

A STUDY GUIDE
FOR SERIOUSLY
DATING OR
ENGAGED:
NO LONGER TWO

A Guide to How God Made Men, Women, and Marriage

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A Study Guide for Seriously Dating or Engaged: No Longer Two
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CONTENTS

1	An Explanation Exists	1
2	No Faith In Men	7
3	A Beautiful Little Fool	23
4	A Lottery	37
5	An Act of Possession	45
6	A Mind of Her Own	49
7	One Good Husband	55
8	Walk Around In It	63
9	One Side Only	71
10	Trying and Failing	79

An Explanation Exists

*"But you see, Meg, just because we don't understand
doesn't mean that the explanation doesn't exist."*

- Madeleine L'Engle, A Wrinkle in Time

What kind of grandiose fantasies or dreams did you have before you started dating about romantic relationships, including marriage?

Had you ever considered the distinction between God-sanctioned (covenant) marriage and government-sanctioned (contract) marriage? Is there a difference in your mind?

Does the difference mean anything to you? If so, how?

What does the difference look like in a relationship?

How does this impact your thinking about your current relationship?

Do you agree that marriage is “do or die trying?” Why or why not?

What do you think of the assertion that when we are uncomfortable, it is often more about rubbing up against our bias than an actual affront to truth?

Are you aware of your biases? If so, are you able to recognize the inclinations of your bias in relationships? How do you adjust for them?

How do you respond when your bias rubs up against someone else's bias on the same matter?

The author shared an example of holding to a particular practice and believing it the “right” way because it was how she grew up. Can you think of your own example of holding to a particular practice or belief simply because that’s how you grew up?

What are your thoughts on the idea that there is God’s Word and everything else is commentary? What is the role of commentary?

What was your biggest take-away from this chapter?

No Faith in Men

"There's no trust. No faith, no honesty in men."

- William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*

Do you agree that men often get a bad rap or that our culture has become feminized? If so, where do you see it? In what ways has it affected our culture?

NO LONGER TWO

How has this cultural shift impacted you?

Men, how do you view yourself? Do you feel like you have to hide, suppress, or change anything?

Women, how do you view men? What do you expect of the man in your life? What type of traits are you attracted to or repelled by in men? Is this cultural shift at all responsible?

QUESTIONS FOR MEN

(women jump to page 16)

In what ways, do you feel driven to work, achieve, succeed or take care of what has been entrusted to your care? Where on the spectrum do you find yourself falling?

How has unemployment affected you?

NO LONGER TWO

Is your occupation the only thing that makes you feel productive or give you a sense of purpose? If you were to lose your job, what else in your life could meet this innate drive?

The author used brain science to explain the stereotype that men tend to be more visual than women. What has your experience been with this stereotype?

How much do you relate to the information provided about being more visual?

How have you struggled with this quality in yourself; with your eyes in the ways described? Have your eyes remained faithful in past relationships? In your current relationship?

How has the trend to normalize and promote pornography affected you?

NO LONGER TWO

The author described some positive and productive aspects to being visual. How do you relate to these positive aspects? Do you find being more visual helpful in working or accomplishing goals?

The author also explained how men are able to assess the nature of a situation, including whether or not there is a threat present. How do you relate to this ability? Have you had experience with this quality?

The next quality described in the book is how men tend to be better at single tasks rather than juggling multiple tasks. How true is that quality for you?

If you relate to this trait, how has it benefitted you and how has it created problems for you?

In what ways do you relate to the ability to judge time, size, speed, distance? In what ways have you been able to create strategies or complex processes to solve a problem?

Were you aware that you had the ability to bypass the emotional center of your brain in order to accomplish certain tasks? Have you ever found yourself far less emotional about a situation than the women around you? Can you recall an experience where you didn't find yourself emotional until well after it was over?

Consider how this ability can be both a strength and a weakness.

The author claims that because of all these traits, qualities, instincts, and drives, that men tend to possess the primary emotional need of respect, support, and encouragement. This need can take many shapes and forms. Does this need resonate with you at all? In what form does it take for you, personally?

Do you think failure to have this need met has played a role in past relationship problems? If so, in what ways? How is this need met in your current relationship? Have you ever discussed this need in your current relationship?

QUESTIONS FOR WOMEN

In regard to what the author described as the man's natural drive to work and achieve, what is the man in your life like? Do you see this quality in him? Do he seem to have a really strong instinct and drive or a really weak one?

How have you seen unemployment affect men you know?

In what ways can you relate to this quality in men and the subsequent problems that arise from unemployment?

How have you been affected by men being more visually oriented?

