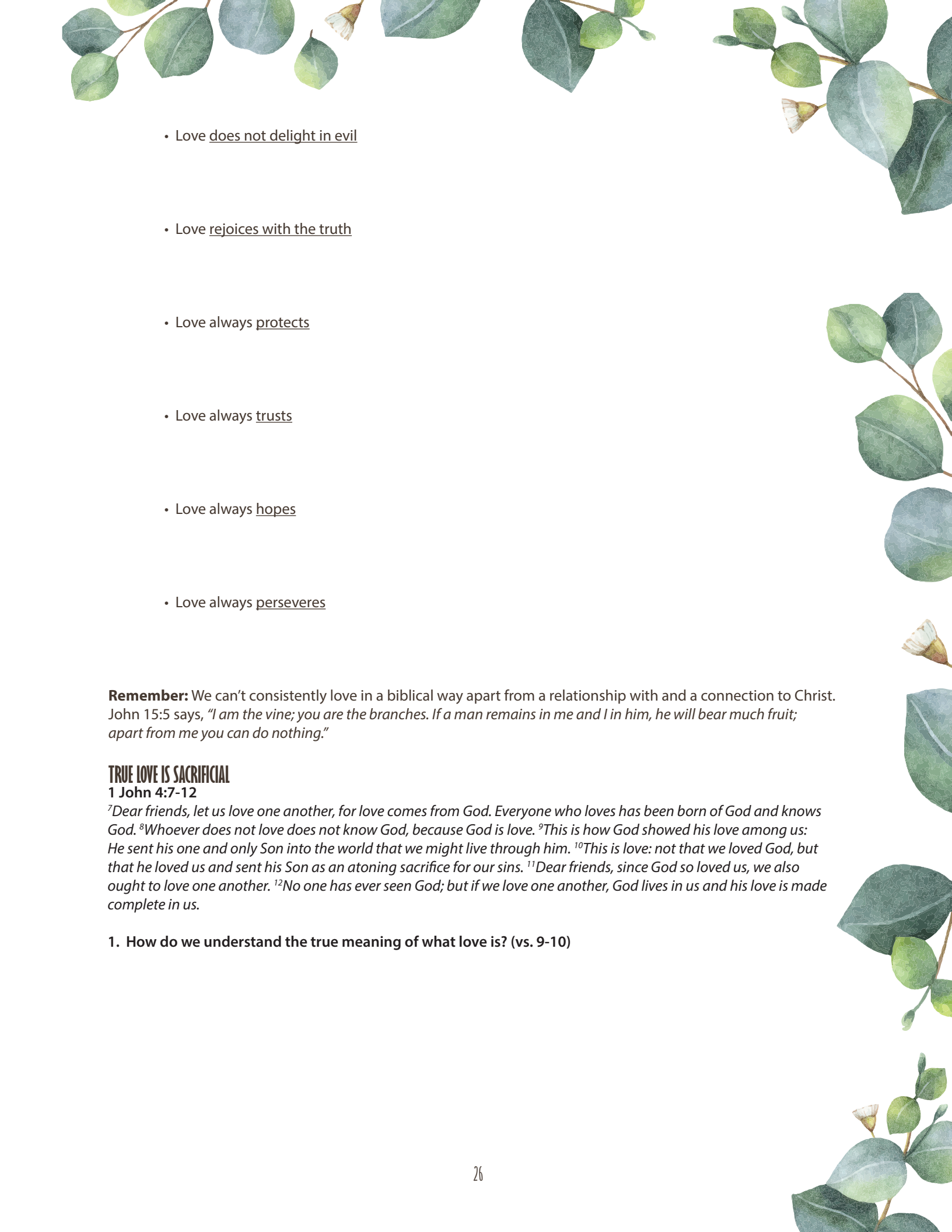
4. What does love do when things don't go its way? (vs. 7)

5. What will love never do? (vs. 8)



6. What does each word or phrase that describes love mean?

- Love is patient
 - Love is kind
 - Love is not envious
 - Love is not proud
 - Love is not boastful
 - Love is not rude
 - Love is not self-seeking
 - Love is not easily angered
 - Love keeps no record of wrongs
- 

- 
- Love does not delight in evil
 - Love rejoices with the truth
 - Love always protects
 - Love always trusts
 - Love always hopes
 - Love always perseveres

Remember: We can't consistently love in a biblical way apart from a relationship with and a connection to Christ. John 15:5 says, "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

TRUE LOVE IS SACRIFICIAL

1 John 4:7-12

⁷Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. ¹⁰This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹²No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

