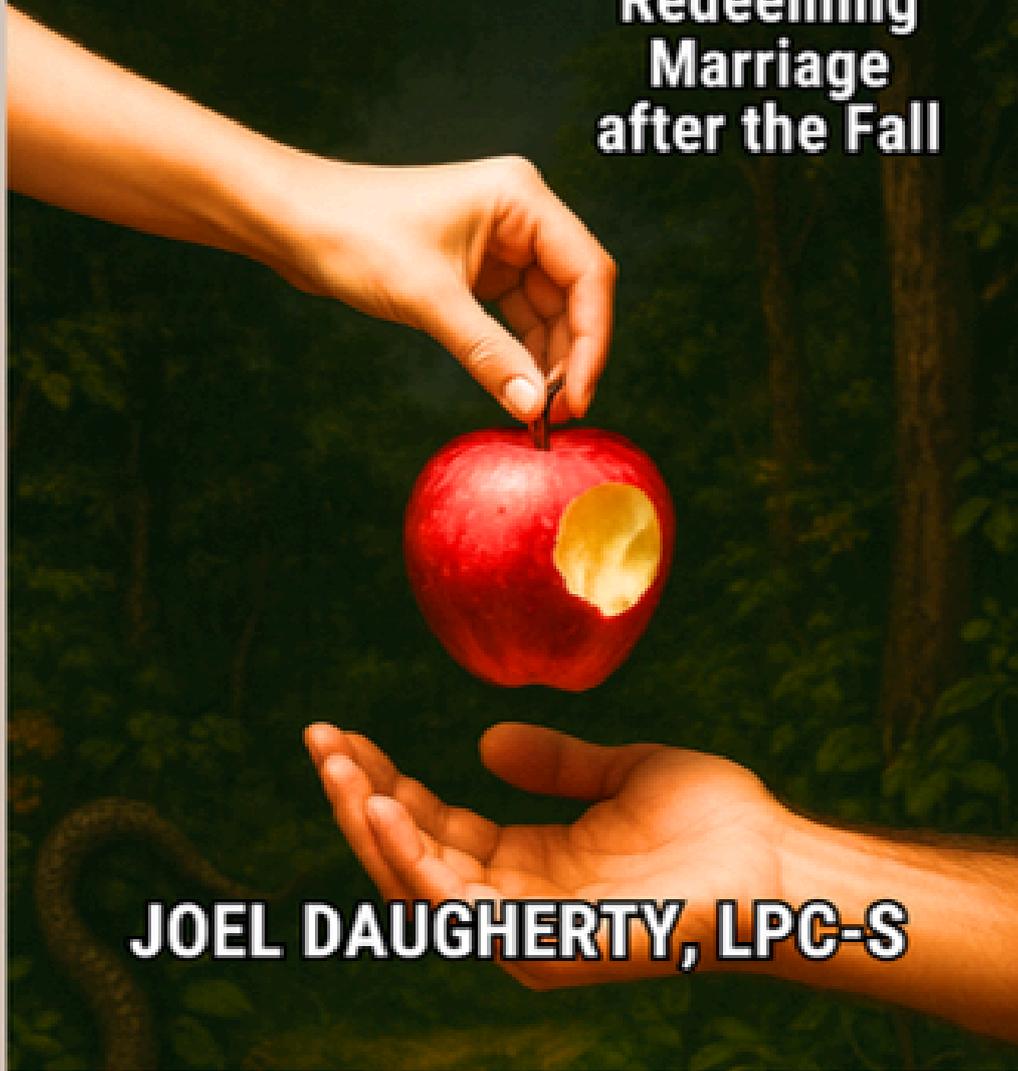


Desire & Dominion

**Redeeming
Marriage
after the Fall**



JOEL DAUGHERTY, LPC-S

WORKBOOK

A Guided Workbook for Processing Desire, Healing Hurt,
and Restoring Hope in Marriage

BY JOEL DAUGHERTY, MA, LPC-S

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WELCOME

Dear Sister in Christ,

I developed this workbook to help you process the struggles and longings of marriage in light of God's Word. The pages that follow are not simply about answering questions or completing exercises; they are an invitation to slow down, reflect deeply, and allow the Holy Spirit to uncover both wounds and desires in your heart. Each chapter offers space to wrestle with the tension between your longing for closeness and the reality of disappointment, as described in Genesis 3:16.

Through guided discussion prompts, reflection exercises, and practical steps, you will be equipped to name your frustrations honestly, explore how distorted desire shows up in your relationship, and begin shifting your hope from your spouse's response to Christ's unchanging love.

Seeing your marriage through the lens of God's redemption is the first step to re-writing your story-and it's going to be good!

Joel Daugherty

HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

This workbook is designed to accompany each chapter of *Desire & Dominion*, helping you process its themes in a personal and practical way. Each section includes discussion questions, journaling prompts, and exercises to encourage deeper reflection. You can work through it individually, using the space provided to explore your thoughts and prayers, or you can engage in group study, sharing insights and supporting one another in a safe, honest environment.



