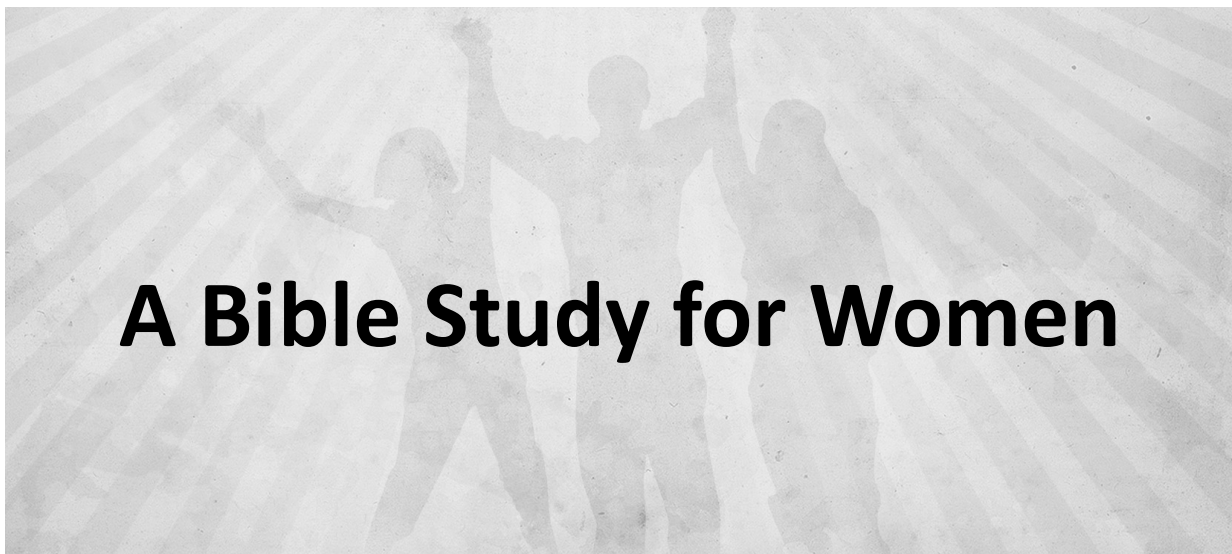




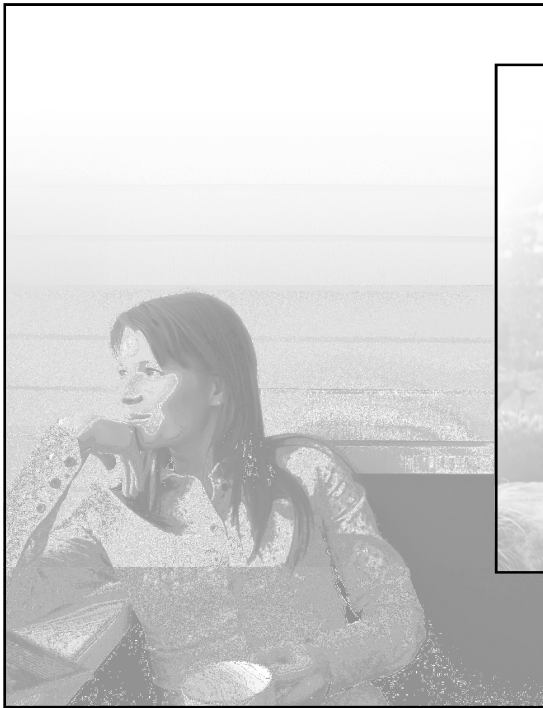
THRIVING

Not Just Surviving

**DEPLOYMENT PERSPECTIVES
FOR TODAY'S MILITARY FAMILIES**



A Bible Study for Women



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Editors: Barb Beyer, Anne Borcharding, Andrea Plotner



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Foreward

When you hear the word *deployment*, what other words come to mind? Demanding, exhausting, lonely? Opportunity, growth, learning? Maybe you're telling yourself (as the children's game goes), "Can't go over it, can't go under it, can't go around it. We'll have to go through it!" The question is, who will go through it with you?

