## Week One: This Isn't Trouble

#### **Leader Meeting Outline**

## (1) Group Begins

- (Welcome group members)
- This week we are reviewing chapter 1, which challenged us to examine our hearts more carefully when it comes to loving biblically despite our circumstances.
- Let's read the quote from author Gloria Furman at the beginning of the chapter and then we'll pray.
- (Read Gloria Furman quote on pg. xxii of Clean Home, Messy Heart)
- (Lead group in opening prayer)

### Chapter 1 Group Review

### **Opening Questions**

- How did you relate to the opening story of this chapter?
- Would someone please share a part in the "Messiness of Love" section that really spoke to them?

### **♥** Washing with the Word Reflections

- Sometimes our convictions can lead us to be sorrowful about our sin struggles. But God's Word has the power to change our hearts and show us the way to love in the fit and the fight. This sort of godly grief is actually good for us because it leads us to repent and ask for grace.
- (Turn bibles to 2 Corinthians 7:10 and ask a member to read aloud)
- All of our circumstances, trials included, are carefully crafted by our loving Father to bring about our sanctification.
- (Turn bibles to Romans 5:3-4 and ask a member to read aloud)
- Let's read the first main scripture in the Washing with the Word section. Please turn your bibles to Romans 5:8.
- (Read Romans 5:8 aloud to group)
- Was there anything in this section that stood out to you?
- Let's look to Christ's example of what biblical love really looks like. Turn your bibles to 1
  John 3:16.
- (Have a group member read 1 John 3:16 aloud)
- Did anyone have anything from this section they wanted to share?
- The author writes, "To love sacrificially means to love without prerequisite or requirement?" What does this mean to you in light of Christ's sacrificial love toward us?
- Now let's see how the Holy Spirit empowers us to grow in the area of loving our children and others biblically. Turn your bibles to 2 Timothy 1:7.
- (Read 2 Timothy 1:7 aloud to group)
- Was there something in this last section that convicted or encouraged you?

#### **☑** Study Reflection

- Let's discuss our responses to the reflection question on page 8 asking about what it looks like to love someone biblically. First, let's read the scriptures together.
- ➤ (Divide the three scriptures up between the group members, each reading one: John 3:16, Matthew 5:43-48, and Luke 6:27-36)
- (Ask each member to share their reflection response)

#### **☑** Scripture Memorization

- Now let's test ourselves on this week's memory verse.
- (Note: the method how you do this should be pre-determined by the preference of your group. See Small Group Leader Kit Introduction for suggestions)

#### **☑** Prayer

• Will somebody read Romans 5:8 aloud for us (*take moment to read*)? We don't need to share the specific prayers that we wrote from this chapter, but would anyone like to share a summary of how the Spirit spoke to their heart during this week's reading?

**Reflection Journal Users:** You may or may not choose to review the 5 Scriptures from this week's reflection journal. If you would like to, take turns reading the verses aloud and discuss how the Spirit convicted and/or encouraged them through their reflection journaling time.

## (1) Group Ends

## Week Two: Sin on the Table

#### **Leader Meeting Outline**

## (1) Group Begins

- (Welcome group members)
- This week we are reviewing chapter 2, which highlighted our own prideful tendencies toward habitual sin as well as the hope we have in Christ to overcome temptation.
- Let's read the quote from author Elyse Fitzpatrick at the beginning of the chapter and then we'll pray.
- (Read Elyse Fitzpatrick quote on pg. 10 of Clean Home, Messy Heart)
- (Lead group in opening prayer)

### Chapter 2 Group Review

#### **Opening Questions**

- How did you relate to the opening story of this chapter?
- Would someone please share a part in the "Messiness of Sin" section that really spoke to them?