CHAPTER ONE: A FRUSTRATED DESIRE

A woman's longing for her husband was meant to bring joy, but after the Fall, that desire became tangled with pain and disappointment. What should be holy and reciprocal often turns into frustration, as women struggle with unmet needs, feelings of rejection, or the temptation to control. Desire can morph into possessiveness, idolatry, or insecurity, leaving both spouses feeling more distant. Even in healthy marriages, an undercurrent of dissatisfaction can quietly erode intimacy. Yet Christ offers redemption: when a woman anchors her worth in Him instead of in her husband's approval, her desire is reshaped into hope, grace, and freedom.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

01 In your marriage, how have you experienced desire bringing both joy and frustration?

02 Which of the distorted forms of desire—control, idolatry, insecurity—feels most familiar to you?

03 Have you ever “traded away” a part of yourself in the hope of gaining your spouse's affection? What was the result?

IDOL CHECK



What's one area where you may have "substituted" your husband (e.g., kids, work, spiritual busyness, fantasies)? Ask yourself: What am I seeking there that should be sought in my marriage or in Christ?

- Children – Pouring all energy and identity into motherhood, leaving little room for marital intimacy.
- Work or Career – Finding affirmation, purpose, or escape in professional success rather than in the marriage.
- Ministry or Spiritual Busyness – Using church involvement, serving, or "doing for God" as a substitute for connecting with a spouse.
- Friendships or Extended Family – Leaning on friends, parents, or siblings for the emotional closeness that should be shared in marriage.
- Hobbies or Entertainment – Spending more time with personal interests, TV, or social media than investing in the relationship.
- Fantasies or Comparisons – Escaping into daydreams, romance novels, social media "perfect couples," or imagining a different partner.
- Self-Sufficiency – Choosing independence ("I don't need him") instead of vulnerability and openness.
- Bitterness or Pain – Holding onto hurt or resentment as a protective wall, rather than engaging in honest repair.

How does this substitution show up? What is it costing me? What would it look like to turn this back toward my husband—or ultimately, toward Christ?

SCRIPTURE MEDITATION

Write Genesis 3:16, Song of Songs 7:10, and Galatians 5:9 side by side. Note the tension between longing, fulfillment, and corruption. End with a short prayer or Scripture you want to claim over your marriage.



Genesis 3:16

Song of Songs 7:19

Galatians 5:9

Prayer/Scripture

CALL TO ACTION

Choose one distorted form of desire (e.g., insecurity, control, idolatry) and commit to noticing when it shows up this week. Write down at least 3 moments you catch it, and instead of acting on it, pray through it.

Moment #1



Moment #2



Moment #3



CHAPTER TWO: MAN'S RULE

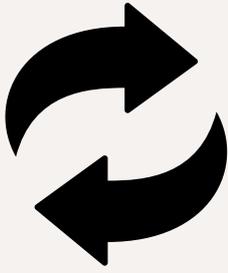
This chapter explores the second half of the Edenic curse: “And he shall rule over you” (Gen. 3:16). After the Fall, man’s God-given role of loving leadership became distorted into control, neglect, and even domination. Many wives live under the weight of ineffective or oppressive leadership, longing for security and partnership yet experiencing disappointment or even harm. Scripture affirms a husband’s headship but calls him to lead as Christ leads the church—with sacrifice, humility, and love. While poor leadership can wound deeply, the chapter reminds wives that Christ remains the faithful Head, even when their husbands fail.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

01 How have you experienced your husband's leadership—either positively or negatively?

02 What emotions rise up in you when you read the words, “he shall rule over you”?

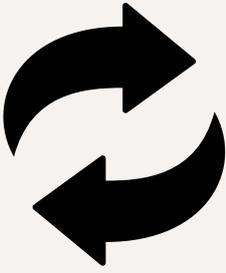
03 Where do you struggle most to entrust yourself to God when your husband falls short as a leader?



ROLE EXCHANGE

Imagine for a moment that the roles were reversed. What would it feel like for you to be responsible for leading the home in love, provision, and spiritual care, instead of your husband?

- Pressure to provide financially (primary or co-breadwinner role)
- Job performance expectations (productivity, meeting goals, long hours)
- Job instability (layoffs, downsizing, fear of losing employment)
- Work-life imbalance (career demands vs. family presence)
- Occupational hazards (men often dominate high-risk jobs: construction, oilfield, military, law enforcement)
- Competition and achievement pressure (status, promotions, recognition)
- Lack of fulfillment at work but feeling trapped due to responsibility
- Carrying the burden of debt (mortgage, car notes, student loans)
- Economic downturns and fear of not providing enough for family
- Pressure to fund children's education, weddings, or legacy wealth
- Retirement insecurity—wondering if they've saved enough
- Feeling guilty if a spouse earns more or if he can't "keep up" financially
- Pressure to be a strong, steady leader while also emotionally present
- Unmet expectations from spouse (emotional support, household help, sexual intimacy)
- Conflict resolution pressure (expected to "fix it" or stay calm)
- Feeling unappreciated or unseen for the sacrifices made
- Sexual performance anxiety or differences in desire
- Fatherhood expectations (discipline, role modeling, quality time)
- Societal pressure to "be strong" (don't cry, don't show weakness)
- Fear of failure or inadequacy (career, family leadership, masculinity)
- Limited emotional outlets (fewer close friendships, stigma about seeking help)
- Comparisons to other men (income, physique, success, possessions)
- Cultural shifts in gender roles (navigating what masculinity looks like today)



ROLE EXCHANGE

- Work-related physical strain (heavy labor, injuries)
- Sleep deprivation due to stress, work, or health issues
- Cardiovascular risk—men often neglect preventive care
- Sexual health concerns (testosterone decline, ED, fertility issues)
- Aging pressures (hair loss, strength decline, reduced stamina)
- Perfectionism—wanting to excel in all areas
- Suppressing emotions instead of processing them
- Fear of vulnerability or appearing weak
- Pressure to always “know the answer” or “fix the problem”
- Unrealized dreams or regrets (career path, personal goals)
- Identity tied too strongly to work performance

How does this exercise change your perspective on leadership and responsibility?

