

The Husband Course Workbook

Seven modules. One required action each week.

How to use this workbook

This PDF is fillable. Tap any shaded box and type; or print it and write. Whichever fits how you work.

GoodNotes / Notability: import the PDF, then type in the fields or write over them with a pencil.

Preview / Apple Books / Acrobat: tap a field and type; your work saves with the file.

Printed: the boxes are ruled and sized for a pen.

One section per module. Each module ends with a required action that has a finish line your wife could notice; the workbook is where you record what you actually did, not what you meant to do.

Name

Started

Before you begin

This course assumes a basically safe marriage. It is formation and practice — not counseling, crisis care, clinical treatment, addiction recovery, or trauma therapy.

Abuse, coercion, threats, violence, active addiction, serious betrayal, or fear of retaliation call for confidential individual help first — not a joint exercise. Never use Scripture, forgiveness, headship, money, children, or course completion to demand access or to silence a concern.

Immediate danger: call or text 911. Abuse or coercive control: National Domestic Violence Hotline, 1-800-799-7233, or text START to 88788 — confidential, 24/7.

How the course works

1. Read the module

Short opening, Scripture anchor, and 3–5 numbered tasks. About 45–60 minutes.

2. Complete the action

One required exercise with a visible finish line. Husband-owned; her participation is invited, not demanded.

3. Optional depth

Optional study aids, a knowledge check, and conversation prompts if she is willing.

The seven modules

Each module asks one question and ends with one husband-owned required action. Work them in order; the later modules assume the habits built in the earlier ones.

MODULE 1

Build the Foundation

What am I building my marriage on, and what am I personally responsible to reinforce?

MODULE 2

Communicate to Understand

Do I listen to understand, or listen to answer and defend?

MODULE 3

Fight the Problem, Not Each Other

What conflict pattern do I bring into the marriage?

MODULE 4

Repair Hurt and Practice Forgiveness

Where do confession, restitution, boundaries, and forgiveness differ?

MODULE 5

Understand the Family You Brought In

Which inherited assumptions shape my reactions as a husband?

MODULE 6

Guard Friendship and Intimacy

What deliberate attention does our friendship and intimacy need?

MODULE 7

Put Love into Action

Does my daily conduct communicate love in a way she can recognize?

Build the Foundation

What am I building my marriage on, and what am I personally responsible to reinforce?

45–60 minutes, plus one check-in this week

This week's finish line

Schedule a weekly 20-minute marriage check-in, complete the first one, and follow through with one act of care based on what you heard.

SCRIPTURE ANCHOR

Read each passage in its wider context. Tick it when you have.

Matthew 7:24–27; Jesus connects hearing with doing. Obedient discipleship is not a guarantee that a faithful husband controls every outcome.

Ephesians 5:21, 25–33; Verse 21 opens a household code of paired commands, and Paul never reverses the direction inside a pair. A wife's submission and a husband's self-giving love are two different callings, not one symmetrical rule; both spouses answer to Christ, and headship never authorizes coercion, entitlement, or concealment of harm.

James 1:19–22; Quick listening and practiced obedience expose the gap between religious speech and embodied faithfulness.

THIS WEEK'S TASKS

Task 1. Schedule the check-in

Twenty uninterrupted minutes, not a performance review.

- Ask: "I want to protect twenty minutes for us each week; not to grade our marriage, just to stay connected. Would [day/time] work?"
- Choose a quiet, neutral setting. Do not begin in bed, late at night, during a rushed transition, or when either of you is already upset.
- Put the time on your calendar only after she agrees; or after you have made a respectful invitation she may decline without penalty.

What I did

Task 2. Prepare three questions

- Write: "What felt good between us this week?"
- Write: "What felt heavy?"
- Write: "What is one small thing I could do that would help?"

- Do not prepare a defense, a correction script, or a list of complaints for her.

What I did

Task 3. Complete the first check-in

- Put phones away. Keep the meeting to twenty minutes unless she freely wants more.
- Listen without correcting her memory or explaining your intent.
- Share one pressure of your own without making her responsible to fix it.
- End on time. A trustworthy rhythm respects the boundary it promises.

