

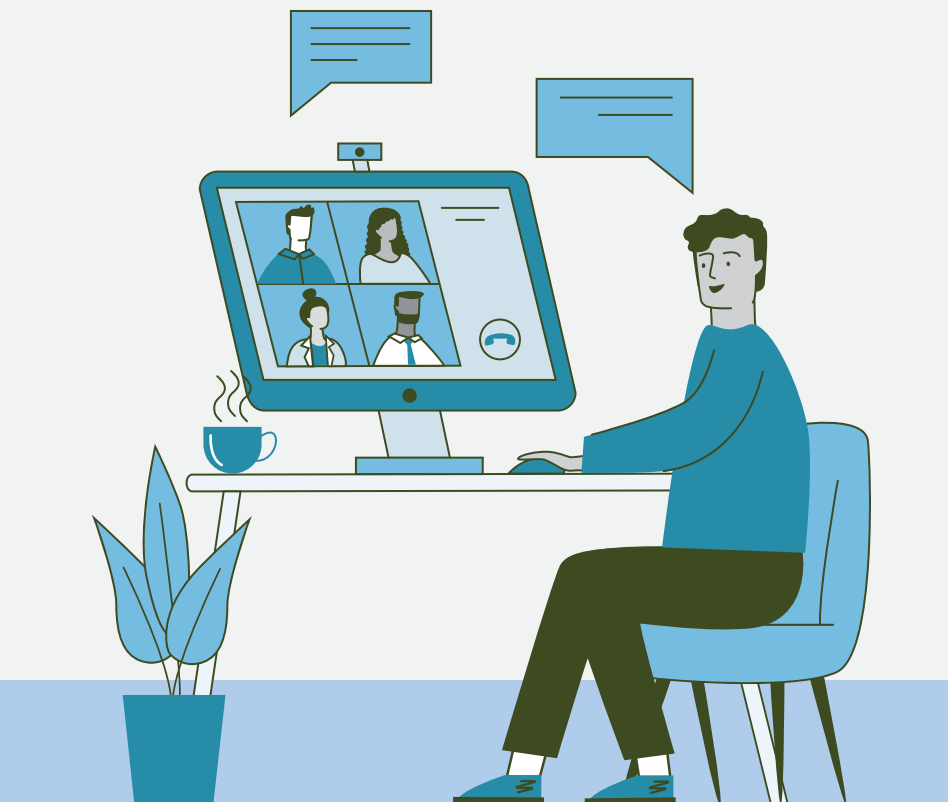


## ONLINE GROUP PLAN

**Summer 2020 // Proverbs; Song of Songs // Session 13: Relational Investment**

Suggested Use Date: 08/30/2020

*For use with Explore the Bible Leader Guide, Personal Study Guide, and Daily Discipleship Guide*



# PREPARATION

## Best Practices for Leading an Online Group



**PRAY** for your group members and for God to grant you insight as you study and prepare your Bible study session. Do this throughout the week.



**SCHEDULE** your group's online Bible study using the online meeting tool you prefer. Invite group members and guests to participate using a meeting ID if required by your online meeting tool. [Click here](#) to view a Best Practices document for online groups.



**SEND** digital copies of the next session to group members who do not have a print copy. If using the *Personal Study Guide*, encourage group members to read the passage and comments for the next session. If you are using the *Daily Discipleship Guide*, encourage your group members to follow up your session by engaging with the five daily Bible readings.



**CONNECT** with your group via email or text messaging early in the week.

*Create your own message:*

- Briefly tell the group the title of your next Bible study, why it is important, and what they will learn.
- Challenge group members to study before the group session if your group uses a *Personal Study Guide*; remind group members to follow up your online study with their daily readings if your group uses the *Daily Discipleship Guide*.
- Remind group members when your group will meet online.

*Or copy and paste this suggested wording into the email or text message to your group:*

Whether we're young or old, we're wise when we see the value of investing in relationships, beginning with our relationship with God. In this week's study, we'll be reminded that just as a couple must invest in their relationship, believers must also invest in their relationship with God.

Read Song of Songs 5:6-16, noting the emotions expressed. Find out more about these emotions by reading the comments for Session 13 in the *Personal Study Guide* or *Daily Discipleship Guide*. What do these emotions reveal about how to foster a relationship?

We will meet at (add time) using (name of online tool). Here is the link to our meeting: (add meeting ID if your online tool doesn't do that automatically)

### WEEKLY MESSAGE



**PREPARE** to lead your group's Bible study.

- **Study** Song of Songs 5:6-16, reflecting on the similarities and differences in a marriage relationship and our relationship with God.
- **Listen** to the Explore the Bible Adult Leader Podcast. Go to [goExploreTheBible.com/Adults-Training](https://goExploreTheBible.com/Adults-Training) for an overview of the main points and key ideas from each session.
- **Visit** the Explore the Bible blog for additional leader helps at [goExploreTheBible.com/Leader-Helps](https://goExploreTheBible.com/Leader-Helps)
- **Create** your teaching plan for guiding your group's online Bible study experience. Use the Online Group Plan on the next pages as a starting point, modifying it for your group as needed. Consult the *Adult Commentary*, *QuickSource*, and *Leader Pack* for additional ideas and resources.