What can you do to help your husband with the demands and pressures that life brings?

SCRIPTURE MEDITATION

Meditate on Ephesians 5:25–27. Journal how Christ’s example of leadership (self-sacrifice, nurturing, sanctifying) could reshape your expectations of your husband and your response to his shortcomings.

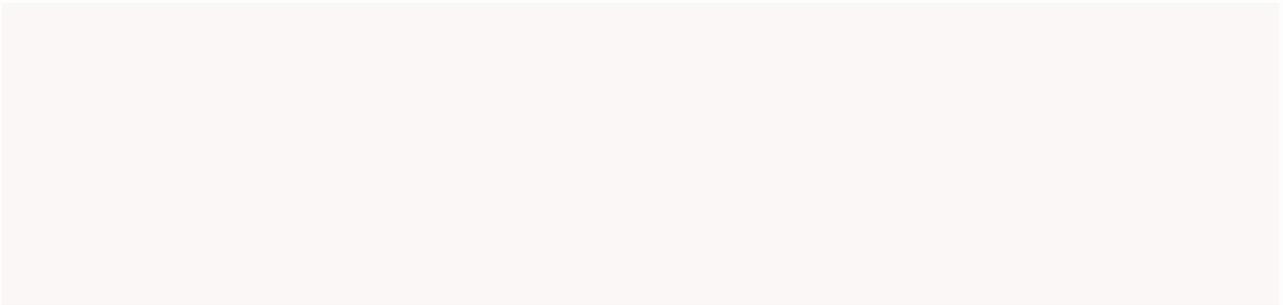


Prayer/Scripture

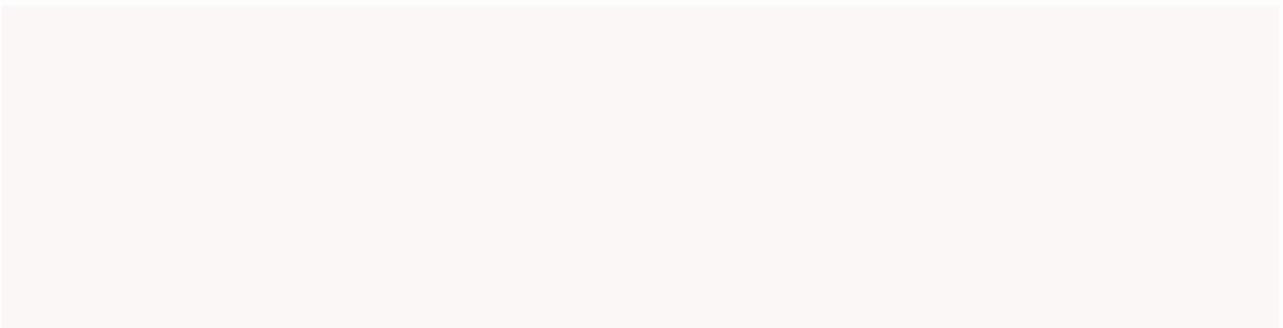
CALL TO ACTION

This week, resist the temptation to fix or control your husband's leadership. Instead, choose one small area to entrust to God in prayer. Write a note of affirmation to your husband—highlighting one way he has led well, however small—and share it with him. By speaking life, you plant seeds of encouragement that God can use to strengthen his role.

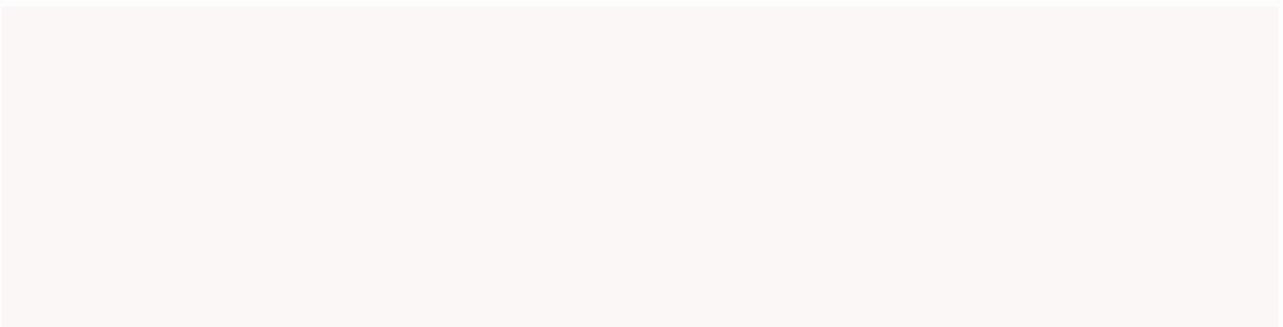
What affirmation can you give your husband about his leadership this week?



Are there other areas of your husband's leadership which you may not recognize?



What are some ways you can encourage his leadership (i.e., asking for input, encouraging strengths, etc.)?