1. How do we understand the true meaning of what love is? (vs. 9-10)

2. What is the essence of God's love? (vs.10)

3. What is the difference between fond affection and true love?

4. How is God's love made complete in us? (vs. 11-12)



Illustration: *The difference between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea is often used to illustrate this point. The Sea of Galilee is full of life and vitality while in the Dead Sea nothing can live. The Jordan River flows into both seas but it doesn't flow out of the Dead Sea like it does the Sea of Galilee. In the Dead Sea the water just sits there and evaporates leaving behind salt and chemicals that inhibit life, while the water in the Sea of Galilee remains fresh because it flows both in and out.*

5. What is the world's view of love?

6. How does the biblical view of love differ from the world's view?

7. Why is it important to hold to a biblical view of love?

Remember: Love does what will benefit others, what it is that they really need. The essence of God's love is the sacrificial, selfless giving of his Son. His love is made complete in us as we give ourselves sacrificially and selflessly to one another. We are to be a channel for God's love and let it flow into us and through us to others. You can substitute the words "sacrificial, selfless giving" for "love" in reading 1 John 4:7-12 and think about how that impacts the meaning of love.

The purpose of marriage: The purpose of marriage isn't to have our needs met but to bring glory and honor to God through the marriage relationship. We do that by loving one another sacrificially and in doing so reflect the love of Christ to the world. When we seek and trust in God, he will meet our needs.

PERSONAL EVALUATION

Insert your name every place in the passage from 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 where it says or refers to the word “love” and reflect on how true the statement is.

⁴Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

On the chart below, rate the degree to which you demonstrate each characteristic of love toward your husband, children, and others.

– very little 0 some + a lot

In evaluating each characteristic say, “I am ___ with ___.”

Example: “I am patient with my husband.”

Characteristic	Husband	Children	Others
Patient			
Kind			
Content			
Humble			
Respectful			
Self-sacrificing			
Self-controlled			
Forgiving			
Godly			
Protective			
Trusting			
Hopeful			
Faithful/forbearing			

My evaluation of myself is:

My prayer for myself is:

SESSION 5

ACTING IN TRUE LOVE



A WIFE OF NOBLE CHARACTER REFLECTS CHRIST

Colossians 3:12-14

¹²Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

1. What is the key to bringing your husband good?
2. Remembering 1 John 4:20 from the last lesson, what is the essence of Christ's love?
3. Why is forgiveness an essential part of love?

Proverbs 17:9

⁹Whoever covers an offense seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates close friends.

Remember: Choosing to respond in submission and love can make your relationship work whether or not your husband chooses to do what is right. Living by biblical principles always blesses and protects us spiritually, regardless of what others are doing.

A WIFE OF NOBLE CHARACTER FOCUSES ON THE GOOD

Philippians 4:8

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things.

1. What does focusing on the good things about your husband do for your marriage?
2. What does focusing on the things you think need to change about your husband do to your marriage?
3. How should you pray for your husband so that you don't focus on what you think is wrong with him and needs to be changed?

Remember: Thinking about what is good directs your spirit upward. Dwelling on the negative or what is wrong leads you into a pit. A question to ask yourself is, "Do I want to go where the thoughts I am thinking will lead me?" Always keep in mind that whatever you dwell on will be magnified in your life.





A WIFE OF NOBLE CHARACTER WANTS TO PLEASE HER HUSBAND

1 Corinthians 7:34

An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world – how she can please her husband.

1. What pleases a husband?
2. Why should a wife engage in flirtatious behavior with her husband?
3. What does flirting look like?

Remember: It delights a husband if his wife does not treat him like a child, but rather shows him respect and flirts with him as a lover.

A WIFE OF NOBLE CHARACTER FULFILLS HER MARITAL DUTY

1 Corinthians 7:3-4

³The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. ⁴The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife.

1. What is a wife's marital duty to her husband?
2. A duty is defined as an obligation of behavior or conduct in relation to others or to God, which has a stronger claim on a person than personal self-interest. Why is fulfilling the sexual union within a marriage called a duty?

3. What happens whenever we fulfill a Christian duty?

4. What does it mean that a wife's body belongs to her husband?

5. Why is a wife meeting her husband's sexual needs an important part of bringing him good and showing him love?

6. What does it say about a woman who avoids or refuses to meet her husband's sexual needs?

What will be the outcome?

7. If a woman has a wrong attitude toward sex, how does she change that?

Remember: God designed sex to be the consummation of the one flesh relationship and an integral part of marriage. Sex is an important way of doing your husband good and showing him respect. You need to be willing and able to talk with your husband about what would make your intimacy more enjoyable for both him and you.