The highly personal stories in *Thriving, Not Just Surviving* tell of a Savior who is willing to go through your spouse's deployment with you. These stories cover a wide range of experiences common to all spouses of deployed service members, regardless of branch, rank, or spiritual maturity. We have chosen to focus on the stories which fit best with these eleven lessons, but we encourage you to read the whole book. Each story contains golden nuggets of truth. The study questions are designed to help you apply the authors' insights to your own situation and go deeper with God.

There is a Savior who wants to go on this journey with you. He is strong and wise. He knows the path you must take. Hold tightly to His hand.

Special thanks to the authors and contributors to this study:
Gervais Baptist, Anne Borcharding, Laura Cross, Muriel Gregory, and Andrea Plotner.

Thriving Not Just Surviving

Deployment Perspectives for Today's Military Families

Bible Study

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Tips for Facilitators

1. Each lesson is designed to facilitate approximately 1 to 1 1/2 hours of in-class discussion.
2. To simplify your preparation, facilitator notes (such as, “Turn to a partner and discuss...”) have been written into the participant’s guide.
3. As you prepare to teach each lesson, refer to the Teaching Resource chart on pages 30-31 which will help you identify the central truth of each lesson and become familiar with the Scriptures to be covered. We encourage you to read each Bible passage in advance so you are familiar with the context. You may also want to think of examples from your own life which help students better understand how to apply the truths they are learning.
4. You will need a flip chart or dry erase board for each lesson. For homework, students will need a Bible, a *Thriving Not Just Surviving* book, this Participant’s Guide, and a blank journal for prayer.
5. Lessons have been designed around adult learning principles—research about how adults learn best. Each lesson progresses, in steps, from the “big picture” to personal application.
6. Consider beginning each class with a review of homework, Bible memorization, or a question such as “Does anyone want to share how God made last week’s lesson real in your life?”
7. Participants will frequently be asked to share in pairs or small groups. This allows for greater participation, greater personal application, and the safety of a confidential environment.
8. Your teaching will be most dynamic when you have been daily faithful in prayer and Bible study, leading out of the overflow of God’s presence in your life.
9. Try to create an atmosphere of care in your room with simple decorations, simple gifts, and seating arranged to create a warm and inviting environment as you share and grow together.
10. Be intentional about following up with your students outside of class via phone, e-mail, coffee dates, note cards, text messages, or whatever speaks best to your group.
11. Try to have a co-teacher identified in your class to “share the care” and serve as a substitute if you are unable to teach a lesson for some reason.
12. Remember that God may have something different in store for your class than you had planned. Give yourself permission to be structured or flexible as the situation requires.
13. If you run out of time in class, verbally encourage everyone to build the material that wasn’t covered into their Advanced Individual Training time at home.
14. During your first class session point out “Got Discipleship?” (page 7). Major goals of this study include teaching the value of journaling our prayers and responses to God’s Word, and guiding participants in their personal times with God. Though an entire week’s homework could be completed quickly, we are encouraging women to meet with God daily in prayer and His Word.

Got Discipleship?

Tips for Growing in Relationship with God

The Bible: Where to Start?

- Go back over the verses included in your weekly Bible study lesson.
- The book of John (New Testament) tells about Jesus.
- The book of James (New Testament) talks about living God's way.
- The book of Proverbs (Old Testament) talks about wisdom .
- The book of Psalms (Old Testament) is comforting if you are suffering.
- The book of Genesis (Old Testament) talks about how the world began.
- Use a daily devotional such as *Our Daily Bread* or *My Utmost for His Highest*.

How Do I Read the Bible?

- As you read a small passage, have your pen and paper handy and ask yourself:
 - What does it say? About God? About mankind or me?
 - What does it mean?
 - What does it mean to me?

How Do I Pray?

- Speak to God like a trusted friend. Tell Him what is on your heart and mind.
- Try journaling your prayers so as not to get distracted.
- Pray Scripture. (i.e. pray through a Psalm, making it personal)
- Utilize some good models for prayer, including:
 - The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:5-15)
 - F.A.C.T.S. Prayer:
 - Forgiveness
 - Adoration
 - Confession
 - Thanksgiving, and
 - Supplication

How Do I Journal?

