

# SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION TOPICS

***Relationships:*** Broken relationships are everywhere! Not only the obvious failed marriages of our “enlightened” culture – I’m talking about wounds that keep families from the nurturing, sheltering activities God purposed. I’m talking about fractured friendships that tear down rather than build up. I’m talking about gaping wounds in the fragile flesh of fellowship in the body of Christ. Relationships fail because we have not gone to God’s Word to understand the content of relationship.

Studying relationships can open the discussion of love, communication, and purpose in the Godhead evident even in the Creation of the World. It traces God’s perfect design intention for His image bearer through Creation, the Fall, and Redemption. Our relationships in this world as women – daughters, sisters, mothers (physically & spiritually), friends, and wives flow dramatically from our understanding of our relationship to God through Jesus Christ. We are no longer takers (dead in sin) but now givers and receivers because we are complete in Christ (Philippians 2/ Colossians 3).

***Loving God In Life’s Disappointments:*** It’s Saturday morning. You wake up feeling great, pull on your most comfortable robe and slippers, step into the quiet hall, (the children are still asleep), and find that the hall window was left open all night, it rained, and the beautiful, new hardwood floor has buckled! You hit your first valley. What rises up in your heart? Disappointment moves quickly to blaming or self-blame, anger, discouragement, fretting, worry, or a bad mood.

There are also, tragically, those life-altering disappointments that can leave us devastated and even unbelieving of God’s love and care of us. This topic looks at expectations from a biblical perspective and tells us from God’s Word how we may know, embrace and love God in all of life’s disappointments – in all the ways our expectations don’t “work out” – from the husbands or friends who disappoint us, or the irritation of lost car keys and burned roasts, to the tragic life-altering events that tear at our hearts and have the potential of leaving us helpless and hopeless, even unbelieving.

There is help in understanding and trusting our Sovereign Father who works in all the disappointments of our lives for His glory and for our good.

***Conversations – Talking to God, Talking to Myself, Talking to Others:*** Imagine your day today without conversation. Everything from the mundane details of living to the deepest expressions of love, joy, pain, frustration, and hurt depend on our ability to talk

to one another. Conversation is the vehicle of communication for every dimension of life. Relationship would be impossible without some means of communication. Why is this and what makes communication so difficult, yet so important?

In order to understand conversation, why it is important and how we may use it well – we must understand where it came from and its original purpose. Conversation is one of the scores of areas where we have been “taken captive by hollow and deceptive philosophies that depend on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.” We must be “transformed by the renewing of our minds”. For too long, our wicked culture and a man-centered, dilute interpretation of Scripture have told us how to converse- with God- with ourselves- and with one another.

This topic has the potential to set the foundation for our conversations on the bedrock of God’s speech to us in His Word. God’s Word then models for us talking to God, meditation for our own mind and heart, and counsel to others in the home, the body of Christ, the community, and the workplace.

***The Proverbs 31 Woman:*** Years ago I was given a tract with this passage of Scripture on it. The translation was “Today’s English Version” from the Good News Bible. At the top of the tract was written, “In praise of a good woman.” Verse 10 read, “How hard it is to find a capable wife.” At the bottom of the tract I had written years ago... “Is this a real woman? or a composite? Take this apart. Can you attain this Margy? Is this realistic?” I was tremendously impacted by the title of the tract and the translation. I wanted to be what God wanted me to be but was wondering how I could ever pull it off!

In the years that have followed I have thought, prayed, studied, and grown by the work of God’s Spirit to understand this passage in a different way than is expressed in my original question! The question is not – is this a real or composite woman? The question is “What is God exalting in Proverbs 31? An accurate translation of verse 10 tells us – “A wife of noble character, who can find?” In this beautiful passage, God is praising Godly character, not brawn or even brain. Godly character is praised, not productivity! Women often judge their success by what they do – not who they are! The personality profile in Proverbs 31 is character oriented! What a relief! Inner qualities determine outward behavior. The work of my hands is important as an outworking of the stuff of my heart.

This topic uses this premise to study the many qualities of Christ-like character exposed in Proverbs 31. Those qualities are then reiterated in many other passages of Scripture.

***The Whole Picture- The True Nature of Reality:*** Is our sense of well being from day to day summarized by whether we had a “good day” or a “bad day”? And what made the

day “good” or “bad”? Often, sadly, it is the circumstances of our days that dictate to our mind and heart our mood and spiritual temperature!

