

Study Questions/ Facilitator's Guide for Small Groups

By Cindi McMenemy

Dear Study Group Facilitator:

Thank you for your desire to lead a small group through my book, *Letting God Meet Your Emotional Needs*.

Your desire to study this book thrills my heart. I have written the following lesson plans to go through this study in 12 weeks; however it can also be done in 6 or 7 weeks – taking the introduction and chapter one the first week and two chapters a week for the remaining 6 weeks. In my experience, I have seen more commitment from women to attend a 6-8 week study, rather than 10-12 weeks at a time. However, you know your women best. This is *your* study, so adapt as you feel will best accommodate your particular group of women.

The aim of each session together is that the women feel connected with each other, that they feel safe enough to be transparent with one another, and that they feel encouraged and strengthened in their walk with God. I would love to hear of ideas you incorporate in your study, as well.

May the Lord bless you as you lead women into a closer connection with the Only One who satisfies.

In His unfailing love,

Cindi McMenemy
Spring, 2011

Introduction: Longing for Love

Welcome the women to the study. Introduce yourself as their facilitator. Have each woman introduce herself and tell why she is at a study called “Letting God Meet Your Emotional Needs.”

Identify with the group by telling them how *you*, as the facilitator, can relate, personally, to this type of subject matter. Share with them what you hope to personally get out of the study, as well as your goal for the women attending.

Open the study session in prayer.

Have the women look at the Table of Contents page. Ask which of the chapter titles, at this point, resonates the most with them. (Which chapter are they most looking forward to going through?)

Explain that this study aims to take them, step-by-step, into a closer relationship with God to where they see Him as their “spiritual husband” and the one who can meet all of their emotional needs.

If the group hasn’t yet read the introduction, read it aloud (or pick a few women you know ahead of time who read well and enjoy reading publically and split up the sections as they read aloud).

1. As you read through the introductory paragraph on Page 7, did any of you recognize it as a paraphrase of Psalm 23?

2. How do you feel about the concept of the Lord Jesus as our “Perfect Husband”?
3. Where would you say you are in the stages of a relationship with God:
 - Getting Started?
 - Growing Together?
 - Going the Distance?
4. Commit to praying for each other throughout this study. You may want to assign prayer partners for this study, or have each woman voluntarily team up with another to pray with her and hold her accountable through the 7- or 12-week study. (I always end the first session together by praying aloud for *each* woman in the group, asking God to meet her where she is and bring her to that place of intimacy with Him.

Assign the women to read the next one or two chapters during the week or go straight into chapter one together and continue.

Close your time together in prayer.

Chapter 1: Finding the One Who Will Satisfy

Key Point: As women, we are creatures of longing who will continue to search for fulfillment – sometimes exhausting our relationships in the process – until we find the Source of our Satisfaction.

Opening Discussion Question: Where do you tend to look to fill the longings of your heart?

1. What portions of Chapter One did you highlight that really stood out to you?
2. Turn to Page 18. Have the women look up these verses (or read the clarifications) from the Notes section (Notes 2-10) on Page 217.
3. Summarize the three ways to respond to God’s invitation on pages 23-24, highlighting the three “Ts” on Pages 24-25 (Tell Him First, Take Him Seriously, Trust Him fully).

Turn to Page 28. Ask if everyone in the group remembers a time when they personally responded to God’s invitation to eternal life? If not, this would be a good time to read aloud NO. 1 on Page 28 and lead the women in a prayer of salvation.

Guide the women through Questions 2 and 3 on Page 29. (Offer suggestions for anyone who was stumped on this part so that

everyone has something filled out on No. 2 and No. 3 and has a plan for the next week.

Encourage the women to practice throughout the week what they wrote on Page 29 for Questions 2 and 3. This is a way they can put action to their intentions when it comes to drawing closer to the Lover of their Soul.

Pray for the women that they will be able to take simple steps this week to tell God first, Take Him Seriously and Trust Him Fully.

Chapter 2: Knowing He Accepts Me

Key Point: God loves, forgives and accepts us without condition. Because there was nothing we could do to earn His love, there is nothing we can do to lose it.

Opening Discussion Question: What portions of this chapter have been significantly meaningful to you?

Review Pages 38-39, pointing out the way the Lord views the things that linger in our past (and look up the accompanying Scriptures):

- *He considers them in the past and no longer relevant* (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- *He doesn’t let our past mistakes affect how we look in His eyes* (Isaiah 1:18)

- *He chooses to forget our mistakes and He never keeps an account.* (Isaiah 43:25, Psalm 103:12, Romans 5:8)

Optional: Play “Just Come In” by Margaret Becker on the CD, *Steps of Faith 1987-1991*, © 1992 by The Sparrow Corporation.

Walk women through the “Steps to Feeling Accepted” on Page 42 through a time of guided, silent prayer. Close this time in prayer, aloud.