- Play praise music while you write.
- Use paper or a word processor.
- Include prayers, thoughts, Scripture you are memorizing, or reflections on God's Word.

How Do I Memorize Bible Verses?

- Read through the passage three times first thing each morning.
- Write it on a business or index card and refer to it throughout the day.
- Read the verses three times last thing before going to sleep.

Begin with the End in Mind

Notes:

God's Promise: "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off every thing that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us" (Hebrews 12:1).

Faith in the Foxhole [10 minutes]

As a class, discuss the following questions: Have you ever trained for a race or other physical challenge? Did you have a training plan? What were the steps you used to achieve your goals? Note responses on the left hand side of flip chart or white board.

Basic Training [15 minutes]

A deployment can be like a marathon. And it can bring forth a myriad of feelings—including sadness and despair. Bobbie Simpson encourages us to focus on the end of the deployment—the goal—for motivation to live, work, and plan while we wait.

- Read her article on pages 16-18 of *Thriving Not Just Surviving*.
- As a class discuss: Bobbie states that, "Looking ahead is a powerful motivator." Do you agree with that statement? Why or why not?

Group Training [25 minutes]

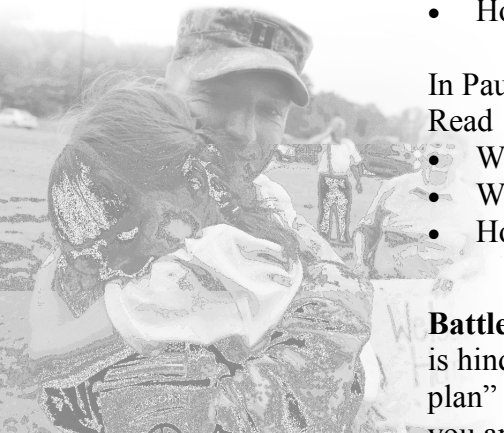
As a class read Hebrews 12:1-3. Discuss the following questions.

- What do these verses say about how we are to view our lives?
- Going back to the physical training list created in the introduction, what are some spiritual parallels that can be drawn as we train for life? Note responses in the right hand column.
- Why is focusing on the end essential to completing the course?
- What does it mean to "fix your eyes on Jesus?" What are practical ways to do this?
- How is deployment like the race mentioned in Hebrews?

In Paul's letter to the church in Corinth, we again see the race analogy. Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-25 and discuss the following:

- What should be our goal in the race?
- What might "winning" look like during difficulties or deployments?
- How can you be training for the race and why is it essential?

Battle Buddies [15 minutes] Write in the margin an obstacle or sin that is hindering your race. Take about five minutes to brainstorm a "training plan" to overcome this encumbrance. Turn to a partner and, to the extent you are willing, share your response (i.e. "I struggle with pride") and pray for one another. Commit to praying for each other during the week.



Advanced Individual Training [at home]

A well-known passage on God’s good plans for our future comes from Jeremiah 29. While the often cited verse 11 states God “plans to give you a future and a hope,” the context reveals something far deeper.

- Read verses 1-14 and note:
 - Where the Israelites are _____
 - How much longer they will be there _____
 - What they are instructed to do while they wait _____
 - How they are to respond to knowing God has a plan (verses 12-13) _____
- Though they will not be immediately freed, they are to thrive in the situation.
- Evaluate the answers to the following questions:
 - Are you calling upon the Lord? (verse 12) _____
 - Are you seeking Him with your whole heart? (verse 13) _____
- If you answered “no,” seek the Lord’s guidance on what needs to change.

How are you doing on the “training plan” you developed during the class session? Pray for yourself and for your “Battle Buddy” from class to succeed in your training this week.

Read the article, “Keep It All in Perspective” on pages 19-21 of *Thriving Not Just Surviving*. Dawn Grossman reminds us that our outlook profoundly affects our attitudes.

- Make a list of things that you do not understand, things that you fear, and things that make you angry. Ask God to help you see them all from His perspective. (See James 1:5.)

Suggested reading in *Thriving Not Just Surviving*

- Pages 45-48 *From the Front*
- Pages 117-119 *A Routine Day*

Scripture to memorize this week: “Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance” (James 1:2).

