



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, *Women on the Edge*.

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 7 weeks – taking one week for the introduction and two chapters a week for the remaining 6 weeks. In my experience, I have seen less drop-off in attendance if my studies are 6-8 weeks long, rather than 10-12 weeks or more. 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 away from the edge and to their spacious place in God's embrace.

In His unfailing love,

Cindi McMenemy
Fall, 2010

Introduction: Standing at the Crossroads

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 “Women on the Edge.”

Tell the group how you 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.

If the group hasn't read the introduction yet, 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. Turn to Page 9. Do you ever ask yourself those questions in italics on Page 9? Do you see one word that all those sentences have in common? (The pronoun “I”) What does that tell you about those thoughts?

We're going to delve chapter by chapter into the main areas for which women are desperate, but let's talk up front right now about the things *we* are desperate for.

Is yours something in the list on Page 11 or is it something else?

Direct the women to the bottom of Page 11:

*Any of those desperations can lead you down a destructive detour in life or toward a deeper desire for God. I'm convinced there's no road in between. So the issue is a serious one. Where do you want to go with **your** passion? Which road do **you** want to follow?*

2. Look at the Table of Contents and notice the areas in which women are desperate when they're “Surviving on the Edge.” We're going to look at one or two of these each week and learn how to turn our desperations into a desire for God so we are no longer ‘surviving on the edge’ but ‘thriving on the edge’ as we're on the edge for God.
3. Commit to pray 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.

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: Desperate for More

Key Point: We are women on the edge when we continue to want more in spite of our blessings. Yet when we learn to desire God alone we find contentment and our spacious place away from the edge.

Opening Discussion Question: What portions did you highlight or what really stood out to you in this chapter?

1. Turn to Page 26. What did you include in your list of things that come to mind when you consider what more you wish you had?
2. What did you include as you listed the blessings in your life?

How did that exercise change your perspective?

3. How did each of you respond to the statistics on Page 27? \
4. How did you answer question 4. What is your 'one thing'?

5. Would anyone like to share their personally paraphrased version of Psalm 27:4?

Optional: Play Matthew Ward's song "There is One Thing" from his "Even Now" CD. Have the women listen, reflectively as the music plays.

Close your time together in prayer, praying for each of the women, specifically.

Assign the women to read Chapter 2 and work through the application questions for next week. Encourage them to highlight any portions of the reading that stood out or impacted them in a particular way or that they'd like to discuss in the group.

Chapter 2: Desperate for Control

Key Point: God can take our desire for control and replace it with a desire for the One who really *is* in control.

Opening Discussion Question: What portions did you highlight or what really stood out to you in this chapter?

Review the section “God’s Ability to Govern” on Pages 33-36, having each woman read aloud a subtitle and one verse underneath it.

We looked at Jenny’s story and her realization that she was trying to control what only God could control and she was refusing to control what she was responsible for controlling. Can any of you relate?

Read Page 45 “God’s Name is on the Line”

Turn to Page 47. Read Opening Paragraph: *Our desire to be in control leads us out to the edge. But surrendering to the One who controls all things with His loving, capable hands helps us stay in a spacious place where we let Him control our lives and we reap the benefits.*

1. Who would like to share what they listed under No. 1 – the situations you’ve been wanting God to control in you life that you are responsible for?
2. And what situations, specifically, are truly outside of your control that you must surrender to God?
3. Have women share their personal applications of the verses listed on page48.
4. Which of God’s abilities to govern (on pages 33-36) are particularly comforting to you?

What verse did you pick to memorize and did any of you actually memorize it?

Have the women voluntarily read the prayer aloud if they’d like to share theirs. You, as the facilitator, may want to begin so others will follow if they feel inclined to share.

Pray for the women in the group as they surrender their hearts to the Only One who is really in control.

Chapter 3: Desperate for Fulfillment

Key Point: We are all desperately seeking something when what we need to seek is God. When we become grateful for what we have and develop a desperation for Him, we find true fulfillment.

Opening Discussion Question: Look at the list on Pages 52-53. Which one of these is *your* ‘key to fulfillment’? (Or add in your own)

Summarize the main points of “Rachel’s Road to Desperation” in Genesis 29-30 (Pages 55-58). Which of these can you relate to and why?

Turn to page 62. Read the opening paragraph before the questions.

