



VERTICAL  
*Marriage*  
SMALL-GROUP STUDY

THE ONE SECRET THAT WILL  
CHANGE YOUR MARRIAGE

## **Vertical Marriage Small-Group Study Workbook**

FamilyLife Publishing®

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### EACH SESSION YOU WILL:

- Watch a 25-minute video.
- Talk through discussion questions and what each session means for you.
- Understand your spouse and feel understood through Couple's Connection.
- Experience a Vertical Moment together.



WELCOME TO

VERTICAL

*Marriage*

**W**e could not be more excited for the journey you are about to take. God is going to meet you right where you are and walk with you toward His dream for your marriage. We call it *Vertical Marriage*, and it is a path that we have taken as well. We promise that you will laugh, maybe cry a little, be challenged, get to know other couples, and obtain some practical tools that will help transform your marriage.

On our wedding night, we got on our knees at the foot of our bed and prayed these words, “Jesus, we are not asking You for a good marriage, but for a great marriage that will one day impact the world for Your kingdom.” This study based on our book, *Vertical Marriage*, is part of God’s answer to that prayer. It has not been easy for us, as you will hear in painful detail, but Jesus has been with us every step of the way.

He is with you as well, and you will discover just how much He loves you and wants to give you the marriage you have always longed for.

— *Dave and Ann Wilson*  
authors of *Vertical Marriage*  
cohosts of *FamilyLife Today*<sup>®</sup>



VERTICAL MARRIAGE

# HOW TO SABOTAGE YOUR GROUP IN 5 EASY STEPS

If you're looking to make things awkward and ruin *Vertical Marriage* for everyone in your group, especially your spouse, here's how:



### **Step 1: Share embarrassing details about your marriage**

Nothing screams “I’m never coming back!” like hearing your spouse tell the group juicy details you’d rather discuss privately. (This will be especially helpful in Session 4.)

### **Step 2: Jump on your soapbox**

Some groups focus on lame stuff like encouragement and praying together. Boring! Instead, suck the energy out of your group with lengthy opinionated monologues. Then quickly correct those who dare to share a different perspective.

### **Step 3: Judge early and often**

Not every marriage is in the same place, but they should be. And it’s your job to let them know it.

### **Step 4: Push through boundaries**

Group discussion questions are written to be non-threatening. But even so, someone may feel uncomfortable answering and opt to stay silent. Don’t let them! Ignore their boundaries and press for details.

### **Step 5: What’s said here doesn’t have to stay here**

Over the course of five sessions your group will build an environment of trust. This provides the perfect setting to uncover details about each couple that your entire friend network should know about.

### **Note**

If you prefer an affirming group experience, then do the opposite!



## SESSION ONE

"My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water."

— J E R E M I A H 2 : 1 3



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# The Elusive Secret

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“The simple secret begins with realizing that a purely horizontal marriage just doesn’t work.”

– Dave and Ann Wilson  
*Vertical Marriage*

## KICKSTARTER

Everyone take a piece of paper and write a number from 1 to 10 to show how you would rate your marriage today. Don’t let anyone else see your paper, even your spouse. Once you have written your number, fold the paper, and put it in your pocket. This is for a private, marriage-building exercise later.

Don’t overthink it. Just write down what you’re feeling today about your relationship.

 Quick group poll: Without revealing your answers, who thinks your rating and your spouse’s rating will be close to the same? Who thinks your ratings will be far apart?