What I did

Task 4. Act before the next check-in

- Complete one reasonable act of care connected to what you heard.
- Do it without announcing points, expecting praise, or requiring reciprocity.
- Write no private report about her answers. Store no sensitive details in this course.

What I did

Task 5. Protect the rhythm

- Put the next check-in on the calendar before the first one ends.
- If the first time did not work, repair the miss and choose another time; do not quit because it felt awkward.
- Do not turn consistency into surveillance. A check-in is not a performance review or evidence that you are now entitled to praise.

What I did

REQUIRED ACTION

Establish your weekly 20-minute marriage check-in

1. Ask for a mutually workable time in a neutral setting.
2. Complete the first check-in using your three questions.

3. Choose one action you personally own before the next meeting.
4. Schedule the next check-in before this one ends.

Observable finish line: The next check-in is on the calendar, the first check-in occurred, and you completed one small act of care based on what you heard; whether or not she participated.

What actually happened

I reached the finish line above.

PRIVATE SELF-CHECK

Reflect alone. Do not use these to diagnose or score your wife.

- Does my wife receive protected attention, or only what remains after everything else?
- When she names a need, do I get curious or begin proving my intent?
- What promise have my repeated habits contradicted?
- Am I pursuing connection calmly, or seeking reassurance that I am a good husband?

What this surfaced in me

OPTIONAL CONVERSATION

Invite; do not assign. She may decline, stop, or suggest another format.

- intro
- items

Module debrief; what changed, and what she might have noticed

Communicate to Understand

Do I listen to understand, or listen to answer and defend?

45–60 minutes, plus one listen-back conversation

This week's finish line

Complete one 15-minute listen-back conversation on a low-to-moderate concern; restate her view accurately before you give yours.

SCRIPTURE ANCHOR

Read each passage in its wider context. Tick it when you have.

James 1:19–20; Quick listening and slow anger are practices of righteousness, not tactics for winning an argument.

Proverbs 18:13, 17; Answering before listening is folly. Humility attends before concluding.

Ephesians 4:25, 29; Truthful speech should fit the need and build up; truth is not permission for contempt or verbal force.

THIS WEEK'S TASKS

Task 1. Name your listening failure

Pick one habit and replace it for this week.

- Write one observable habit: interrupting, fixing, reassuring too quickly, hijacking with your own story, withdrawing, or rehearsing a rebuttal.
- Choose one replacement behavior for this week.
- Tell her which habit you are working on; with permission, not as a gotcha.

What I did

Task 2. Choose the conditions

- Ask for a workable time and select a quiet walk, porch, drive, or seated conversation.
- Do not choose bedtime, the bedroom, late night, the first minutes after work, or a moment when either of you is rushed or flooded.
- Sit at respectful distance. Keep the way out clear. Phone away.

What I did

Task 3. Ask permission and listen

- Say: "Is now a workable time for me to understand this without trying to fix it?"
- Give her up to five uninterrupted minutes.
- Do not cross-examine, correct chronology, or introduce your counter-case while she speaks.

What I did

Task 4. Listen back accurately

Fair does not mean she agrees with you.

- Say: "What I hear is... and it mattered because..."
- Ask: "What did I miss or distort?" Revise without defending yourself.
- Do not demand that she perform the same exercise in return.

What I did

Task 5. Clarify the need

- Ask: "Would empathy, an idea, a specific action, or more time help most?"
- Do not smuggle advice into the question.
- Write the action you own in your own task system; not her sensitive details.
- Return with evidence of follow-through rather than making her raise the subject again.

What I did

REQUIRED ACTION

Complete one listen-back conversation

1. Choose one low-to-moderate concern and ask consent to practice.
2. Listen without interruption for up to five minutes.

3. Restate content and significance in your own words.
4. Ask what you missed and revise before responding.

Observable finish line: Before giving your view, you restated her concern and its significance, asked what you missed, and revised until she said it was fair; without requiring agreement or reciprocal performance.

What actually happened

I reached the finish line above.

PRIVATE SELF-CHECK

Reflect alone. Do not use these to diagnose or score your wife.