How have men that you know struggled with pornography or lusting for other women? Has it played a role in relationships, including your current relationship?

The author described some positive and productive aspects to men's visual orientation quality. Does this help you understand or relate to the man in your life any better?

Prior to reading this chapter, were you aware that men have the ability to read the nature of a situation? Does this information impact your understanding of men?

What has your experience been with men and multi-tasking? Has it created problems for you at work or in your relationship?

Is the man in your life more “big picture” or strong at judging time, speed, size, or complex processes? Has this been something that you viewed as complementary to your nature or as a threat or obstacle?

Have you experienced him being less emotional than you? Have you ever witnessed a man become emotional far after an event was over? Recall a time when you found yourself frustrated or hurt by a man's lack of emotional reactivity.

Does the author's explanation of this trait enhance your understanding of men in any way? Does it give you a change in perspective or attitude about these past experiences that left you upset, unhappy, or frustrated?

Did you realize that men need respect, support, and encouragement? Considering the man in your life, as well as past relationships, how has this need manifested or played a role in the relationship?

In what ways has this chapter impacted your understanding of the man in your life? How can you incorporate this information into your relationship?

A Beautiful Little Fool

"All right... I'm glad it's a girl. And I hope she'll
be a fool - that's the best thing a girl can be in
this world, a beautiful little fool."

- F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*

Do you agree that we can read bias into Scriptures? Have you encountered people from different positions using similar or the same Scriptures to defend their position?

Which of the positions mentioned have you heard about the role of women? Have you agreed with any of them?

Prior to reading this chapter, what was your reaction to the word “helper?” After reading what the author found about the Hebrew word translated to “helper,” what is your reaction to the word now?

What are your thoughts on the idea that woman was created to come alongside man in partnership, to help him achieve his purpose from a place of strength?

QUESTIONS FOR WOMEN

(men jump to page 30)

Women tend to be more aware of their internal experience, leaving them predisposed to be more emotional and relational. What has your experience been with this tendency?

The author provided an example of party planning to illustrate a difference between men and women. What was your reaction? Do you relate to it at all?

NO LONGER TWO

Do you find that you are more talkative than men, including the man in your life? Has the amount of or interest level in talking been an issue in your current relationship? If so, how?

How are you at expressing your emotions? Have you found that expressing emotions is an issue that has arisen in your relationships with men? Has it been an issue in your current relationship? Has the research provided on differences in brain structures impacted your thoughts on this difference?

What was your reaction to the information provided on oxytocin and the role that it plays in emotional bonding? Have you witnessed a difference between the sexes in their ability to bond emotionally?

The author frequently refers to more primitive times to contextualize some of the innate qualities in people, including their drives, instincts, and brain functioning. How does this help you understand God's design for men and women in both marriage and in community?

In this chapter, the author proposes that women bond, talk, and experience life through emotion because it benefitted the marriage, but also because it kept the women in the community connected strongly. What are your thoughts? How does that translate today, specifically in your life?

How has your right IPL created trouble in your relationships (personalize things, interpret situations and hold to this intuition despite protests from the other person)? Have you had an argument similar to the one described in page 35?

The author provides the theory that there is significance to Eve being formed from the rib of Adam (it symbolizes how she guards the heart while he guards her). What do you think of that idea? Have you seen this dynamic in your relationship?

Life is like a junior high school dance, she is waiting to be picked. What is it like to be picked? What is it like to not be picked? What role might this reality have played in the demise of your past relationships? Do you feel picked in your current relationship?

Do you like the feeling of being loved? Does it surprise you that it is tied into your dopamine system? In what ways do you identify with loving love? How much of a disparity has there been in your relationship with your regard for love and the man you are dating?

(Women, jump to next chapter.)

QUESTIONS FOR MEN

What was your reaction to the juxtaposition of men focusing upon the external experience while women focus upon the internal experience? Did it provide you with any new insights into women, including the woman in your life?

The author provided an example of party planning to illustrate a difference between men and women. What was your reaction? Do you relate to it at all?

Do you find that you are less talkative than women? Has the amount of or interest level in talking been an issue in your relationship? If so, how?

NO LONGER TWO

How are you at expressing your emotions? Have you found that expressing emotions is an issue that has arisen in your relationship? Has the research provided on differences in brain structures impacted your thoughts on this difference?

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In this chapter, the author proposes that women bond, talk, and experience life through emotion because it benefitted the marriage, but also because it kept the women in the community connected strongly. What are your thoughts? How does that translate today, specifically in your life?

In what ways have you experience a woman utilizing her right IPL to the point of creating trouble (personalizing things, interpreting situations and hold to this intuition despite your protests)? Have you had an argument similar to the one described in page 35?