CHAPTER THREE: THE LOSS OF PROTECTION

This chapter explores the loss of protection that began with Adam's passivity in Eden. Instead of guarding his wife, Adam stood silent while she was deceived, and then failed her again by blaming her. That breach of protection echoes through Scripture and history—Abraham exposing Sarah, Lot offering his daughters, Judah abandoning Tamar, and Abraham neglecting Hagar. The pattern is clear: when men fail to protect, women are left vulnerable, unseen, and unvalued. Yet the stories of Hagar, Marie Durand, and others remind us that God Himself steps in as the faithful Protector when husbands falter. He is El Roi—the God who sees—and the Husband who never abandons His daughters.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

01 How have you felt unprotected—physically, emotionally, or spiritually—in your marriage?

02 When your husband fails to “keep watch,” how do you typically respond (withdraw, self-protect, seek comfort elsewhere, etc.)?

03 What does it mean to you personally that God is El Roi, the One who sees, and your Keeper who never slumbers?

CALL TO ACTION

This week, identify one small way you can actively rest in God's protection. It might mean releasing constant worry through daily prayer, choosing to stop revisiting a past hurt, or practicing stillness when you feel unsafe or unseen. Write down a short declaration such as, "The Lord is my Keeper; He does not slumber" (Psalm 121:3–4), and place it somewhere you'll see it often—on your mirror, fridge, or journal. Each time you notice it, pause and thank God for being your shield, even when others fail you.

Where have I felt most vulnerable in my marriage, and how can I surrender that vulnerability this week?

How has God shown Himself as my Protector in past seasons, even when others have failed me?

What would it look like for me to release my fears into God's care this week and rest in His keeping?

CHAPTER FOUR: GRIEVING THE LOSS

This chapter reflects on the grief that follows broken trust, failed protection, and shattered dreams in marriage. Just as Eve grieved her husband's failure and exile from Eden, women today often grieve the loss of what marriage was supposed to be—a safe partnership, faithfulness, or intimacy. Grief in marriage is not always about physical death, but the death of expectations, dreams, and security. Drawing from King David's story and Elisabeth Elliot's testimony, the chapter emphasizes that while sorrow is real, it is not final. Healing comes as we confess our own sins, press into God, let go of what is lost, embrace eternal perspective, and choose gratitude for daily graces.

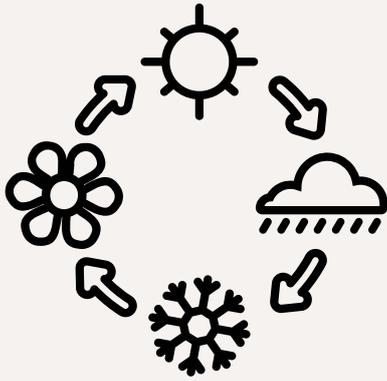
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

01 What losses in your marriage—trust, intimacy, safety, dreams—feel most painful to grieve?

02 How do you tend to process grief: denial, anger, bitterness, avoidance, or surrender?

03 Which of David's steps (repentance, pressing into God, grieving/letting go, eternal perspective, embracing life) do you need most right now?

SEASONS EXERCISE



Using Ecclesiastes 3:1–8, journal about which season best describes your marriage right now (weeping, planting, tearing down, rebuilding). How might God be inviting you to move to another season?

01 Which season listed in Ecclesiastes 3 best describes where your marriage feels right now, and what makes you identify with that season?

02 How does recognizing your current season help you release unrealistic expectations or pressure to be in a "different" season?

03 What would it look like for you to honor this season—whether grieving, rebuilding, or waiting—while still holding hope for what God may do in the next one?

04 Looking back, can you identify a past season in your marriage that eventually shifted into something new? How does remembering that transition encourage you about the season you're in now?

CALL TO ACTION

*Write down seven small daily graces you can thank God for this week,
even in the midst of grief.*

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

CHAPTER FIVE: REMAKING THE HEART

This chapter focuses on how God remakes the heart through pain, loss, and disappointment. Eve's grief over Abel's murder and Cain's exile created distance from Adam, reflecting how resentment and unforgiveness can build walls in marriage. Over time, however, Eve softened and trusted again, symbolized in the birth of Seth. The chapter highlights forgiveness as the first step toward heart change, reminding wives that bitterness becomes a prison while mercy sets them free. It also explores how suffering produces endurance, character, and hope (Rom. 5:3–5), showing that God uses hardship to prune, refine, and grow lasting fruit.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

01 What makes forgiveness in marriage especially difficult, compared to forgiving others?

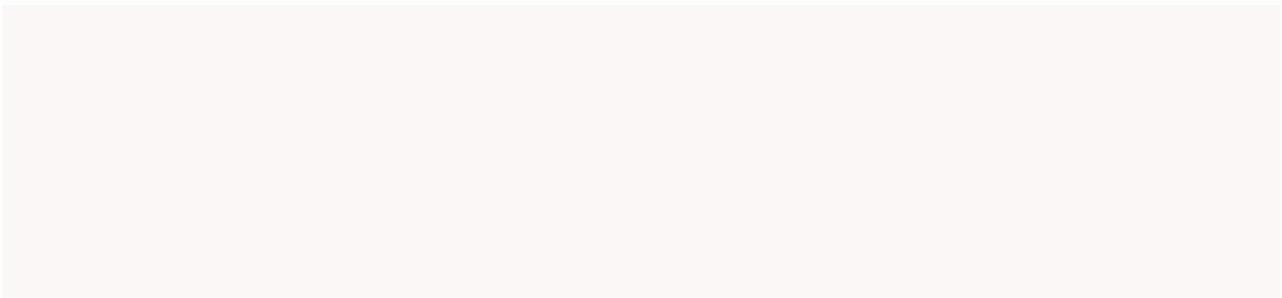
02 Which of the qualities suffering produces—endurance, character, hope—do you sense God is working on most in you right now?