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Bible Reading							
Sit Down Prayer							
Journaling							

Refinement

Notes:

God's Promise: James 1:2

Faith in the Foxhole [10 minutes]

Turn to a partner and share your childhood military “resume.” Did you ever experience deployment as a child? Do you have any veterans in your family? Do you recall any of their stories?

Basic Training [15 minutes]

Read the article “Daddy I Don’t Want You to Go!” by Cindy Wesley found on pages 12-15 of *Thriving Not Just Surviving*. Cindy shares her struggle with how deployments and military service are affecting her family. She asks, “Will there be an end to this, or does the Lord want us to continue to do this to our family?”

- Have you and your spouse ever discussed these questions?
- What was the conclusion? Share with the group.

Group Training [25 minutes]

We often consider deployment a form of suffering. Suffering is a word that often causes an interior shudder. We usually avoid thinking about it, let alone embrace it. Read 1 Peter 1:6-7.

- Discuss what you know about the process of refining metals.
- How does that relate to suffering?
- What should be our response to suffering?
- What is the result of our faith being tested?

Using a flip chart or dry erase board, make two columns—one listing difficulties of deployment, the other listing how that circumstance might bring God praise, honor, and glory.

As a group, read Romans 5:3-5 and answer the following questions:

- What promises does God give in these verses regarding suffering?
- Talk about the chain reaction. How does perseverance develop character, and character produce hope?
- What does it look like to “rejoice in suffering” during deployment?

Battle Buddies [10 minutes]

Turn to a partner and share: Reflecting back on 1 Peter, what is being “burned off” in your life right now? What character qualities do you see God developing in you? Share, then pray for perseverance for one another.

If you have a recording of “Refiner’s Fire” play it, meditating on the lyrics.

Advanced Individual Training [at home]

Read the following verses and list what they say about suffering:

- James 1:2-4 _____
- 1 Peter 4:12 _____

Throughout Scripture we see that our primary purpose, upon becoming God’s children, is to bring our Father glory. 1 Peter 1:7 talks about our faith bringing Christ glory. In her article, Cindy shared ways deployment sufferings brought about praise and honor for God in their family. Pray and seek the Lord’s revelation on specific ways He desires to be glorified in you during this time. Record your insights below.

Cindy also wrote about the sweetness of “going deeper” with God during deployments. Read Exodus 33:14. Are you resting in the presence of the Lord? Consider asking God to help you make daily time in His presence.



Suggested reading in *Thriving Not Just Surviving*

- Pages 113-114 *I Am Not Alone*
- Pages 115-116 *Balancing Act*

Scripture to memorize this week: “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Ephesians 2:10).

Use this chart to track your time with God each day this week:

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Bible Reading							
Sit Down Prayer							
Journaling							



Notes:

Thriving Not Just Surviving: Deployment Perspectives for Today's Military Families
Lesson 3

Share My Calling

God's Promise: Ephesians 2:10

Faith in the Foxhole [10 minutes]

Turn to a partner and share what you wanted to be when you grew up. Did you stick with that youthful plan or did God take your life in a different direction?

Basic Training [15 minutes]

Quietly read "Share My Calling" by Anne Borcharding found on pages 37-38 of *Thriving Not Just Surviving*. Mark or underline what strikes your interest. What are the differences between a job and a calling?

Group Training [25 minutes]

Have someone with a NASB or ESV translation read 2 Timothy 1:8-9.

As a group discuss:

- What do these verses say about God's plans for our lives?
- What do these verses say about our response to God's purposes?

Read Genesis 2:18

- What does this verse say about God's plans for your marriage?
- If being a "help-meet" denotes being a "life-saving counterpart" as Anne explained in her article, what does this look like in the context of a military marriage?

Using a flip chart or dry erase board, make two columns to answer the question, "What obstacles (feelings, circumstances) can make it hard to share your husband's calling?"

- Now, beside each obstacle evaluate what underlying heart issue could be at its cause.
- How should we be living out our calling practically as military wives? How does that mesh with your spouse's career being a shared calling?
- What changes in your thinking or actions would result from you truly viewing your husband's career in the military as a calling for you both?