### **Washing with the Word Reflections**

- It's very easy to see the sins of our family and/or children and condemn them for repeated failures, but are we recognizing that we also exhibit the same struggle when it comes to our own spiritual maturity? When is the last time you considered yourself to be the "worst of sinners?"
- ➤ (Turn bibles to 1 Timothy 1:15-16 and ask a member to read aloud)
- Although we should recognize ourselves as the worst of sinners, we need not lose our confidence in Christ our Savior, nor in his promise to make all things—even our messy hearts—brand new.
- Let's read the first main scripture in the Washing with the Word section. Please turn your bibles to Romans 7:18-19.
- (Read Romans 7:18-19 aloud to group)
- Was there anything in this section that stood out to you?
- Now let's turn our attention to how Christ has freed us from our slavery to sin. Turn your bibles to Romans 6:6.
- (Have a group member read Romans 6:6 aloud)
- The author writes, "The unchanging and unfailing word of Scripture says we've been freed, but our unstable and unruly emotions attempt to suggest otherwise (pg. 15)." Let's read Galatians 5:17 to see why that is.
- (Have a group member read Galatians 5:17 aloud)
- Was there anything in this section that stood out to you?

- When we are walking by the flesh, we are easily overtaken by temptations. But walking in the power of the Spirit increases our awareness not only to the temptation, but also to the way out of it. Turn your bibles to 1 Corinthians 10:13.
- (Read 1 Corinthians 10:13 aloud to group)
- Was there something in this last section that convicted or encouraged you?
- How do you think being connected to the body of Christ helps us in our struggle to overcome temptations?

#### **☑** Study Reflection

- Let's discuss our responses to the reflection question on page 18. First, when we are in the middle of warring against the flesh—when our blood is boiling about something and we feel that angry ball of fire in our stomachs, do we believe God when he says he's given us a way to escape?
- (After this discussion response, have each member of the group read the Scriptures they found pertaining to God's faithfulness).

#### **☑** Scripture Memorization

- Now let's test ourselves on this week's memory verse.
- (Note: the method how you do this should be pre-determined by the preference of your group. See Small Group Leader Kit Introduction for suggestions).

#### ☑ Prayer

• Let's read Psalm 51:10 together (read aloud to group). Would anyone like to share a summary of what they wrote or how the Spirit spoke to their heart during this week's reading?

**Reflection Journal Users:** You may or may not choose to review the 5 Scriptures from this week's reflection journal. If you would like to, take turns reading the verses aloud and discuss how the Spirit convicted and/or encouraged them through their reflection journaling time.

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# Week Three: The Poor Juggler

#### **Leader Meeting Outline**

## (1) Group Begins

- (Welcome group members)
- This week we are reviewing chapter 3, which discussed how easily we are overburdened by our multi-tasking and extended commitments, and how God's Word speaks to how we should examine the heart behind all our busyness.
- Let's read the quote from author Kevin DeYoung at the beginning of the chapter and then we'll pray.
- (Read Kevin DeYoung quote on pg. 20 of Clean Home, Messy Heart)
- (Lead group in opening prayer)

### Chapter 3 Group Review

#### Opening Questions

- How did you relate to the opening story of this chapter?
- Would someone please share a part in the "Messiness of Being Busy" section that really spoke to them?

### $^{\scriptsize \text{th}}$ Washing with the Word Reflections

- As you considered your own heart's motivation behind multitasking and being overburdened in your schedule, what did you find? How did you feel about the author's question, "Are we leaving behind better things in order to accomplish the bulk of things?"
- To get started, let's consider how God gives us guidance concerning our schedules. Open your bibles to Psalm 25:8.
- (Turn bibles to Psalm 25:8 and ask a member to read aloud)
- Was there anything that you wanted to share about this section?
- Thanks to Christ and the Holy Spirit, we now have direct access to the Father. Through his Spirit and his Word, he instructs our hearts not only in making wise spiritual decisions, but also decisions that help us to be better reflections of his Son's glory and love to others through our schedules. Let's read 2 Timothy 3:16 together.
- (Read Romans 2 Timothy 3:16 aloud to group)
- So now that we've been reminded of the truth of our ability to be instructed by the Lord in the area of time management, let's consider what the Lord wants us to be doing with our time, generally speaking. Turn to Micah 6:8.
- (Have a group member read Micah 6:8 aloud to group)
- Was there anything in this section that stood out to you?
- Based on this verse, what is the attitude baseline God wants us to have for our day? How do our responses to hectic schedules play a role in disrupting this baseline? Why do you think we are prone to allowing ourselves to become overextended in our commitments?