- What do I do in the first ten seconds after hearing criticism?
- Do I summarize her strongest point, or a weaker version I can dismiss?
- Can I tolerate her distress without rushing to make myself feel innocent?
- Would honest disclosure feel safe with my current patterns?

What this surfaced in me

OPTIONAL CONVERSATION

Invite; do not assign. She may decline, stop, or suggest another format.

- intro
- items

Module debrief; what changed, and what she might have noticed

Fight the Problem, Not Each Other

What conflict pattern do I bring into the marriage?

45–60 minutes, plus one conflict practice

This week's finish line

Name your conflict pattern, establish a pause-and-return rule while calm, and use it once; with a specific return time so pause cannot become avoidance.

SCRIPTURE ANCHOR

Read each passage in its wider context. Tick it when you have.

Proverbs 15:1, 18; Gentleness can turn down heat; a hot temper multiplies conflict. Gentleness is strength under control, not silence about wrong.

Ephesians 4:26–27, 31–32; Repair harmful conduct promptly. Emotional forgiveness, safety, and resolution cannot be forced onto a nightly deadline.

Romans 12:18; "If possible, so far as it depends on you" recognizes both personal responsibility and the limit of controlling another person.

THIS WEEK'S TASKS

Task 1. Name your move

Name the behavior, not the temperament.

- Write what you do first under pressure; raise your voice, interrupt, pursue, withdraw, explain, become sarcastic, surrender, or widen the argument.
- Tell your wife in one sentence without naming her pattern.
- Watch for contempt: mockery, sneering, hostile imitation; stop and repair specifically if it appears.

What I did

Task 2. Set the pause rule while calm

- Agree on a phrase either spouse may use, a minimum pause length, a maximum return window, and how a new time will be communicated.
- A pause without a return time is avoidance; not stewardship.
- No following room to room, blocking doors, taking phones, or forcing eye contact.
- If returning reliably is beyond your current skill, seek support before the next heated moment.

What I did

Task 3. Choose one moderate issue

- State the issue in one observable sentence before you say anything about her.
- Do not start in bed, late at night, while rushing, immediately after arriving home, before a special event, or in front of children.
- Name your own contribution before assigning hers.
- Agree on the one decision that actually needs to be made; not ten years of history.

What I did

Task 4. Work the issue as a team

- Each person describes one event, its effect, and a request.
- Listen back before replying.
- Generate at least three possible next steps before choosing one.
- If either person becomes flooded, call the pause and return at the promised time.

What I did

Task 5. Write the decision

- Record who will do what, by when, and when you will review it.
- If you use the pause, return when promised. If the time becomes impossible, name a specific replacement time.
- Repair conduct that happened during conflict; not only the original topic. Do not use apology to close the subject prematurely.

What I did

REQUIRED ACTION

Establish and use your pause-and-return rule

1. Name your own pattern in concrete behavior.

2. Negotiate the pause rule while calm; phrase, minimum pause, return window.
3. Choose one moderate issue and work it as a team.
4. Write the decision with a review date, or use the pause once with a honored return time.

Observable finish line: Your rule is written down, every boundary was honored, any pause included a specific return time, and one moderate issue ended with a written next step and review date.

What actually happened

I reached the finish line above.

PRIVATE SELF-CHECK

Reflect alone. Do not use these to diagnose or score your wife.

- Can I describe my first conflict move as behavior rather than personality?
- Do I name my contribution before assigning hers?
- Have I kept my last three promised return times?
- Do I ever use volume, pursuit, blocking, sarcasm, Scripture, money, or the children to gain leverage?

What this surfaced in me

OPTIONAL CONVERSATION

Invite; do not assign. She may decline, stop, or suggest another format.

- intro
- items

Module debrief; what changed, and what she might have noticed

Repair Hurt and Practice Forgiveness

Where do confession, restitution, boundaries, and forgiveness differ?

45–60 minutes, plus one repair action this week

SCRIPTURE ANCHOR

Read each passage in its wider context. Tick it when you have.

Psalm 51:1–12; David names sin before God without bargaining. Grace grounds repentance; it does not remove temporal consequences or entitle restored trust.

Luke 19:1–10; Zacchaeus responds to salvation with material restitution. Grace produces accountable action, not vague regret.