03 What do you think it means that God “wastes nothing” in your story, even your pain?

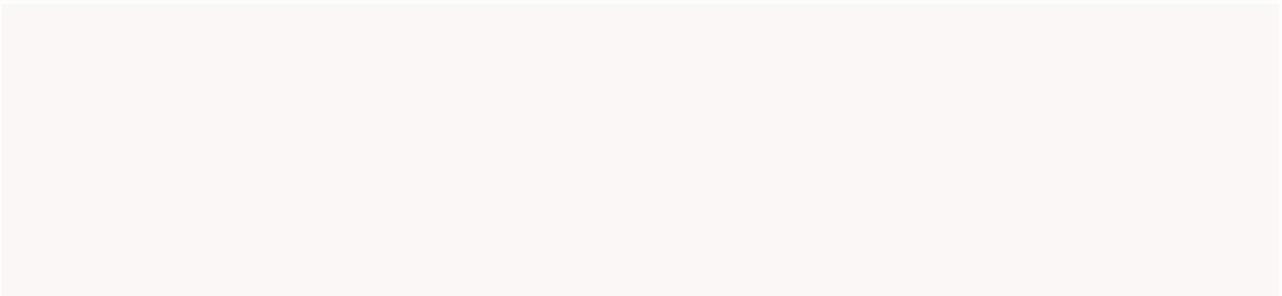
CALL TO ACTION

This week, choose one act of forgiveness to practice toward your husband. It could be releasing a long-held resentment, responding with gentleness instead of anger, or offering a kind word where you would usually criticize. Journal your experience afterward: How did it feel? What shifted in me? Pair this with Romans 5:3–5 as a daily reminder that God is producing endurance, character, and hope in you, even through hardship.

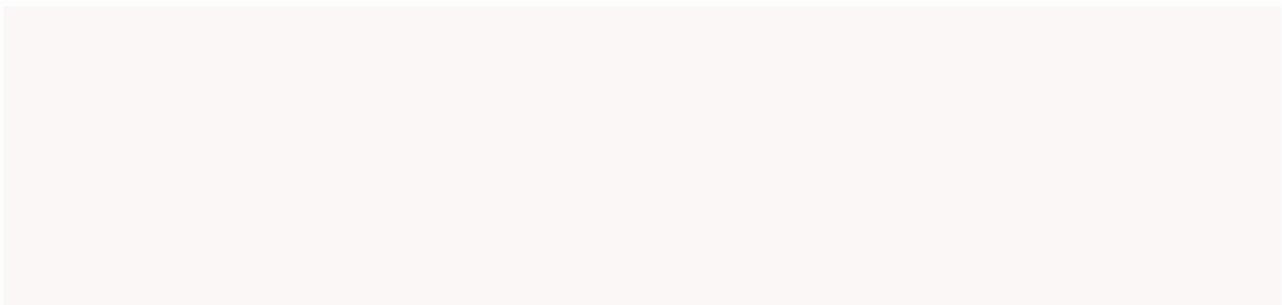
What action are you choosing to forgive this week?



What emotions surfaced as you prayed and acted differently?



Did you notice any changes in your heart, your outlook, or your husband's response?



CHAPTER SIX: APPOINTMENT THROUGH SORROW

This chapter centers on the idea of divine appointments—moments of brokenness and restoration that God ordains for His purposes. Eve’s grief over Abel’s death and Cain’s exile gave way to new hope in the birth of Seth, whom she recognized as “appointed” by God. The Hebrew word shiyth points to God’s intentional provision, reminding us that even in loss, He is actively setting new purposes in place.

The chapter weaves Eve’s story with Job’s appointed sorrow, showing that suffering is inevitable, but never wasted. God uses trials to refine endurance, shape character, and anchor hope. It also emphasizes that His appointments include not only sorrow but also comfort and rest—often provided through the Body of Christ.

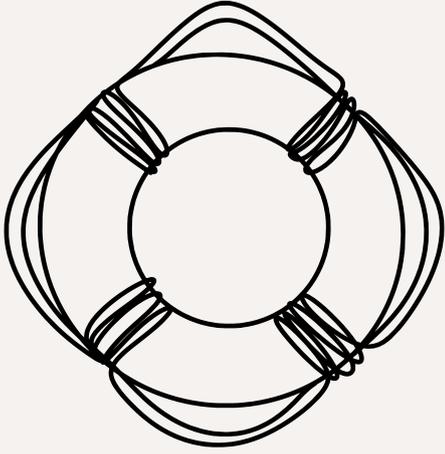
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

01 How does the idea of God appointing both sorrow and comfort change the way you view your own struggles?

02 Which of the four hopes described in this chapter (transformational, testimonial, eternal, present) resonates most with you right now? Why?

03 How has the Church or a community of faith brought comfort or rest to you in seasons of difficulty?

LIFELINES



List the names of three people in your church or faith community who have encouraged or supported you. Next to each, write how their presence has been a lifeline. If you struggle to list anyone, pray for God to appoint new connections for you.