- There's an account in the bible that speaks to this very topic: the story of Mary & Martha. Let's turn to Luke 10:38–42 and read.
- ➤ (Have a group member read Luke 10:38-42 aloud)
- What about this story can you relate to?
- How often are we more focused on our multi-tasking performances (like Martha) than our relationship with Christ (like Mary)?
- Let's look at Colossians 3:23–24 and consider how our attitudes can be totally transformed if we focus our minds on serving *the Lord* in all of our tasks.
- (Read Colossians 3:23–24 aloud to group)
- How do you think having this mindset when taking on the day would change the way we treat our children, husbands, family, etc.?

#### **☑** Study Reflection

Let's discuss our responses to the reflection question on page 27. Start by reading the two scriptures provided, Jeremiah 17:7–8 and John 15:4–5 (pick two group members to each read a passage). Based on these verses and this chapter, why do you think time with Jesus should be the best, most important part of our schedules?

#### **☑** Scripture Memorization

- Now let's test ourselves on this week's memory verse.
- (Note: the method how you do this should be pre-determined by the preference of your group. See Small Group Leader Kit Introduction for suggestions).

### ✓ Prayer

Let's share what each of us chose as our response to the prayer section. Which area did you say you wanted to pray about improving in?

**Reflection Journal Users:** You may or may not choose to review the 5 Scriptures from this week's reflection journal. If you would like to, take turns reading the verses aloud and discuss how the Spirit convicted and/or encouraged them through their reflection journaling time.

## (1) Group Ends

## Week Four: Return to Me

#### **Leader Meeting Outline**

## 4 Group Begins

- (Welcome group members)
- This week we are reviewing chapter 4, which gave us some interesting perspectives on how our hearts are prone to wander from the Lord, but also encouraged us in our Father's relentless pursuit of rebellious runners.
- Let's read the quote from author Tullian Tchividjian at the beginning of the chapter and then we'll pray.
- (Read Tullian Tchividjian quote on pg. 30 of Clean Home, Messy Heart)
- (Lead group in opening prayer)

### Chapter 4 Group Review

### **Opening Questions**

- How did you relate to the opening story of this chapter?
- Would someone please share a part in the "Messiness of Running" section that really spoke to them?

### **Washing with the Word Reflections**

- Let's briefly discuss how being a mother has given us perspective on the hurt that results when our children run away from us. Are we able to see ourselves from God's point of view, as renegade runners, just like our children can sometimes be?
- To take a closer look at how we're tempted to run from the Lord, let's read the parable of the lost son, Luke 15:11–32.
- (Turn bibles to Luke 15:11-32 and read aloud to group)
- Let's focus on Luke 15:25–27. The older son was in the fields, working hard, and he came home to a party being thrown for his wayward younger brother, who had run away but now returned. How does the older son's attitude toward the father's welcome of his brother show us a more discreet way of running from the Lord? Do we see this sort of running from God's grace in our own hearts?
- Is there anything else in this section that someone would like to share with the group?
- We have such great reason to repent of our running and flee toward the safety of our Father. Let's hear from the Lord as we read Isaiah 44:22 together.
- (Have a group member read Isaiah 44:22 aloud to group)
- How does it make you feel to hear the Lord speak to you in this way?
- Would someone like to share a comment from this section that encouraged or challenged them?
- Let's hear more from the lips of our Father by reading together Hosea 11:1-4.
- ➤ (Have a group member read Hosea 11:1-4 aloud to group)
- What parts of this passage show God's tender compassion toward his children?

- The author asks, "Has all of our running ever found us a greater consolation than the living hope we have in Jesus?" What is the hope we have in Christ? Can it be found through other pursuits?
- Let's take yet another look at how being in community with other believers can help us run from the Lord less and less over time. Turn to Lamentations 3:40.
- (Read Lamentations 3:40 aloud to the group)
- In this section, what did you read that encouraged or convicted you?
- Why do you think examining our ways is best done in the context of fellowship in the body of Christ?
- There's a group of three Scriptures on page 37 of the book that I want us to take a look at. Let's read together Zechariah 1:3, 1 Peter 5:6–7, and Jeremiah 3:12 (assign passages to group members to read).
- As we consider these scriptures, and this entire chapter, how have our hearts been convicted regarding our own running? What have these Scriptures revealed about the heart of God?