Colossians 3:12–14; Compassion, patience, and forgiveness belong to Christian character. They must not be severed from truth, justice, or safety.

Romans 12:17–21; Releasing vengeance belongs to God's people. Refusing personal revenge does not forbid reporting harm or pursuing safety.

THIS WEEK'S TASKS

Task 1. Name the wrong specifically

Confession is agreement with reality, not self-hatred.

- Choose one specific behavior, not a global character flaw.
- Write what you did in active voice: "I disclosed private information" not "Things were shared."
- Name the likely impact without dictating how she must feel.
- Remove every "but," counter-accusation, and request for reassurance.

What I did

Task 2. Separate forgiveness, reconciliation, and trust

- Ask yourself: Am I seeking relief from guilt or willing to bear the cost of repair?
- Identify what restitution might look like for this specific harm.
- Accept that she does not owe immediate conversation, affection, or public unity.
- If the harm involves abuse, infidelity, addiction, or criminal conduct, seek qualified individual guidance before joint conversation.

What I did

Task 3. Repair small injuries promptly

Do not reserve repentance for dramatic failure.

- Notice minor harm: interrupting, dismissive humor, broken promises, phone use during vulnerable conversation.
- Make one clear confession followed by changed conduct.
- Avoid compulsive apology that asks your wife to manage your shame.
- If both spouses have harmed each other, own your conduct without turning confession into a trade.

What I did

Task 4. Choose accountability that fits the harm

- Identify whether a pastor, counselor, recovery group, financial professional, or legal authority is appropriate.
- Choose helpers who will not collude with secrecy or rush her response.
- Do not recruit friends to persuade her that you have changed.
- Track commitments with dates and actions; not vague claims of "working on it."

What I did

REQUIRED ACTION

Make one specific confession or repair attempt

1. Choose a specific behavior rather than a global flaw.
2. Name the wrong and its impact without "but."
3. Offer one concrete repair or accountability step.
4. Allow time and boundaries without demanding forgiveness or closure.

Observable finish line: You made a safe, specific repair attempt and completed or scheduled the concrete action you offered, without requiring a particular response.

What actually happened

I reached the finish line above.

PRIVATE SELF-CHECK

Reflect alone. Do not use these to diagnose or score your wife.

- Do my apologies name my action, or mainly explain my intentions?
- What consequence, disclosure, or restitution have I been trying to avoid?
- Have I confused forgiveness with reconciliation or restored trust?
- Do I pressure my wife to comfort me when I should be listening to harm?

What this surfaced in me

OPTIONAL CONVERSATION

Invite; do not assign. She may decline, stop, or suggest another format.

- intro
- items

Module debrief; what changed, and what she might have noticed

Understand the Family You Brought In

Which inherited assumptions shape my reactions as a husband?

45–60 minutes, plus one replacement practice this week

SCRIPTURE ANCHOR

Read each passage in its wider context. Tick it when you have.

Genesis 2:24; Marriage forms a new primary household allegiance. Leaving and holding fast do not require contempt for parents; honoring parents does not require unsafe access.

Ezekiel 18:19–23; The chapter rejects fatalism about inherited guilt and calls each person to present repentance. Generations influence one another, but a father's sin does not seal a son's destiny.

2 Corinthians 5:17; New creation in Christ grounds hope for changed patterns without pretending learned habits disappear without repentance and practice.

Romans 12:2; Renewed thinking resists unconscious conformity. A family pattern should be tested by truth and faithful fruit, not defended because it is familiar.

THIS WEEK'S TASKS

Task 1. Observe your family-of-origin patterns

- Describe who made decisions in your home growing up, and how.
- Note whether apologies were common, rare, or demanded only from children.
- Ask what rule about men, emotion, money, conflict, or loyalty your childhood taught.
- Describe patterns and effects; do not put relatives on trial.

What I did

Task 2. Notice present triggers

Making sense of a reaction is not the same as being right for this marriage.

- Identify one ordinary marital moment that produces a reaction larger than the event.
- Ask: "What old rule does this moment activate?"
- Create a small gap between sensation and action before you respond.
- Do not weaponize background: "You are acting just like your mother" rarely creates understanding.