If we are going to have “good” days regardless of the circumstances, we need to get the whole picture! That is available in God’s Word. There we have a richly textured picture that allows us to see the disparate pieces of our lives in God’s sovereign, capable care. We find solid ground that allows us to stand firm and strong against the winds of circumstance with joy and hope!

Psalm 73, 2 Corinthians 4, and other powerful passages are the heart of this topic. All of God’s Word provides us with illustrations of that unseen world of spiritual reality which God inhabits and which He calls us to see and know with our spiritual senses. Then we can interpret what we see with our physical eyes.

**God’s Way – Not Mine:** It is a “no faith” response to look at the situation or circumstances God has brought us to and say... “This isn’t working, therefore I must...”, “How can I get out of this one...?”, “I don’t like this. I know... I’ll...”, “I must solve this problem... let’s see... I’ll...”

Scriptures have been given to us to,:

- \*Confront us with God’s sovereignty
- \*Attest to His duty and right to rule
- \*Encourage/exhort/and give hope in all circumstances
- \*Have the Holy Spirit witness to our souls the truth of God’s Revelation
- \*Confirm the truth of the testimony about God
- \*Demonstrate His ability and faithfulness to His people

This topic challenges you, as the leader, to examine the claims above. It challenges ladies to learn from the lessons taught by many positive and negative illustrations from God’s Word. Scripture is filled with people who faced problems and chose God’s way or their own way. The fall-out of their choices is very instructive!

**You Never Know What a Day Will Bring! – Proverbs 3: 5&6 Trust in the Lord:** YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT A DAY WILL BRING! This is true of our “every days” and for the “long haul”! Your new perm that was supposed to yield lush, loose curls cascading about your face turned out to be frizzy and to cry over! In the same way, “You never know what

life will bring!” A man who trained to be a medical doctor became one of the greatest preachers of the 20th century – Martin Lloyd Jones.

This short term and long term uncertainty can leave us feeling vulnerable, even frightened. We need to know something for sure, to be able to have confidence in something that we know will work out as planned. There is one such truth that we can be sure of. It’s taught in many ways in the Bible. It is summed up in Proverbs 3: 5,6.

What is the heart of this trust we are commanded to practice? How is it described in other passages? Psalm 91 and Matthew 5, among other Scriptures, expose the heart of trust of the believer. This topic is to help bring a conviction to our hearts as women who seek to know and love God.

***Everyday Struggles with Sin:*** Where do these struggles originate? We must first reject the theories of Godless society and even a liberal religious climate that explain away the battle that wages in the hearts of all people. We must accept that God’s Word describes our dilemma as Adam’s offspring and prescribes new life in Christ, as the second Adam, and as our only hope for deliverance. Now we can look at our struggles with sin without growing discouraged.

We were created to worship. We will either worship God or idols. Most often, our deepest sin issues are rooted in hearts that worship us. We are on the throne of our hearts and bow down to the sinful desires that pander to our pride and lusts. Mark 7:21-23 tells us where sin comes from. It comes from the heart. Jer. 17:9 “The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Who can know it?”

It’s important to know the difference between WHEN we sin and WHAT we do as a result of indwelling sin; but we need to know WHY we sin in order to engage in spiritual battle effectively. God mercifully brings rescue. We would be utterly without help if He did not. In I Corinthians 10:13, we find the heart of that help. He will provide a way of escape. Jesus says in John 14:6 “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life”.

Biblical solutions for our struggles with sin are found in understanding God’s holy and perfect searching of our hearts, in knowing God and the nature of reality, and in knowing who God is and what He has done. We must become practiced at discerning root issues and examining them in the light of God’s Truth. Then God’s provision for us in all the formal and informal means of grace will equip us for the struggle. We will know growth in grace. God is faithful to feed and nurture the righteous life within which He created and brings to completion as we commit ourselves to walk in His ways, in dependence on Christ’s work for us.

**JAMES 4: SUBMISSION TO GOD:** James isn't speaking to unbelievers when he introduces "spiritual adultery" as a warning against friendship with the world. But James' solution is not trying harder or "getting better" at being a Christian. It is repentance.