#### **☑** Study Reflection

Often times we run from the Lord because of our confidence to handle situations on our own, or our prideful tendencies to believe we don't need his instruction. This exercise had us search the Scriptures to see what they have to say about the pride in our hearts. Let's each share with the group the Scriptures we found and what the Lord revealed to you as you were reading them.

### **☑** Scripture Memorization

- Now let's test ourselves on this week's memory verse.
- (Note: the method how you do this should be pre-determined by the preference of your group. See Small Group Leader Kit Introduction for suggestions).

### ✓ Prayer

• This exercise had us read parables from Luke 15. How were you reminded of God's love as you read through these parables this past week?

**Reflection Journal Users:** You may or may not choose to review the 5 Scriptures from this week's reflection journal. If you would like to, take turns reading the verses aloud and discuss how the Spirit convicted and/or encouraged them through their reflection journaling time.

## (1) Group Ends

# Week Five: The Braiding of Hair

#### **Leader Meeting Outline**

## (1) Group Begins

- (Welcome group members)
- This week we are reviewing chapter 5, which tackled the sensitive topics of beauty, perceptions, and misplaced hopes in physical appearances rather than eternal realities.
- Let's read the quote from author Carolyn Mahaney & Nicole Whitacre at the beginning of the chapter and then we'll pray.
- (Read Carolyn Mahaney & Nicole Whitacre quote on pg. 40 of Clean Home, Messy Heart)
- (Lead group in opening prayer)

## Chapter 5 Group Review

#### **Opening Questions**

- How did you relate to the opening story of this chapter?
- Would someone please share a part in the "Messiness of Perceptions" section that really spoke to them?

### **Washing with the Word Reflections**

- As women, it's common to hold our physical beauty in high regard, especially in a culture that thrives on self-glorification. Can all of us honestly admit that we spend far more time on our appearances than on celebrating the beauty of God's glory in creation? Why do you think this is?
- Let's take a look at what Isaiah 61:10 has to share with us.
- (Turn bibles to Isaiah 61:10 and read aloud to group)
- Let's be honest, ladies: how frequently do we wake up rejoicing like this? In your own words, why is Isaiah so overwhelmed with joy?
- Is there anything in this section that someone would like to expand upon in this section?
- The righteousness we are given in Christ is indeed a precious and beautiful adorning. Let's turn to Song of Solomon 4:7 to hear a special word of adoration from our Father.
- (Have a group member read Song of Solomon 4:7 aloud to group)
- Do you believe that in Christ there is no flaw in you as it relates to how God views you?
- The author writes, "It costs nothing for a human to whisper these sweet nothings into your ear, yet it cost the Lord *everything* to be able to do so." How does that make you feel about the good news of God's love?
- Is there anything else in this section you'd like to highlight?
- Let's turn our bibles now to Romans 9:20.
- (Have a group member read Romans 9:20 aloud)
- Does someone have thoughts about this Scripture or section that they'd like to share?
- Why do you think these biblical truths about beauty, appearance, and our identity in Christ are important to share with our children?

- There's a verse in Isaiah that speaks to a cornerstone in Zion that will be a sure foundation for us. Let's go to Isaiah 28:16 to read more.
- (Read Isaiah 28:16 aloud to group)
- Who is the cornerstone that Isaiah is talking about? (answer: Christ)
- What happens when we made other things besides Christ a cornerstone in our lives, such as our beauty?
- Let's finish this part of the group discussion by reminding ourselves of the glory we as believers have to look forward to. Turn with me to Isaiah 62:1–4.
- ➤ (Have a group member read Isaiah 62:1-4 aloud)

#### **☑** Study Reflection

This exercise had us insert our names into blank spaces in order to further solidify our understanding of how God sees us in Christ. I'd like each person in the group to share which line number (1-5) encouraged you most, as well as read the coordinating Scripture aloud to us. Take a moment to select the number you'd like to share and to look up the Scripture.

#### **☑** Scripture Memorization

- Now let's test ourselves on this week's memory verse.
- (Note: the method how you do this should be pre-determined by the preference of your group. See Small Group Leader Kit Introduction for suggestions).

#### ✓ Prayer

• This exercise had us read parables from Luke 15. How were you reminded of God's love as you read through these parables this past week?