Person #1

How have they helped?

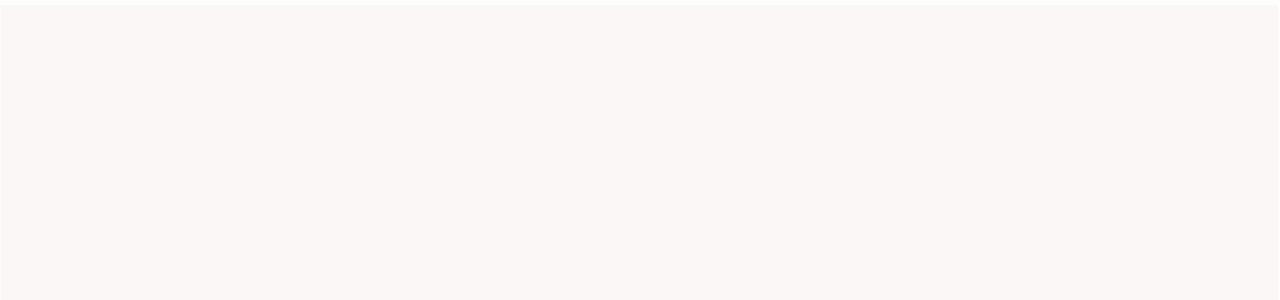
Person #2

Person #3

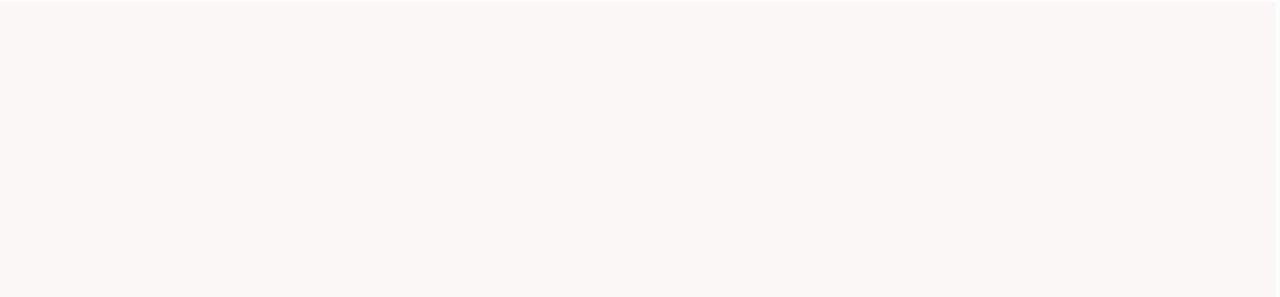
CALL TO ACTION

This week, look for three “appointments with comfort” God has already set for you. It may come through Scripture, a friend’s encouragement, a sermon, a moment of beauty, or an unexpected blessing. Write it down as soon as you recognize it. Then share it with someone you trust—your spouse, a friend, or your group. By naming God’s appointments out loud, you strengthen your faith and remind others that He is always working, even in sorrow.

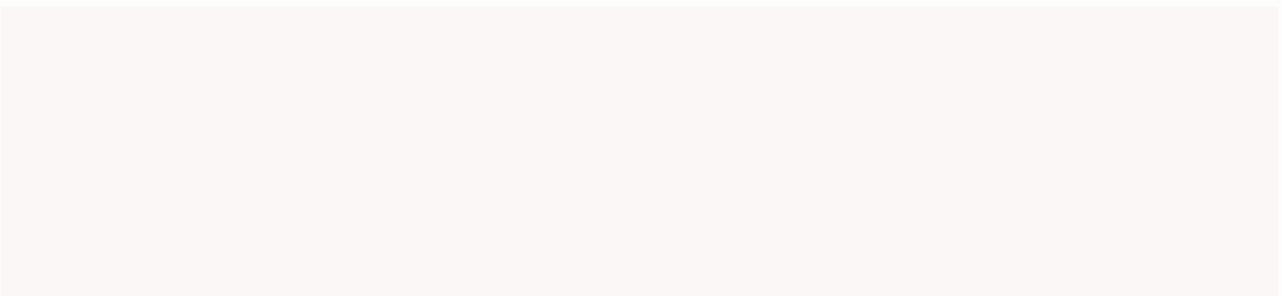
Appointment with Comfort #1



Appointment with Comfort #2



Appointment with Comfort #3



CHAPTER SEVEN: THE LAST ADAM

This chapter contrasts Adam's failure to cover shame with Christ's perfect covering. Adam and Eve's fig leaves symbolize our inadequate attempts to hide pain and sin, while God's garments of skin foreshadow Christ, the Lamb who clothes us in righteousness. The Samaritan woman at the well further illustrates how Christ meets us in shame and transforms us with living water, succeeding where men and self-effort fail. Hebrews 12 then calls us to lay aside sin, run with endurance, look to Jesus, and consider Him. The chapter weaves biblical stories and historical testimony (Helen Lemmel's hymn "Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus") to show that freedom and healing come only by fixing our eyes on Christ, the Last Adam, who brings lasting hope and restoration.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

01 When have you felt most vulnerable or "naked" in your marriage—emotionally, spiritually, or physically? How did you respond?