The author provides the theory that there is significance to Eve being formed from the rib of Adam (it symbolizes how she guards the heart while he guards her). What do you think of that idea? Have you seen this dynamic in your relationship?

Life is like a junior high school dance, she is waiting to be picked. How well have you been at picking the woman in your life? Are there other things you have picked instead? What role might this reality have played in the demise of your past relationships?

Do you like the feeling of being loved? Does it surprise you that it is tied into your dopamine system? What is your reaction to the evidence that women have a stronger reaction to love in this internal reward system? How much of a disparity has there been in your relationship with your regard to feelings and needs for love?

A Lottery

"All the housemaid hopes is, happiness for 'em –
but marriage is a lottery, and the more she
thinks about it, the more she feels the
independence and the safety of a single life."
- Charles Dickens, *Dombey and Son*

Re-read the list of corresponding qualities between men and women on page 42. What is your reaction to that list? How could knowing these differences, and how they relate to each other, help in your relationship?

NO LONGER TWO

That author presents a new take on intimacy. What was your experience doing the exercise on pages 43-33? How did you answer the reflection questions?

How have you been with different types of relationships (unicycle, bicycle, tricycle, automobile)? Have you mistaken which type you had? Have you tried to make all relationships into one type? How might your relationships improve if you had them categorized accurately and then maintained them appropriately?

The author gave a story about a car chase (pp45-46). Describe how your past relationships developed flat tires. Have any ended up on the rims with sparks flying?

What did you think of her suggestions for maintaining the four kinds of intimacy? How can you incorporate them into your relationship?

Re-visit the images on page 49. What have your experiences been like with both cycles? What cycle are you on now?

In the section on married sex, the author addresses two misconceptions. Have you ever held either of them? What did you think of her response to them?

There are two types of love described in the book. One is compared to silly string and the other is compared to a rubber band. What has been your experience with both of them? What type of love have you experienced in your current relationship?

The author used the image of a boombox to describe the process of plugging in to God and then unplugging and operating in your own power. Have you ever experience this process yourself? What did it look like? How did you, if you have, broken that cycle and remained plugged in?

NO LONGER TWO

What was your reaction the story of the Fall? Did you gain any new insights into the human condition or into your own experience?

Do you ever struggle with hiding from others or hiding from God? If so, how do you hide? What is your reason for hiding? Do you have any desire to be more open?

The author claims that pride is the primary source for relationships problems. After re-reading the closing remarks on the chapter, how has your past relationships suffered because of pride? What can you do to safeguard your current relationship from your pride?

An Act of Possession

"Never may an act of possession be exercised upon a free being; the exclusive possession of a woman is no less unjust than the possession of slaves; all men are born free, all have equal rights: never should we lose the sight of those principles; according to which never may there be granted to one sex the legitimate right to lay monopolizing hands upon the other, and never may one of the sexes, or classes, arbitrarily possess the other."

- Marquis de Sade

What has been your past feelings about the marriage section of Ephesians 5? Is it a passage with which you are familiar?

In the section “Context for the Context,” explanation is provided for Paul’s letters. Describe any new insights you gained into those sections of Scripture contributed by Paul.

Had you ever heard of Greco-Roman household codes? How might that context influence your understanding of portions of Paul’s letters addressing home life?

What impression was left on you with the explanation the author gave for Paul's writing style (indicative vs imperative)? Can you identify examples of each in other passages by Paul? What difference does the writing style make to how you apply what the Scripture says?

Describe your reaction to the verse that tells all Christians to submit to one another (Ephesians 5:21). Do you agree with the author that it establishes a directive for mutual submission among all believers? Why or why not?

In the closing remarks in this chapter, the author connects mutual submission to the male-female dynamic discovered in previous chapters. Is this a compelling connection? How might it influence your expectations for your current relationship?

There are many Christians who argue against the concept of mutual submission. What is your current opinion on the matter? How does your opinion affect your relationship?

A Mind of Her Own

"The real offense, as she ultimately perceived,
was her having a mind of her own at all. Her
mind was to be his – attached to his like a
small garden-plot to a deer-park."
– Henry James, *The Portrait of a Lady*

What has been your reaction to or understanding of Ephesians 5:22 in the past?

Does your new understanding of the definition of “submit” impact your perspective on this verse?

Wives are told to submit “as to the Lord.” What has that come to mean to you? How does it relate to what you have learned about female nature and the role of an *ézer*?