What I did

Task 3. Retain one gift intentionally

- Name one inherited strength that actually serves your marriage now.
- Ask your wife whether she experiences it as a gift; she may see it differently.
- Even virtues can distort: loyalty can become secrecy, thrift can become control.
- Retaining a pattern intentionally is different from repeating it unconsciously.

What I did

Task 4. Replace one harmful pattern

- Choose one specific behavior, not your entire family system.
- Identify the cue that usually activates the old pattern.
- Write one replacement response that can be observed: "I need twenty minutes and will return at 7:40."
- Practice the replacement once when the cue appears, or rehearse it calmly if it does not.

What I did

REQUIRED ACTION

Retain one pattern and replace one pattern

1. Describe one inherited behavior that serves your marriage.
2. Describe one inherited behavior that no longer serves it.
3. Choose a cue and a specific replacement response.
4. Practice or rehearse the replacement once without diagnosing your wife.

Observable finish line: You named one pattern to retain, one to replace, and carried out or rehearsed the replacement without assigning homework to your wife.

What actually happened

I reached the finish line above.

PRIVATE SELF-CHECK

Reflect alone. Do not use these to diagnose or score your wife.

- Which ordinary marital moment produces a reaction in me that seems larger than the event?

- What rule about men, emotion, money, conflict, or loyalty did my childhood teach?
- Which inherited strength does my wife actually experience as a gift?
- What family comparison have I used unfairly against her?

What this surfaced in me

OPTIONAL CONVERSATION

Invite; do not assign. She may decline, stop, or suggest another format.

- intro
- items

Module debrief; what changed, and what she might have noticed

Guard Friendship and Intimacy

What deliberate attention does our friendship and intimacy need?

45–60 minutes, plus one no-screen connection block

SCRIPTURE ANCHOR

Read each passage in its wider context. Tick it when you have.

1 Corinthians 7:3–5; Paul teaches mutual sexual self-giving and shared agreement, not one-sided entitlement. Read alongside the whole biblical witness against force and harm; this passage must never justify coercion.

Song of Songs 2:7; 8:6–7; The poetry honors love's covenantal fire and proper timing. Desire is powerful; it is not managed faithfully by pressure.

1 Corinthians 13:4–7; Patient, kind, non-self-seeking love provides the moral shape for marital intimacy alongside covenant mutuality.

1 Thessalonians 4:3–8; Holiness includes governing the body with honor rather than exploiting another person.

THIS WEEK'S TASKS

Task 1. Protect unclaimed attention

Friendship requires presence, not performance.

- Schedule one no-screen connection block of at least thirty minutes.
- Offer two realistic options: walk, coffee, shared music, porch conversation, or quiet affection.
- State plainly that there is no expectation of sex or forced disclosure.
- Put devices away and protect the time you agreed on.

What I did

Task 2. Honor consent within covenant

- Accept that either spouse may decline any sexual or affectionate activity at any time.
- Offer kind words, practical partnership, and nonsexual touch as goods in themselves; not deposits toward access.
- Never criticize or compare your wife's body. Protect her privacy.
- After she states a boundary, keep ordinary warmth intact. Sulking and coldness punish a "no" without speaking a threat.

What I did

Task 3. Address structural pressure

- Ask about rest, pain, medication, privacy, unresolved hurt, body image, and caregiving load.
- Share household and caregiving responsibility as justice and love, not seduction strategy.
- Treat different desire patterns as shared information; not moral rank.
- Seek medical evaluation for pain; seek trauma-informed care where trauma is present.

What I did

Task 4. Guard fidelity and friendship

- Notice when secrecy, fantasy, messaging, pornography, or outside emotional disclosure draws energy from covenant truthfulness.
- Remember what makes your wife laugh, what drains her, and what she hopes for beyond household function.
- Speak about intimacy away from the bedroom and outside the immediate sting of rejection.
- Ask one question at a time and make opting out ordinary.

What I did

REQUIRED ACTION

Complete one pressure-free no-screen connection block

1. Invite rather than announce, offering two realistic choices.
2. Agree on at least thirty minutes and one mutually welcomed activity.
3. State clearly that there is no expectation of sex or forced disclosure.
4. Put devices away and ask one brief after-action question afterward.