 Watch Video


## VIDEO HIGHLIGHTS

- Repentance ... on the floor of a Honda Accord



**Shut up and listen.  
Repent.**

*God to Dave*



**I didn't make Dave to  
meet all your needs.  
He can't do that.**

*God to Ann*

“A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.”  
– Proverbs 15:1

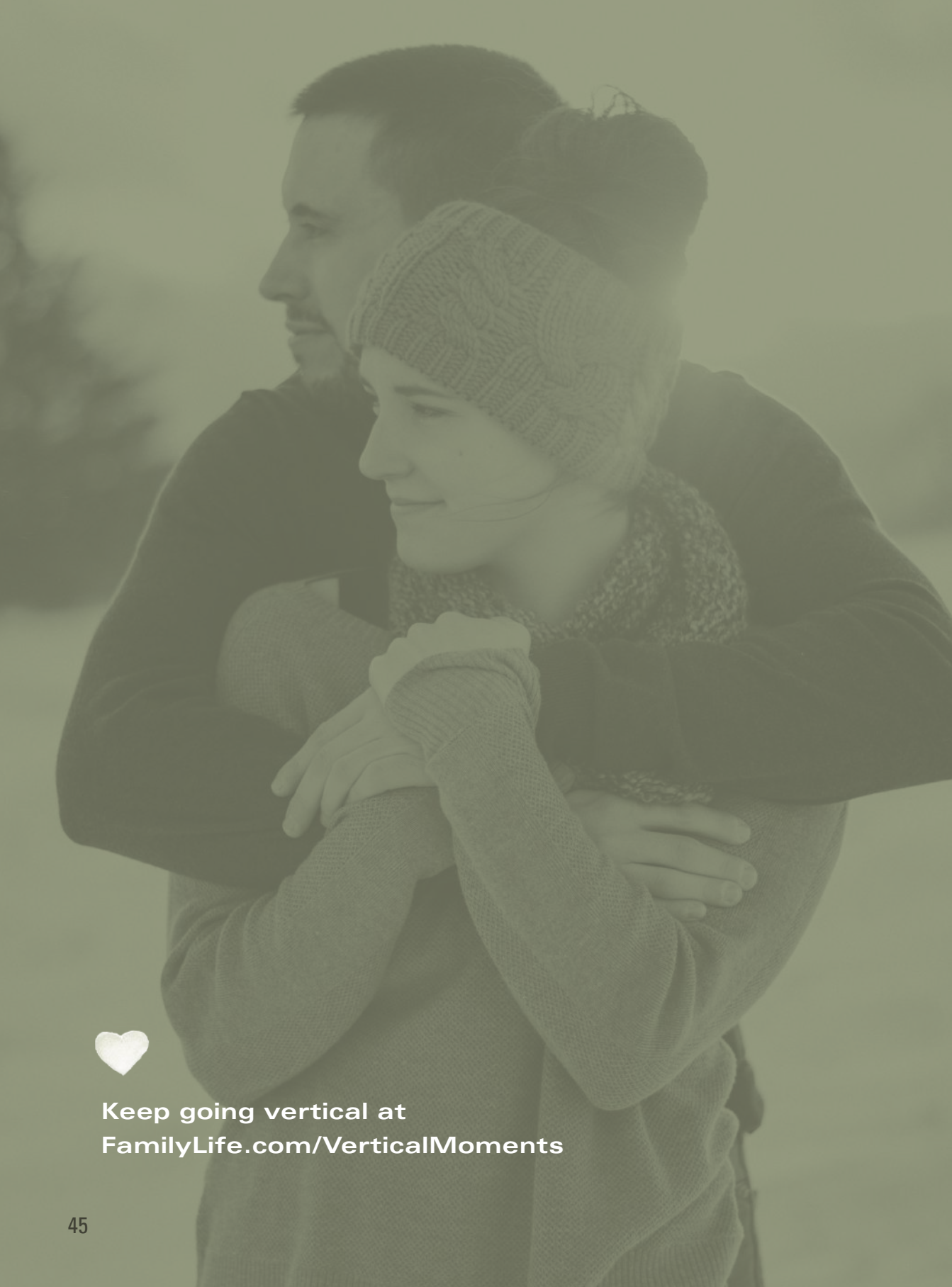
- When we go vertical first, God quenches our thirst.
  - Dug their own cisterns (Jeremiah 2:12-13)
  - Put God first in everything (Proverbs 3:6)
- How do we go vertical?
  - Daily: pray together
  - Weekly: date night
  - Yearly: get away
- The scariest, safest, most wonderful place to be

**“WE THINK WE MARRIED THE WRONG PERSON, BUT WE’RE ACTUALLY LOOKING IN THE WRONG PLACE.”**

— DAVE WILSON

NOTES

**Sign up for the *Let’s Go Vertical!* prayer guide at [FamilyLife.com/GoVertical](http://FamilyLife.com/GoVertical)**



Keep going vertical at  
[FamilyLife.com/VerticalMoments](https://www.familylife.com/VerticalMoments)