In Ephesians 5:23, Paul describes the husband as the “head” of the wife. The author makes a case for “head” meaning “source” even though the traditional interpretation has been “authority.” What did you come to believe? How does it impact your view of Paul’s message to husband and wives?

What impact would this have on your relationship?

The author also addressed Paul's use of "head" in 1 Corinthians 11. What did you come to understand about this passage? What about the overall argument about the hierarchical relationship between husband and wife?

Why do you think it was necessary for the author to be so extensive with her research on the word "head?"

The final inflammatory wording in the address to women is “in everything.” What do you believe that means?

What does all this talk about “submit,” “head,” and “everything” mean for your relationship? Did the information presented in this book provided you with any clarity? In what ways has it challenged your thinking?

What are your thoughts on the author's claim that these verses actually connect back to Genesis 2, supporting what we learned about the nature of men and women and the dynamic between them?

What do you now believe about the traditional view that the husband is the wife's authority, that she needs to obey what he says, that his opinion is the final word on a subject, and that she must surrender to his leading in absolutely everything?

One Good Husband

"One good husband is worth two good wives, for the scarcer things are, the more they are valued." – Benjamin Franklin

After reading this chapter, what did you come to believe about the intention of this passage? Is it a description for men in how they could submit to their wives?

NO LONGER TWO

What was your reaction to how the author characterized the call on husbands to love their wives (bottom of page 96)?

Men, how does your love for the woman in your life compare?

Women, how does the love you feel from the man in your life compare?

Have you ever considered how Christ loves us?

Men, have you ever compared how you love to how Christ loves? What would it look like to give up your lifestyle for the woman in your life? In what ways would it be challenging?

Women, what would it mean for you to see the man in your life give up his lifestyle for you?

What impact upon your relationship would this sort of love have, including a willingness to sacrifice his lifestyle?

Many experiences of love are conditional, easily broken by sinful tendencies. Where have you encountered unconditional love – love that went beyond mistake-making, wrong-thing-doing, miss-the-mark failures?

The author breaks down the section, “that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,” and shows the connection to the purpose of marriage and meaning of many of its symbols (exclusivity, name, ring, vows). What impact does this have on your opinion of marriage? How might it affect your relationship?

The section, “Without Blemish,” explains how God reconciled the distance between Himself and a sinful human race. How does the Gospel message tie into relationships, including marriage? What role does God have in your relationship?

The author made an argument against the wide-held notion that men are to be the “spiritual leader” of his wife. What are your thoughts on the subject? Men, what had you felt about the mantle? Did you embrace it? Women, had you wanted a man to lead you or do you prefer the position of partnership?

NO LONGER TWO

What has been your experience with abilities, gifts, and interests that do not fit what people think should fit who you are (e.g., gender, race, age)?

Paul links the marriage relationship to the husband's body both metaphorically and literally. What insights did this give you into this, the deepest of relationships?

Through the verse-by-verse discussion of the Ephesians 5 marriage passages, connections continue to be found between the text and the nature of men and women, including their basic emotional needs. To what extent do you identify with these revelations? What does it do for your understanding of relationships, including what God wants for your relationship?

Husbands are called to nourish and cherish their wives. What does that mean to you? How has it looked in past relationships? What does it look like in your current relationship?

Walk Around In It

"You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view... until you climb into his skin and walk around in it."

— Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*

Paul's use of Genesis 2:23 takes us back to Genesis in the midst of a discussion of marriage. What have you learned so far about two becoming one? What does it mean to you and your relationship?

Divorce has become common in this country and the author explains the seriousness of the act in her discussion of Malachi 2. What is your attitude about divorce? What is your experience with divorce? Did you witness the seriousness of these experiences?

The author also addressed the concept of biblical grounds for divorce. What are your thoughts on the concept? Have you encountered people referencing this concept?

People often focus upon the filing for divorce over the acts that led to the dissolution of the marriage, even prolonging the finality of a divorce despite continuing in the behaviors that prevent the relationship from healing.

If you've been divorced, what insights did you gain from this section of the book? What was your experience like?

If you have never been married, how does this compare to your past break-ups? What was the reality of the break-up, did someone break their pledge?

What has been your reaction to differences between you and the person you have dated? Did you perceive them as threats to you or the stability of the relationship? Did you see them as problems? Have you experienced times where you have been extra sensitive to differences you see in another person? What about your current relationship?

The author noted the correlation between man's role with woman's need and woman's role with man's need (page 131). Couples often work against it rather than with it. What has your experience been like? How might you adjust for it in your current relationship?

“You are married to a sinner.” Or, rather, you are in a relationship with a sinner. The point is that people are not perfect. They are in a battle with pride and ego. And so are you. Have you ever considered that fact? How might that perspective impact your relationship?

