

FOR THE SMALL GROUP LEADER

THANKS FOR LEADING your small group through the *Divine Portrait* study on marriage. I hope you find the Chinese proverb to be true—“the teacher learns twice.” Here are some tips to help you become acquainted with the content and the format.

CONTENT: This series is more of a “how-come,” than a “how-to.” Our desire is to give a big, healthy vision for how to think, feel and do marriage biblically. The first four sessions frame God’s picture for men, women, and marriage in broad strokes...almost as one larger message. Then we add the practicalities of teamwork, resolving conflict, sexual intimacy, etc. The material will touch the real-world issues of marriage that you would expect, but we’ll do it in a way that keeps God’s big picture of marriage in view.

FORMAT: This is a video curriculum. The sessions were recorded at a live conference in February, 2017.

SMALL GROUP MEETINGS:

- Discuss the small group questions. (30+ min)
- Remind each couple to talk through the “Take it Home” questions with their spouse.
- Note: For the Sexual Intimacy session, instead of a large group discussion, couples will split into two groups, male and female, and discuss the small group questions written for the appropriate gender.

HOMEWORK:

There is VERY little, but what is there is ESSENTIAL! We ask each person to:

- **Read** the short, introductory article at the beginning of each chapter. It takes about three minutes. One spouse can even read it aloud while the other is driving to group!

- **Watch** the video or listen to the podcast for that weeks session.
- **Discuss** the “Take it Home” questions as a couple after each small group meeting! Watching the videos and discussing the material as a group is only part of the growth process. Talking it through and applying it to each marriage is where the real growth takes place. Emphasize this!

GROUND RULES:

- Transparency keeps it real. Share your stories—your good and bad, your funny and painful. This will create authenticity and intimacy in the group, as well as encourage each other by seeing how others have similar victories and struggles.
- Say nothing that will embarrass or disrespect your spouse. Marriage small groups have earned the bad rap of being a place where people bash their spouse. The rule is “Thou shalt not confess someone else’s sins.”
- Remind the couples of our goal—growth. You may have couples who struggle with unrealistic expectations of how the study will “fix” their marriage or have unhealthy comparisons to other couples.
- Remind them that our goal is healthy growth, not perfection.
- Remind the couples of the most important thing to bring each week—themselves. The tendency in marriage groups is to focus on our spouse’s shortcomings. This will kill growth. Continue to encourage personal growth by helping folks focus on their own growth or struggle.