1. Read Psalm 42:1-2. What is your soul thirsting for as David thirsted for God?
2. What do you feel is still lacking in your life?
3. What might God want to teach you by withholding it from you?

4. Review the three steps on the “Road to Fulfillment” (pages 60-61). Have women share if God might be leading them to a ministry through their ‘lack’.
5. Read Psalm 139:1-6 aloud. Ask if anyone wants to share their written prayerful response to those verses.

Chapter 4: Desperate for Change

Key Point: God will either change our circumstances or He will change us. Difficulties drive us to be desperate for God, therefore He often will opt to change us.

Opening Discussion Question: What is something in your life right now that you are feeling desperate to change?

Review the S.O.S. steps on Pages 73-75.

Have someone read the opening paragraph on Page 81.

1. Who would like to share their S.O.S. from their situation they are most desperate to change?
2. From Page 82, (Question No. 2) what are three ways you can remember God throughout the day?
3. Who would like to share with the group how you filled in your song from Isaiah 40:1-3? (Let as many answer as would like to share)

Close your session together in prayer, praising God for what He has allowed into your life and how it is making you more desperate for Him.

Chapter 5: Desperate for Love

Key Point: If we are desperate for anyone else’s love over God’s we are on a dangerous road toward devastation. But if we strive to love Him above all, we will find freedom.

Opening Discussion Question: What impacted you the most from the Chapter on “Desperate for Love”?

Summarize the following sections on pages 90-92:

- God’s Love is Eternal
- God’s Love is Enduring

Highlight the Steps to “Developing a Faithful Heart” on pages 92-95:

- Love Him by Letting Go of the Idols
- Love Him by Loving Others
- Love Him by Living Right
- Love Him by Lifting Him Up

1. Turn to Psalm 18: 1-2. Ask the women who would like to share their prayerful responses to God's character descriptions in this passage.
2. Have someone read First Corinthians 13:4-7. Ask what characteristics of love the women need to focus on in showing love toward others?
3. Ask who would like to share how they rated their passion on Page 99.

Lead the women in a time of prayer, asking God to help you each love Him as desperately as He loves each of you.

Chapter 6: Desperate to Avoid the Patterns of the Past

Key Point: We are not destined to repeat the patterns of our past. In fact, through Christ we have more of an ability to be like our Heavenly Father than our own earthly parents.

Opening Discussion Question: How did you feel as you read through this chapter on trying to avoid the patterns of the past?

Summarize the points on pages 103-107 that will keep us sane.

Summarize the lies vs. truth on Page 109.

Have someone read the opening paragraph on Page 113.

1. On page 113, what are some positive things you can remember about your upbringing that you would like to emulate?
2. Does anyone feel comfortable sharing the negatives you grew up with that you want no part of today?
3. Have volunteers look up and read aloud the Scripture verses listed on Pages 113 -114. Talk about the benefits of having these Scriptures fresh in your mind when you begin to have thoughts that you will slip into destructive patterns from the past.
4. Close this session by having each woman in attendance pray the prayer on page 114, adding in their name, as others agree in prayer.

Chapter 7: Desperate to Accomplish

Key Point: God is more concerned about what we *become* in the process of trying to accomplish something than about what we actually accomplish.

Opening Discussion Question: Is there something you'd like to accomplish in life that you are tired of waiting for?

Summarize God's "wait-training" examples on Page 120.

Summarize the main points on Pages 123-124 by having volunteers read each Scripture verse indicated in the five points.

Read opening paragraph on Page 127.

1. What are two things you'd like to accomplish before you die?
2. What about your legacy? How do you want to be remembered after you're gone by those closest to you?
3. How are your goal and legacy connected?
4. Look up the following verses and ask how the women responded to each verse as it pertains to God's desire you're your life?

Romans 8:29:

Ephesians 2:10

Ephesians 3:16-19

Read Psalm 18:25-36 as a prayer of surrender to God for what the women in the room want to accomplish.

Pray for the women in the groupand their unmet desires for accomplishment. Pray for God's work in and through their lives so HE will be the "prize" they desire and His work in their life will be considered among their greatest accomplishments.

Chapter 8: Desperate to Find Yourself

Key Point: Rather than a need to "find" ourselves, we need to *forget* about ourselves and focus on the One who made us. As we understand who we are in His eyes, it will change our life and perspective.

Opening Discussion Question: What have you found yourself doing, throughout your life, to try to find your identity or some significance?