Conversation starters:

- "Tell me three things that would make our intimacy more enjoyable for you."
- "I desire for this area of our life to be as good as it can be. Would it be okay if I tell you some of the things that would help me?" Use "I" statements, "I feel like being intimate with you when you ..."



Illustration: *At one retreat a woman shared her story. When her husband cleaned the kitchen, something he liked to do, he did it really well. She had told her husband that a sparkling kitchen was something that put her in the mood for intimacy. Once when she was at a meeting she received a picture and text, "The kitchen is sparkling." She texted back, "I'll be home soon," adding a winking smiley face.*



PERSONAL EVALUATION

Guarding your thinking and responding to your husband sexually is a tangible way of showing him respect and doing him good. A husband feels honored and respected when his wife wants to please him sexually. Rate the statements below to the degree they generally characterize the way you think of and relate to your husband.

The symbols mean:

- (minus sign)	hardly at all
0 (zero)	some but not a lot
+ (plus sign)	a lot.

Personal Characteristics of Acting In Love

- 0 +

1.	I respond with forgiveness when I feel I have been wronged.			
2.	I spend time each day thinking about what I can do that will be of benefit to my husband and will honor him.			
3.	I enthusiastically welcome my husband home each night and give him attention.			
4.	I focus my mind on the good my husband does, not his shortcomings.			
5.	I don't compare my husband to other men.			
6.	I flirt with my husband to let him know that I find him desirable.			
7.	I think about what I can do to please my husband sexually.			
8.	I often initiate intimacy with my husband.			
9.	I hardly ever refuse to have sex when my husband desires it.			
10.	I pray that God would enable me to bring delight to my husband.			

My evaluation of myself is:

My prayer for myself is:

PERSONAL ACTION

PUTTING ON LOVE



Paul says in Ephesians 4:22-24, *"You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness."* Christ's love frees us from our old self to be able to put on the new self.

Paul goes on to say in Ephesians 5:1-2, *"Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."* Christ has made the love of the Father known to us so that he himself might dwell in us, and his love flow out of us.

Read the scriptures that follow and write out how you will specifically separate from your old nature and put on love towards your husband as you submit to Christ and depend on his Spirit to work in you. Pray for insight and take your time doing this.

1. Put on patience – Ephesians 4:2

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

I will separate from...

I will show love by...

2. Put on kindness – Ephesians 4:31-32

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

I will separate from...

I will show love by...

3. Put on contentment – Philippians 2:14-15

Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe.

I will separate from...

I will show love by...





4. Put on humility – Romans 12:3

Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

I will separate from...

I will show love by...

5. Put on respect – Ephesians 4:29

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

I will separate from...

I will show love by...

6. Put on self-sacrifice – 1 Corinthians 10:24

Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others.

I will separate from...

I will show love by...

7. Put on self-control – Galatians 5:24

Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.

I will separate from...

I will show love by...



8. Put on forgiveness – Matthew 6:14-15

For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

I will separate from...

I will show love by...

9. Put on godliness – 1 Peter 3:3-4

Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.

I will separate from...

I will show love by...

10. Put on protectiveness – Proverbs 31:12

She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life.

I will separate from...

I will show love by...

11. Put on trust – Isaiah 31:1

Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, who rely on horses, who trust in the multitude of their chariots and in the great strength of their horsemen, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel, or seek help from the LORD.

I will separate from...

I will show love by...

12. Put on hope – Galatians 6:9

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

I will separate from...

I will show love by...

13. Put on faithfulness/forbearance – Romans 12:12

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

I will separate from...

I will show love by...

My evaluation of myself is:

My prayer for myself is:

RELATING RIGHTLY POST LOG

One important way that we continue to grow in Christ is by sharing the truth we are learning and living by with others. A reason my marriage continued to get better and better is that I took the women of our church through the study, [More Valuable than Rubies: Becoming a Wife of Noble Character](#), over and over again. Each time I took other women through the study I had to examine myself, uncover my sin, and rely on the Lord to make me right. That is always a beneficial thing to be doing.

I would encourage you to prayerfully consider who God would have you take through this study. You might also want to download the complete study, [More Valuable than Rubies](#), from the Ultimate Outcomes website and work through that material with a partner or group.

My prayer will always be that God would use his truth to do a continual work in you as he continues to do in me. Remember, perfection will only come when we enter heaven. In the meantime, we are in the process of being changed.

Hebrews 10:10 – *He has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.*