Observable finish line: You shared at least thirty minutes of mutually chosen, no-screen connection while respecting every physical and conversational boundary.

What actually happened

I reached the finish line above.

PRIVATE SELF-CHECK

Reflect alone. Do not use these to diagnose or score your wife.

- Does my affection carry an unspoken expectation of sex or reassurance?
- How do my words, face, and behavior respond when my wife says no or not now?
- What structural pressure; workload, sleep, privacy, unresolved hurt; can I help address?
- Can my wife set a boundary without losing ordinary warmth from me afterward?

What this surfaced in me

OPTIONAL CONVERSATION

Invite; do not assign. She may decline, stop, or suggest another format.

- intro
- items

Module debrief; what changed, and what she might have noticed

Put Love into Action

Does my daily conduct communicate love in a way she can recognize?

45–60 minutes, plus one seven-day practice

SCRIPTURE ANCHOR

Read each passage in its wider context. Tick it when you have.

1 John 3:16–18; Christian love moves beyond speech into truthful action. Action must remain governed by truth; not manipulation.

John 13:1–17; Jesus joins authority with humble service. His example confronts entitlement rather than assigning a wife to manage her husband's growth.

Galatians 5:13–14, 22–23; Service through love and the Spirit's fruit include patience, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Philippians 2:3–4; Looking to another's interests confronts selfish ambition without erasing truthful limits or personal responsibility.

THIS WEEK'S TASKS

Task 1. Ask what would actually help

- Ask: "What one small action from me would make this week lighter or warmer?"
- Do not assign her a category or assume you already know the answer.
- Choose something specific and sustainable: "Prepare lunches before bed" not "be more loving."
- Ensure the action fits a real need and does not create more work for your wife.

What I did

Task 2. Repeat without keeping score

- Complete the chosen action for seven days without asking for repayment or daily praise.
- If resentment rises because she did not notice, examine the hidden contract.
- You may tell her you are building a faithful habit; do not require daily evaluation.
- Continue because the action is good, while remaining open to correction if it is not helpful.

What I did

Task 3. Own invisible responsibility

- Notice supplies before they run out, appointments before reminders arrive, and maintenance before crisis.
- Owning work means planning and completing it; not asking her to supervise every step.
- Ask what ownership would help, agree on the standard, then carry the mental as well as physical part.
- If you miss a day, repair the rhythm without drama or public streak-keeping.

What I did

Task 4. Review and receive feedback

- After day seven, review privately: Was the action generous or transactional?
- Ask one optional question: "Was this helpful, and should I continue, change, or stop?"
- Receive the answer without lobbying for your preferred gesture.
- Choose one course practice to continue for the next month.

What I did

REQUIRED ACTION

Repeat one recognizable act of love for seven days

1. Ask what one observable action would genuinely help.
2. Define it small enough to repeat for seven days.
3. Complete it without asking for repayment or daily praise.
4. After day seven, invite a continue/change/stop answer.

Observable finish line: You completed the chosen action on seven days, repaired any miss honestly, and received optional feedback without arguing for your preferred gesture.

What actually happened

I reached the finish line above.

PRIVATE SELF-CHECK

Reflect alone. Do not use these to diagnose or score your wife.

- Which acts of care do I prefer because they cost me least?
- Have I asked what would help, or assigned my wife a category?

- Where does my service carry a hidden expectation of praise, sex, or repayment?
- Which one course practice should become a monthly rhythm?

What this surfaced in me

OPTIONAL CONVERSATION

Invite; do not assign. She may decline, stop, or suggest another format.

- intro
- items

Module debrief; what changed, and what she might have noticed

Commissioned

Seven modules, seven required actions, done quietly and for the long haul. Before you close this workbook, write the part you want to still be doing a year from now.

The habit I am keeping

What I want my marriage to look like in a year

Where I still need help; and who I will ask

A word on finishing

Completing a course is not the same as loving your wife well. The course ends; the practice does not. Keep the weekly check-in. Keep the repairs specific. Keep inviting rather than demanding.