Review the section on pages 134-135 (Do you ever find yourself...).

Talk about how the "Four I's" on Pages 136-137 will help anyone who is struggling with significance.

Read the introductory paragraph on Page 139.

1. Have volunteers read each of the Scripture verses listed under No. 1 and ask the women to share what they recorded each verse saying about their identity.

2. Ask if any of the women would like to share their personalized “song” from Psalm 13 on pages 139-140.

Close the session together in prayer.

Chapter 9: Desperate to Obey Him

Key Point: There is a battle raging within each of us – to live our way or God’s. The key is to desire His will over ours so we can truly be desperate for HIM.

Opening Discussion Question: What impacted you the most in this chapter on being desperate for God?

Summarize the examples on Page 148 of those who were singled out by God. Encourage the women to talk about these examples and how they, too, can be women whom God works through mightily – not because of their *ability* – but because of their *availability*.

Read the opening paragraph on Page 152.

1. Ask who would like to share their answers for No. 1 -- what they wrote about a practical way to live out the Steps of Obedience.
2. Have a volunteer read Psalm 15. (You may want to read it in another translation, too, such as The New Living Translation,

The Message or the Contemporary English Version.) Ask who would like to read their personalized prayer responses.

3. Have volunteers read aloud the verses on Page 153. Ask if anyone wants to recite one from memory...or which ones they’d like to work on so they *can* recite them from memory.

Close in prayer by asking the women to pray for each other and a deeper obedience to God.

Chapter 10: Desperate to Serve Him

Key Point: Serving the Lord, by serving others, leads us away from the edge and toward the spacious place of His embrace because it focuses us, not on ourselves, but on Him.

Opening Discussion Question: In this chapter, Lynda’s restlessness (read: “mid life crisis”) was a strong desire to serve God, not herself. How does this run contrary to how the world – and even some Christians – approach aging, retirement, and so on?

Summarize the ways to serve God with a passion on Pages 161-162.

1. Turn to Page 169. Ask who would like to share their response to No. 1.
2. Using the acronym SERVE on pages 166-167, how can each woman incorporate those steps and become a woman who serves God and not self? (No. 2 on Page 169)

3. Read John 12:23-26. Ask who would like to share their answers.
4. Ask someone to read Romans 12:9-13. Ask for the women's input on keeping their spiritual fervor for God.

Close the session in prayer, asking God to ignite the spiritual passion of the women so they will be desperate to serve Him.

Chapter 11: Desperate for His Touch

Key Point: One aspect of being desperate for God, is being desperate for His holy touch on our lives.

Opening Discussion Question: Can you relate to being desperate for God's touch on your life?

Often we don't even realize we need God's healing touch on our lives. Take the women through a time of silent, reflective prayer as you read the boldfaced questions on Pages 176-177 and say the prayer aloud in each section.

1. On Pages 177-178, which of the "Five Areas of a Woman's Life that Need God's Touch" can you most relate to and why?

Have the women take turns reading aloud the verses on pages 180 that tell us of God's response to our cries for help and healing.

2. Have the women read the verses aloud on Page 185 and share the benefits they recorded for each verse.
3. Ask whoever would like to share a verse of Scripture that was healing for them. (This question is about *Scripture* that ministers to us, not necessarily a "healing" incident.)

Close your time together in prayer by asking for God's continued touch on the women's lives.

Chapter 12: Desperate for His Glory

Opening Discussion Question: Why do we get so rattled when we are misunderstood or judged unfairly?

Key Point: When God's reputation becomes more important than ours, we'll be on the edge about the *right* things.

Review the three bullet point on Page 189 about undermining God's glory. Encourage the women to talk about these.

Review the three ways to respond to God on Pages 191-193. Now turn to Page 201. Have someone read the opening paragraph.

1. Ask who would like to share their responses to No. 1.
2. Talk about No. 2 and the ways we can glorify God through our conduct, constant praise and courageous living.

3. Read each of the passages on Page 202 and have women volunteer to share how they can apply each one to their life so God is glorified. (Author's Note: the first edition printing of *Women on the Edge* has the last verse incorrectly referenced. It should be 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

Read "Remaining on the Path of Life" (Page 203) and close the study in prayer, asking God to keep the women desperate for Him and living on the edge for Him alone.

Please direct women to the very last page of the book and encourage them to contact Cindi with their comments on the study and how it impacted their life. She would love to hear from each one of them.