**Reflection Journal Users:** You may or may not choose to review the 5 Scriptures from this week's reflection journal. If you would like to, take turns reading the verses aloud and discuss how the Spirit convicted and/or encouraged them through their reflection journaling time.

## (1) Group Ends

### Week Six: Reluctant Hands

#### **Leader Meeting Outline**

## (1) Group Begins

- (Welcome group members)
- This week we are reviewing chapter 6, which discussed the various attitudes we have when setting our hands to serve those inside our homes.
- Let's read the quote from Dietrich Bonhoeffer at the beginning of the chapter and then we'll pray.
- (Read Dietrich Bonhoeffer quote on pg. 50 of Clean Home, Messy Heart)
- (Lead group in opening prayer)

### Chapter 6 Group Review

### **Opening Questions**

- How did you relate to the opening story of this chapter?
- Would someone please share a part in the "Messiness of Helping" section that really spoke to them?

### **♥** Washing with the Word Reflections

- Let's begin by taking a look at what it means to be a follower of Christ. Open your bibles to Luke 9:23.
- (Turn bibles to Luke 9:23 and read aloud to group)
- Let's talk about it: Why do you think we have such a hard time consistently denying ourselves to follow Christ's example of service?
- Let's turn to Ephesians 2:10 to see what the Word has to say about our created purpose.
- (Have a group member read Ephesians 2:10 aloud to group)
- The author writes, "With this awareness, I should wake up every morning and know that the main assignment for the day will be to help other people." How do you think Ephesians 2:10 gives us the clarity and motivation needed for denying ourselves to serve our household?
- Is there anything else in this section you'd like to highlight?
- Let's turn our bibles now to Galatians 5:13-14.
- ➤ (Have a group member read Galatians 5:13-14 aloud)
- What do you think Paul means when he says, "the whole law is fulfilled in one word: you shall love your neighbor as yourself"? How does loving our neighbor equate to loving God?
- Is there anything else that stood out to you in this section?
- Sometimes we can get tired of serving our families so tirelessly because we feel like our work is not commended or appreciated. Let's read Hebrews 6:10 to find some encouragement.
- (Read Hebrews 6:10 aloud to group)

- How does this Scripture encourage you in your service to your family, even in the mundane, repetitive chores?
- Do you sometimes find yourself more eager to help those outside of your home than the ones under your roof? Why do you think that is?
- Part of denying ourselves daily means that our service includes sacrifice, but it doesn't go unnoticed by our Lord. Turn with me to 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 for a reminder that our helping hands serve to glorify our Father.
- ➤ (Have a group member read 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 aloud)

#### **☑** Study Reflection

First, let's read the two Scriptures provided in this study reflection (1 Peter 4:10 and John 13:12-14—designate two group members to read aloud). Now we'll each take a turn sharing our answers to the question and discuss to all together.

#### **☑** Scripture Memorization

Now let's test ourselves on this week's memory verse.

#### ✓ Prayer

This week's prayer prompt began by asking a question based on this week's chapter and Hebrews 6:10, which we read earlier. Let's take turns answering how we have been challenged and/or encouraged to welcome interruptions as a chance to bring God glory through our service to our families.

**Reflection Journal Users:** You may or may not choose to review the 5 Scriptures from this week's reflection journal. If you would like to, take turns reading the verses aloud and discuss how the Spirit convicted and/or encouraged them through their reflection journaling time.

## (1) Group Ends

# Week Seven: Half-Hearted Fear

#### **Leader Meeting Outline**

## 4 Group Begins

- (Welcome group members)
- This week we are reviewing chapter 7, which discussed our often waning fear of the Lord, and the difficulty we have in humbly surrendering to his lordship.
- Let's read the quote from preacher Charles Spurgeon at the beginning of the chapter and then we'll pray.
- (Read Charles Spurgeon quote on pg. 58 of Clean Home, Messy Heart)
- (Lead group in opening prayer)

## Chapter 7 Group Review

### Opening Questions

- How did you relate to the opening story of this chapter?
- Would someone please share a part in the "Messiness of Disrespect" section that really spoke to them?