02 How does the Samaritan woman's encounter with Jesus resonate with your own story of longing, rejection, or hope?

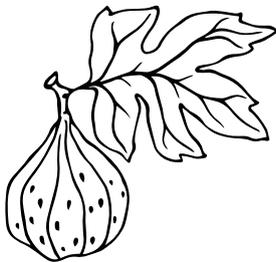
03 Of the four commands in Hebrews 12—lay aside weights and sin, run with endurance, look to Jesus, consider Him—which one do you struggle with most right now?

FIG LEAVES EXERCISE



Write down the ways you try to hide or cover pain (busyness, comparison, withdrawal, criticism, fantasy, etc.). Next to each, reflect on how it leaves you more empty or exposed.



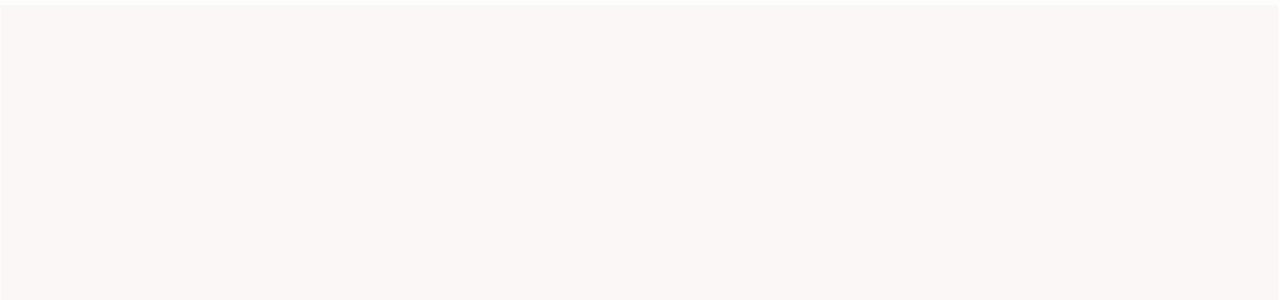




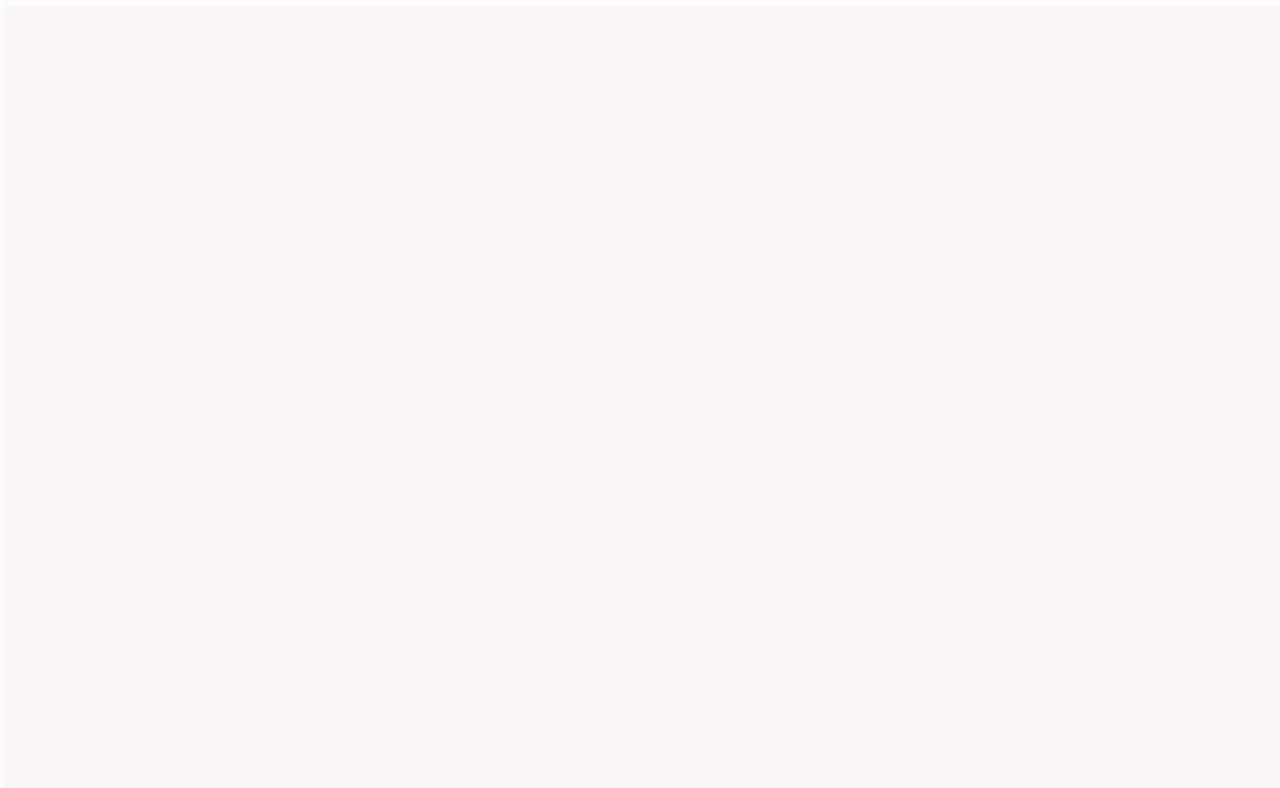
CALL TO ACTION

This week, choose one “weight” or “fig leaf” you identified and lay it aside. Replace it with a deliberate practice of looking to Jesus. For example, if you normally escape into social media when upset, instead read a psalm and journal your feelings to God. If you usually lash out with criticism, pause and whisper a prayer before you speak. At the end of the week, journal about what changed: Did letting go of your fig leaf open space for Christ to meet you?