Chapter 3: Realizing He’ll Never Leave

Key Point: God promises He will never leave us. His staying power is unlike anything we will ever experience from a human being on this earth.

Opening Discussion Question: We all have insecurities to some level. What is it that makes you fear being alone, physically, relationally, or otherwise?

Ask the group what portions of this chapter they highlighted or related to, specifically.

1. Have the women turn to Psalm 77. Read through that Psalm together and notice the shift in focus beginning in verse 10. Talk about how *our perception* is what changes, not God’s presence, promises, or character.

2. Review the attributes of the Good Shepherd on Pages 50-51.
3. Turn to Page 54 and read the opening paragraph. Guide the women through Steps 1-3.

Optional: Read Psalm 23 in *The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language* by Eugene Peterson.

Close your time together in prayer, praising God for being our Lover Who Never Leaves.

Chapter 4: Understanding How He Sees Me

Key Point: God sees you as new, spotless and beautiful when you are in relationship with Jesus Christ, trusting in Him alone for your righteousness and salvation.

Opening Discussion Question: What impacted you the most from this chapter on how God sees us?

Go over the Beauty Regime on Pages 63-64.

Turn to Page 68. Read the Opening Paragraph and then guide the women through steps 1-5. (Focus on No. 3 as one they all can do together, during your group time, to make sure an application is taken from this chapter.)

Lead the women in a time of prayer, asking God to help you each consider *His* mirror more important than your own.

Chapter 5: Approaching Him with Confidence

Key Point: You can be a confident, capable woman in coming before God when you keep in mind just how approachable He is.

Opening Discussion Question: Have you ever known someone who was unapproachable or just very unpredictable?

Ask the group what portions of the chapter resonated with them.

Review the Steps to Approaching Him on Pages 78-80.

Review the Benefits of Approaching Him on page 81 (and look up the accompanying verses):

- Confident of the power within us to accomplish His will through prayer (1 John 5:14-15).
- Capable of doing all things through His strength (Philippians 4:13).
- Consumed with joy from being in His presence (Psalm 16:11)

Read the opening paragraph on Page 83 and guide the women through the three steps listed.

Chapter 6: Making Him My Best Friend

Key Point: Jesus has already shown us He is the best friend any of us could ever have. He is now waiting for us to be true friends of His/

Opening Discussion Question: Describe the qualities and characteristics of a “best friend.”

Review the characteristics of Jesus’ friendship on pages 92-95:

- Jesus has always ‘been there’
- Jesus always keeps His promises
- Jesus has never let me down
- Jesus has loved me sacrificially
- Jesus has motivated me to keep the friendship going

Review the ways to “Reunite with Jesus” on Pages 98-102.

Review the application steps on Page 104. Encourage the women to complete at least 1 or 2 of the steps and share the results with the group if they feel comfortable doing so.

Chapter 7: Clinging to What He Desires

Teaching Tip: Write the Scriptural references from No. 2 below on small strips of paper before the study starts and hand one or two to each woman as she arrives for the study. Tell her to “bookmark” the verses in her Bible so she is ready when called upon to read them later in the study. This will save time during the study and eliminate a woman feeling “on the spot” if she can’t find a reference when called upon.)

Key Point: God says to love Him is to obey Him, so to show Him our love, we must cling to what *He* loves.

Opening Discussion Question: We may often think about how much we are showing our children or our husband or our friends that we love them, but how many of you have ever stopped to consider if you are showing *God* that you love Him?

We’ve been spending the past several weeks talking about God’s love for us. But since any relationship takes two, it’s now time to consider the concept of showing God *our* love.

1. Review the three women who caught God’s heart on Pages 112-113.

Which of these most impacted you:

- The *submissive* heart of Mary, mother of Jesus?

- The *devoted* heart of Mary Magdalene?
- The *passionate* heart of Mary of Bethany?

2. Review God’s Love List on pages 114-118. (Have the women look up some of the passages that are referred to in this section, but not quoted word for word: Micah 6:8, 1 Samuel 15:22, John 14:15, Hebrews 11:6, Psalm 51:17, 1 Peter 3:3-4, Psalm 51:6, Psalm 92:1, Colossians 2:6-7, Romans 8:29.)
3. Talk about the ways you can delight in God (Pages 119-120.
4. Have someone read the opening paragraph on Page 122 and go through the application questions together.

Close the session in prayer by having the women split into groups of two and pray for one another.

Chapter 8: Avoiding What He Dislikes

Key Point: To cultivate an intimate relationship with God we must be aware of what God hates and avoid it at all costs.

Opening Discussion Question: Can you recall a time in your life when you were practicing or tolerating something you knew God disapproved of. How did it affect your relationship with Him?