**REMIND** your group members to study and prepare via another email or text message closer to the day your group meets.

- Include a quote from the *Personal Study Guide*, a question, or an insight you plan to discuss with the group when you meet online.



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## HELPFUL LINKS

- Explore the Bible main landing page: [goExploreTheBible.com](https://goExploreTheBible.com)
- Digital version of Explore the Bible: [curriculum.lifeway.com](https://curriculum.lifeway.com)
- Explore the Bible leader helps: [goExploreTheBible.com/Leader-Helps](https://goExploreTheBible.com/Leader-Helps)
- Explore the Bible Podcast: [goExploreTheBible.com/Adults-Training](https://goExploreTheBible.com/Adults-Training)
- Free Coronavirus links and leader helps: [lifeway.com/coronavirus](https://lifeway.com/coronavirus)



# ONLINE GROUP PLAN

Explore the Bible // Summer 2020 // Proverbs; Song of Songs // Session 13: Relational Investment

NOTES

**GREET** people as they join and encourage them to share about an investment they have made that they are glad they made. After most have joined, call attention to the two introductory questions for this session: **How might a person's investments reveal their stage in life? What might a person's investments reveal about their priorities?** (PSG, p. 118; DDG, p. 109). Explain that in today's session from Song of Songs we'll see how our relationships require a continual investment on our parts to remain healthy. Option: Use the Extra! idea. See [goExploreTheBible.com/LeaderExtras](http://goExploreTheBible.com/LeaderExtras)

**REVIEW:** Present a brief review of different ways people interpret Song of Songs using the information from Pack Item 14 (Handout: Interpreting Song of Songs) or the weekly podcast. Emphasize that the passage studied today focuses on the time after the wedding.

**READ Song of Songs 5:6-8,** identifying the problems arising within the marriage.

**ASK:** How might the failure of a spouse to meet the emotional needs of the other lead to greater issues? (PSG, p. 121; DDG, p. 111) How might the spouse's search for companionship be compared to a person's search for God and meaning? (PSG, p. 122; DDG, p. 111)

**READ Song of Songs 5:9.** Ask: **What is the value of retelling stories when it comes to building and maintaining relationships?** (PSG, p. 123; DDG, p. 111)

**READ:** Direct the group to silently read **Song of Songs 5:10-16** and the comments on the passage section in the PSG (p. 123-125) or DDG (Day 5, p. 115). Encourage them to underline sentences that stand out to them.

**GUIDE:** Invite volunteers to share the sentences they underlined. Emphasize this statement from the PSG (p. 124) or DDG (p. 115): Friendship, partnership,



and companionship are equally important. *Solicit responses to the comment, comparing the marriage relationship to our relationship with God. Ask: **What makes your relationship with God special? What are some appropriate ways for believers to express their love for God?***

**REREAD** *Song of Songs 5:16, emphasizing why being a friend is important within a marital relationship and with God.*

**TRANSITION:** Today, as we've examined the verses in Song of Songs, we see that each of us has a longing for relationships in our homes and with God. It's critical that we remember the beauty of a new relationship while celebrating our time-honored relationships.

**COMPARE:** *Call attention to the outline followed for this session (titles of each section in the PSG, or on page 110 of the DDG). Discuss the similarities and differences between how these titles relate to marital relationship and to a relationship with God. Utilize the bulleted points on page 126 of the PSG or page 112 of the DDG for further evaluation.*

**EVALUATE:** **List reasons for being involved in a relationship. What role does God play in the reasons you listed? What adjustments do you need to make to this list in light of today's study?** (PSG, p. 126; DDG, p. 112)

**CHALLENGE:** *Reread Song of Songs 5:16. Call for volunteers to paraphrase the verse to explain how they would describe their love for their spouse or their love for God. (Be prepared to share your own example.)*

**REFLECT:** *Stress that we need God's wisdom to make good decisions in all our relationships. Guide each person in the group to determine one action they will take to affirm and strengthen their relationship with their spouse or with God during the next week.*

**RELATE:** Lead the group to share actions they will take in light of today's study. Encourage them to consider ways of strengthening the relationships within the group. Remind them of the need for inviting people who are not believers to be part of the Bible study group so they can see what God had in mind when He created us to be relational.

**PRAY:** Offer a prayer of thanksgiving to God for creating us for relationship with others and with Him. Pray that God will lead us to protect our relationships in both word and action. Ask Him to help us consistently invest in building our relationships. Thank Him for the gift of love He provided through His Son, Jesus Christ.

## NEXT STEPS



- Send a link to a recording of “Unfailing Love,” by Jimmy Needham to remind the group that we’re called to exhibit unfailing love in our marriages and in our relationship with God.
- Send digital copies of the next session to those in the group who do not have a print copy. If using the Personal Study Guide, encourage the group to read the passage and comments for the next session.
- Repeat the process outlined in the Preparation section of this document.