Relationships take attention and intention. What does that mean to you? What role has those two things played in your current relationship?

Revisit the section on horsemen (pages 134-140).

Men, have you struggled with a tendency to stonewall? How do you react to criticism? How have these two horsemen affected your past relationships? Your current relationship?

Women, have you struggled with a tendency toward being critical? How do you react to stonewalling? How have these two horsemen affect your past relationships? Your current relationship?

All communication is comprised of content, feeling, and expectation.

Men, what did you think of the author's advice to you in this section? Have you encountered women relying on implied meaning in their communication with you? How has that affected your ability to communicate, as well as the health of past relationships? What about your current relationship?

Women, have you ever noticed how often you rely upon unspoken communication? How could you work on being more explicit instead of implicit when you communicate? How do you think this tendency has affected your ability to communicate, as well as the health of past relationships? What about your current relationship?

NO LONGER TWO

The common horsemen are exactly the opposite of what each person needs. What new insights did you gain in the last section of this chapter? How might it help in your current relationship?

What is it like to be in a relationship with you?

One Side Only

"But there is one thing worse than an absolutely loveless marriage. A marriage in which there is love, but on one side only; faith, but on one side only; devotion, but on one side only, and in which of the two hearts one is sure to be broken."

— Oscar Wilde, *An Ideal Husband*

In the section on Malachi 2, what was your reaction to the lost limb metaphor for the lasting effect of divorce, which could also apply to the break-up of a long-term or serious relationship?

Jesus said divorce was permitted because people's hearts were hard. What has it been like to have a hard heart in a relationship? What is it like to have the person with whom you are in a relationship have a hard heart toward you?

The author claims that the intimacy of marriage is an illustration of the intimacy in the Trinity (Father-Son-Holy Spirit). What does that mean to you and for your relationship?

The author asserted that your choice of interpretation for 1 Peter 3 is a “disputable matter.” Do you agree? What implication does that have?

Peter described a gentle and quiet spirit as a type of beauty more important than fashion and accessories. What is your reaction?
Men, what do find beautiful in a woman?
Women, do you believe that men would find such a spirit attractive and beautiful?

NO LONGER TWO

How does Peter's use of Sarah as an example for women impact you? What do you know of Sarah?

What does the review of other passages on marriage do for your understanding of the relationship, as well as the roles of husband and wife?

Husbands are instructed in Colossians 3 to not be harsh with their wives (embitter, exasperate).

Men, how have you been harsh with women in the past? How might have you embittered them or exasperated them? What about your current relationship?

Women, how have you been treated harshly by men in the past? How have they embittered or exasperated you? What about your current relationship?

How is our culture similar to that of ancient Corinth? What are your thoughts on the author's comments on the effect of a promiscuous lifestyle? Have you encountered the realities of multiple sexual partners?

Consider the section that addressed 1 Corinthians 7, specifically not withholding from each other and the idea of a hedge of protection around a relationship. How might past relationships be different with this approach? How might it affect your current relationship?

What did you learn from the section on the “curse” from the Fall? Do you read it as prescriptive or descriptive (is it God’s design for men to rule over women)? What does it mean for male-female relationships?

What has this chapter done for your understanding of your relationship?

Trying and Failing

"Next to trying and winning, the best thing is trying and failing."

— LM Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*

Do you care? Do you care what the Bible has to say about you and your role in your current relationship, including a possible future marriage? Do you care what Jesus' example reveals to you about how you should believe and behave? Do you care about what we discovered about men and women? Do you care about becoming one with your future spouse?

What do you believe about the Bible? Is it important? Is it significant? Have you given it permission to influence how you think, feel, and behave? Is it a book of suggestions or a book of instructions? If you find something inside its pages that contradicts what you currently believe, what do you discard – what the Bible says or what you believe? Do you at least wrestle with it and try to adapt yourself to its truth?

And what about Jesus? Who do you say He is? Who do you say He is to you? He wants to have a relationship with you. But, what do you want?

Do you care what Jesus said? Do you care about what He did? Do you want to imitate Him? Do you want to follow Him? Regardless of who you are, what gender you are, whether you are married or not, do you want to be like Jesus?

What impact did the analysis of Mark 8:33 have on you? Jesus called us to follow Him and if we are not behind Him, then we are not following Him. Look within yourself. Where are you in relation to Jesus? Have you moved ahead? Have you moved too fast? Have you wandered in another direction? Have you lost your perspective?

NO LONGER TWO

What is your attitude about your current relationship; about trying and failing?

What has this book done for you? What has it done for your relationship?