James 4:7-10 is a profound and sobering formula for repentance – surrender to God. Submission to God is foundational to overcoming our struggle with the idolatry of our hearts – the "desires that battle within". Repentance is the route to submission. Repentance is not popular in our culture, but it is God's powerful and life-changing agenda to preserve His dearly loved children.

***The Christian Woman and Submission:*** In this age of "feminism", when so many of our friends and neighbors are re-evaluating their roles as women, with specific consideration of their position in the home and the world in general, this topic will invite you to join in reflecting on our roles as women, using God's word, the Bible, as the standard for our evaluation.

The downward spiral has continued! Secular humanism has robbed man of the dignity that distinguished him as God's image bearer. It has decimated the roles God ordained to provide fulfilling, enriching lives of service for which we were designed as women. The same is true for men, children and all people for all the roles God's precepts define.

The secular culture and even the evangelical feminist movement has stereotyped the biblical model of submission. Godless people have made God's perfect design for women's roles grotesque because their minds are darkened to the Truth. We must once again bring Godly womanhood into the perfect light of God's Revelation and own it as whole and beautiful. This topic should examine the woman's role before God in general and submission to our husbands (individually) in particular.

***Childrearing – The Mother's Role:*** This study examines the mother's role in "shepherding" her children's hearts. It is based on the parenting model laid out in my husband's book, [Shepherding a Child's Heart](#) (Dr. Tedd Tripp), and in our co-authored book, [Instructing a Child's Heart](#). There are many mothers who struggle with dual parenting roles. Many are lone Christians in a family where either their husbands are tyrannical about non-Christian lifestyle choices or couldn't care less – leaving such decisions and values to the Christian wife. Many have professing husbands who are spiritually lifeless, leaving mom to be the spiritual head. These ladies have questions. We must answer them from God's Word.

***Being God's Woman:*** Our culture is obsessed with “becoming” something or someone. As Christian women, we have the assurance of “being” someone and something in Christ. “Being God’s Woman” rests on what Christ has done, not on what I can do or what or who I become. Foundational to any aspect of my “womanhood” is who and what I am in Christ.

Being who we are in Christ or resting in Christ is an extension of Christ’s death, which was specific for each of us who have turned in faith to him. He is our resource. If Christ’s work stopped at salvation – going to heaven by and by – there would be little hope for us except to do the best we can. But, praise God, Christ’s work was thorough. We are complete in Christ. Not just free from just death for our sins, but we have fullness of life in Christ. Philippians 3 sums everything up in, “I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.”

This topic should contrast the worldly (secular) mind with the spiritual (Christian) mind. We are challenged by God’s Word to define and reject the ways the world has crept into our minds, homes, and churches in our roles as women.

Regardless of the cost, we MUST have a Christian mind. As God’s children, loved and known by God, created by Him for our role as women, we must reject the world’s agenda for us. We will find both protection and direction in doing so. I Peter 1: 13-16

### ***Sexuality – God’s Design Intention (appropriate for small groups or individuals in counseling)***

I grew up in the early 90's, an era of when good Christian people didn’t acknowledge sexuality! Honestly, in my opinion, many Christians continue to avoid the topic, still to this day. We have deemed sexuality & the topic of sex, between a husband and wife, as a “dirty subject” when God defines it as a gift to be treasured. One thing the church did not realize is that, either we teach God’s definition of sexuality (the truth) to our children or the world will teach their own perverse definition of sexuality, but they will learn it from someone. Who do you hope teaches them? Who do you hope will be the ones to stand up and boldly proclaim the truth about God’s design and creation of physical intimacy?

The holy passion God intended in the marriage relationship has grown cold and untrusting in the crafty hands of the enemy of our souls! We have bought the lie and modeled loveless marriages for our children. The result is a given! Having abandoned God’s ways – man will worship the created thing rather than the Creator. As a result, our nation’s children are given over to every evil practice with a continual lust for more.

Mothers sit with their adolescent children before TV's spewing out disgusting exhibitions of sexual acts and lewdness of every description, wholly without regard to any commitment to relationship – let alone marriage. The church has been asleep!

“If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray, and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

Our sexuality is by God's design. It was a pre-fall determination of God that we be male and female – for the purpose of knowing the blessing of sexual union in marriage.

When our view of our sexuality is restored to God's perspective – much healing will transpire – homes will be whole and happy – children will learn the powerful lessons of Proverbs. God created sexuality. It is not funny or trite. It is holy, undefiled, and perfectly lovely!