1. Talk about “David’s Dark Path” on Pages 129-133. Ask how the women were impacted by that story.

2. Turn to Proverbs 6:16-19 and have someone with a clear, understandable translation read the passage aloud. (You may also want to read this in the Contemporary English Version, the New Living Translation and/or The Message).
3. Review the characteristics on “God’s Hate List”(pages 134-139).
4. Review the three steps on Pages 140-141:
 - Forget about the remnants from the old life
 - Focus on what lies ahead in your intimate relationship with God.
 - Forge ahead in boldly pleasing Him before any other.
5. Have someone read the opening paragraph on Page 142 and ask if anyone would like to share their responses to the application questions.

Close your time together in prayer.

Chapter 9: Listening to His Loving Voice

Key Point: God is not the silent type. He has told us everything we need to know to be in relationship with Him and if we cultivate an ear to listen, we will still hear His voice.

Opening Discussion Question: Can you relate to Rita’s frustration in the opening example in this chapter? What has your experience been when it comes to trying to discern the voice of God?

Review the four ways God speaks to us (from Pages 152-156) and ask which is easiest and most difficult for the women to hear Him:

- God speaks through His Word
- God speaks through His witnesses
- God speaks through the world (creation)
- God speaks through whispers on the heart

Review the steps in “Cultivating a Heart to Hear” on Pages 157-158.

Ask if any of the women would like to share what happened as they went through the application steps on Page 164.

Have the women pray together in groups of two or more.

Chapter 10: Discovering a New Lineage

Key Point: Through a relationship with Christ, we are adopted into a family and given not only a new identity, but a new lineage, as well.

Opening Discussion Question: What kind of family did you grow up in? Is there more than you want to imitate or eliminate when it comes to raising your own family?

Review “Your Spiritual Inheritance” on Pages 175-179, having the women open their Bibles and read aloud the passages listed in the text, except for Psalm 16 which you will read together later.

Turn to Philippians 3:13-14. Have someone read the verse aloud and review the three steps on pages 179-180, when it comes to accepting your new lineage:

- Forget what lies behind
- Look forward to what lies ahead
- Press On

Have the women turn to page 182 and read the opening paragraph.

1. Ask if anyone would like to share her experience with going through the first application question on her own.
2. Take the women through the exercise on Psalm 16.

3. Ask if anyone completed the exercise on No. 3 and if they'd like to share the experience.
4. Offer ideas for the women for the fourth application question on shaping their family's spiritual heritage.

Close the time in prayer by praying a blessing over the women and their new 'spiritual heritage.'

Chapter 11: Living With a New Purpose

Key Point: We were created to glorify God and reflect His image.

Opening Discussion Question: What would you say is your purpose for existing in this world?

Review the following points on pages 189-191, having the women look up the Scriptural passages under each topic:

Doing it All for Him – First Corinthians 10:31

Performing good works – Ephesians 2:10

Exercising our Spiritual Gifts – First Corinthians 12:7-11, 28; Romans 12:6-8

Living a holy and blameless life before Him – Romans 12:1-2

Becoming molded to the image of Christ – Romans 8:28-29

Increasing in the knowledge of God – Colossians 1:9-10; 2 Timothy 2:15

Review the sections on pages 192-194:

- Extending beyond the job
- Praying for a way
- Praying for words

Turn to Page 197. Read the opening paragraph and go through the steps to pursuing your purpose. (If the women haven't filled out the section on Page 198, do it together.)

Chapter 12: Experiencing a Future Together

Key Point: God really does have a “happily ever after” He is waiting to experience with us *now*.

Opening Discussion Question: Can any of you relate to feelings of fear or apprehension about your future? If so, why?

Ask someone to read “Our Golden Opportunity” on Page 205.

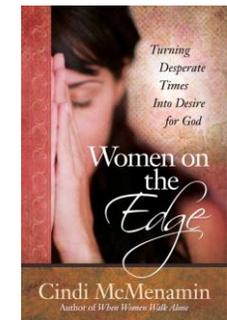
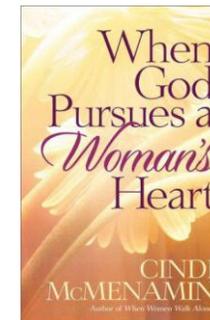
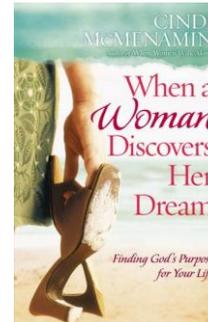
Review the kind of future we have with Christ, our Prince, on pages 206-208.

Go through the Steps to “Celebrating Your Future” on Page 214.

Read “A Parting Encouragement” on the last page.

Discuss the “next step” for your group which might include:

- A gathering a month from now to catch up with each other and talk about how you're keeping your relationship with God ignited.
- An area of service for each woman, individually, based on what she learned in Chapter 11: Experiencing a New Purpose.
- A community service project that your group can do together as a way of glorifying God and serving the One you love.
- Another book or Bible study together. Some recommendations for your next study:



Close your time together in prayer.