What did “weight” or “fig leaf” did you let go of?



How did letting go change you?



CHAPTER EIGHT: REDEMPTION IN RELATIONSHIP

This chapter highlights redemption in relationship, showing how God's grace follows even after deep loss and disappointment. Eve's later years were marked not only by grief but also by reconciliation with Adam, the gift of Seth, and the joy of seeing people once again call on the name of the Lord. The text contrasts fleeting happiness with lasting joy—reminding readers that marriage is designed more to sanctify than to satisfy. Joy in Christ transcends circumstances, even in painful marriages. Through stories of Gwen's long yet joy-filled marriage, Susanna Wesley's perseverance amid hardship, and biblical reminders from Paul's letters, the chapter underscores that true joy and redemption are found not in ideal marriages, but in anchoring our lives in Christ's presence and promises.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

01 Where do you most need to shift your focus from what is lacking in your marriage to what is praiseworthy and good (Phil. 4:8)?

02 How does Gwen's story encourage you about the possibility of finding joy even without emotional closeness from a spouse?

03 Which of Susanna Wesley's four lessons (faithfulness, conscience, spiritual formation, eternal significance) speaks most powerfully to your situation?

CALL TO ACTION

This week, find one story of God's grace in your marriage and share it with someone you trust—a friend, small group, or even your children.

It doesn't have to be dramatic; it could be a small way God gave you strength, peace, or hope in a hard moment. Speaking it out loud not only reminds you of God's faithfulness but also encourages others who may be struggling in their own marriages. Your testimony can become a spark of hope that God is still redeeming relationships today.

LEADER'S GUIDE

Thank you for stepping into the role of leading this group. Your willingness to guide others through the workbook is a gift to each participant. This guide is meant to help you feel confident as you lead, whether you are starting a brand-new group or using this material with an existing one.

1. Purpose of the Group

This workbook is designed for an 8-week journey through biblical themes of marriage, brokenness, and redemption. The purpose is not to “fix” each other’s marriages, but to provide a safe place for honest conversation, guided reflection, and encouragement to grow in Christ.

2. Forming the Group

If Part of an Existing Group

- Use the workbook as your central resource for 8 weeks.
- Integrate it into your regular meeting schedule (Bible study, women’s group, couples’ group, etc.).
- Let participants know that the focus will shift toward marriage and spiritual growth during this series.

If Starting a New Group

- Begin by personally inviting participants (friends, church members, or those in counseling who desire extra support).
- Clarify that the group will run for 8 sessions only—this helps new members feel less intimidated by a long-term commitment.
- Aim for 6–10 participants for the best balance of intimacy and variety of perspectives.

3. When and Where to Meet

- Frequency: Once a week for 8 weeks.
- Duration: 90 minutes is ideal (60 minutes for discussion + 30 minutes for prayer or fellowship).
- Location: Choose a quiet, comfortable space free of distractions (a living room, church classroom, or community room). Make sure everyone has a chair, table, or lap desk for journaling.
- Atmosphere: Keep the tone welcoming—light snacks, warm drinks, and a prayerful attitude can help participants feel at ease.

4. Practical Guidelines

- Be Punctual: Start and end on time. Respecting time commitments helps participants stay engaged and consistent.
- Set Expectations: Remind the group at the first meeting that this is a space for honesty, respect, confidentiality, and encouragement. What is shared in the group stays in the group.
- Guide, Don’t Dominate: Your role is to facilitate—not to lecture. Ask open-ended questions, encourage quieter members to share, and gently redirect if one person begins to dominate.

LEADER'S GUIDE

- Use the Workbook Flow: Each chapter has a summary, discussion questions, exercises, and a call to action. Aim to cover the discussion questions and highlight at least one exercise each week.
- Manage Time: Spend about 10–15 minutes on the summary and introduction, 30–40 minutes on discussion questions, and 15–20 minutes on exercises or journaling. Reserve the final 10–15 minutes for prayer and sharing.
- Encourage Application: Remind participants to complete the reflection exercises and calls to action during the week. Growth happens not just in the meeting but also in the private work with God.

5. Tips for Leaders

- Pray Before Each Meeting: Ask the Holy Spirit to guide your words, soften hearts, and bring healing.
- Be Flexible: Some weeks may lean more heavily on discussion; others may need extra time for prayer. Follow the Spirit's lead.
- Respect Sensitivity: Marriage struggles are deeply personal. Avoid pressure, judgment, or "fixing" others' problems. Listen with empathy.
- Model Vulnerability: Share briefly from your own journey when appropriate. This gives others permission to be honest.
- Check In Between Meetings: A short mid-week text or call can encourage participants to keep engaging with the material.

6. Sample Weekly Flow (90 minutes)

1. Welcome & Opening Prayer (5 min)
2. Chapter Summary & Key Themes (10 min)
3. Discussion Questions (30 min)
4. Guided Exercise or Journaling (20 min)
5. Sharing & Call to Action for the Week (10 min)
6. Closing Prayer (5 min)
7. Fellowship / Informal Conversation (optional)

7. Final Encouragement

As a leader, your goal is not perfection—it is presence. Be present with your group, keep their eyes on Christ, and trust God to do the deeper work in their hearts and marriages.