### **†** Washing with the Word Reflections

- This section opens with a couple of Scripture verses that are very powerful reminders of God's authority. Let's start by reading those together. Turn to Isaiah 46:10 and then Proverbs 16:5.
- (Turn bibles to Isaiah 46:10 and Proverbs 16:5 and assign two group members to read aloud)
- As we are sitting here now, these verses may not threaten our pride, but what if we were to remember them in the middle of an argument or as we are complaining about a circumstance we're in? Let's briefly discuss that.
- Now let's turn to Job 40:8-9 and hear God challenge our hearts!
- ► (Have a group member read Job 40:8-9 aloud to group)
- What are some parts in this section that convicted or encouraged you?
- How do you think the cross challenges our ideas about God's fairness?
- Let's turn our bibles now to Psalm 25:14
- (Have a group member read Psalm 25:14 aloud)
- Explain how the grace of the cross now allows us to be called friends of God.
- Let's read a few Scriptures from Romans to see how our *fear of* and *friendship with* God encourages our messy hearts. Let's read Romans 8:28 and 8:31 together.
- (Have two members each read one Scripture aloud to group)
- How does being a friend of God give us the trust and endurance to overcome temptations to rebel against God's authority in our lives?
- Is there anything else that stood out to you in this section?
- Now let's move on to 1 Samuel 12:24.

- (Read 1 Samuel 12:24 aloud to group)
- Why do you think reflecting upon the things God has done for us increases our reverence and our desire to be faithful to his authority?
- Let's read 2 Timothy 2:12–13 to watch grace and perseverance comingle to give us hope in our battle to humbly surrender to God's sovereignty.
- (Have a group member read 2 Timothy 2:12-13)
- The author writes, "Learning to humble ourselves to the Lord's authority means we do so by faith, confident we aren't bowing down to a tyrant who rules by fear, but rather a Father who leads through love." How do you think this confidence can transform our hearts to be increasingly more faithful to God's calling in our lives?

#### **☑** Study Reflection

This reflection had us look up three Scriptures that referenced the "fear of the Lord". Let's each read what we found by reading aloud our responses, as well as share a brief comment about how you were convicted and/or encouraged by the Scriptures you selected.

#### **☑** Scripture Memorization

Now let's test ourselves on this week's memory verse.

### ✓ Prayer

• This week's prayer prompt asked us to consider something we are currently wrestling the Lord over. As you took the time to reflect and pray about this issue, what did you discover? Would anyone like to share something they wrote? Did anyone have any trouble seeing an area in their life where they are rejecting God's authority?

**Reflection Journal Users:** You may or may not choose to review the 5 Scriptures from this week's reflection journal. If you would like to, take turns reading the verses aloud and discuss how the Spirit convicted and/or encouraged them through their reflection journaling time.

## (1) Group Ends

# Week Eight: Childlike Faith

#### **Leader Meeting Outline**

## 4 Group Begins

- (Welcome group members)
- This week we are reviewing chapter 8, which summarized our hope as overwhelmed moms with messy hearts—that in our risk and pressing into Christ, God's transforming grace is *guaranteed*.
- Let's read the quote from author John Piper at the beginning of the chapter and then we'll pray.
- (Read John Piper quote on pg. 68 of Clean Home, Messy Heart)
- (Lead group in opening prayer)

## Chapter 8 Group Review

### **Closing Group Discussion**

- This final chapter is structured differently than the others, so this week we are going to mainly focus on sharing parts of this last chapter that encouraged us, as well as the questions on page 81–82.
- Does anyone have any comments on pages 69-71? If so, please share.
- Let's read the Philippians passage at the bottom of page 71 together.
- (Have a group member read Philippians 3:12-14 aloud)
- How does this verse encourage you to persevere as a follower of Christ during this challenging season of motherhood?
- Would anyone like to share something from the "Closing Thoughts" section before we jump into the questions on page 81? If so, let's discuss.
- There are six questions on pages 81–82, the last one being a prayer prompt. Let's share the answers we came up with for the first five questions and hear how our hearts have been touched through the journey together in this study.
- (Use Clean Home, Messy Heart book to read questions and move discussion forward)
- The final Scripture I'd like for us to read before closing out our session tonight is from page 76 in the book. Let's turn to page 76 together to read this uplifting word from our Father.
- ➤ (Read Scripture passage Isaiah 46:3-4 on page 76 of book aloud to group)

## (1) Group Ends