Battle Buddies [15 minutes]

Take a few minutes to record any heart issues you may be struggling with regarding your husband's military calling. Join your partner in praying that God will make His plans clear to you and that you will be obedient to whatever calling He has for your life.

Advanced Individual Training [at home]

During your private time, answer—and perhaps journal—responses to the following questions:

According to the following verses what are some specific ways you can live out your purpose?

- Romans 12:13 _____
- Ephesians 4:29, 31 _____
- Philippians 2:14-15 _____
- Titus 2:3-5 _____
- 1 Peter 4:10-11 _____

Pray and meditate on what you may need to change as a result of what God has shown you. Write a note to God outlining your thoughts—and perhaps confessions.

On page 39 of *Thriving Not Just Surviving* Anne lists some action ideas. Consider selecting one of these as a goal for this deployment. Record it here: _____

Read Ephesians 2:8-10 and consider the God of the universe who calls the stars by name. He knows the thoughts of every person in the world (Psalm 139) and feeds all living creatures (Psalm 104) and He has a plan to use you for His kingdom. How does the reality of this passage make you feel? What implications for your life do you see in these verses?

Suggested reading in *Thriving Not Just Surviving*

- Pages 34-36 *A Senior Spouse’s Thoughts*
- Page 41 *Gift of Prayer*
- Pages 57-58 *Daddy’s Letter to Son*

Scripture to memorize this week: “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power” (Ephesians 6:10).

Use this chart to track your time with God each day this week:

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Bible Reading							
Sit Down Prayer							
Journaling							

Battle Ready

Notes:

God's Promise: Ephesians 6:10

Faith in the Foxhole [10 minutes]

Can you think of a situation you initially dreaded, that turned out better than expected? Turn to a partner and share your experience and what God taught you, or what you learned about God's character, as a result.

Basic Training [15 minutes]

In her article "Deployed...Again" on pages 76-78 of *Thriving Not Just Surviving*, Jacqueline Grose writes, "when deployment number two came along, I already knew that I wasn't good at this separation thing. I felt robbed, angry, and ripped apart." Some of us may deal with deployment and separation better than others. Regardless, they are never something we look forward to. The idea of being alone and "doing it all" alone can be overwhelming. Read Jacqueline's article. What are your responses?

Group Training [25 minutes]

God promises to be our protector and refuge in the midst of any storm—even deployment. How does He do this? Read Ephesians 6:10-18.

- Why is protection necessary?
- What does God use to protect us?
- What specific instructions are we given in verse 13?
- Using our familiar flip chart or dry erase board, make two columns. On the left, list the pieces of protection in verses 14-17. On the right, list examples of how to use them in daily life or during deployments.

The passage in Ephesians tells us to be prepared for spiritual attack. As Jacqueline says, "As the wife of a soldier, I have a similar calling on the home front. My attacks don't come in the form of men with rifles or IEDs [but] temptations to be lonely, depressed, or overwhelmed."

- What temptations do you face in your life?
- Knowing the enemy is half the battle. What counter measures can you take to defuse those temptations?

Battle Buddies [15 minutes]

Take a moment to identify your biggest vulnerability during deployment. Which piece of armor would be most effective in protecting you from this attack? What is one practical change you can make in your routine to allow God to better fortify you in this area? Share your thoughts with a partner and pray for one another that God would help you overcome weakness in this area.

Advanced Individual Training [at home]

On page 78 of *Thriving Not Just Surviving* Jacqueline Grose asks herself a series of questions. Spend some time in prayer and answer those questions for yourself:

- How can God be glorified during this deployment? _____
- How can I be a supportive wife? _____
- How will God fill in the gap? _____
- How can I serve others? _____

This week we looked at putting on the armor of God. Now let’s read Colossians 3:12-14 and look at other “clothing” God has provided for us.

Virtue	Example
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Read “Lessons learned through deployments” on the bottom of page 90 in *Thriving Not Just Surviving*. What lessons have you learned through a deployment? How can this help you face another separation?

Read Psalm 68. In your journal, make two columns similar to the charts we have been making in class. On the left, list everything this psalm says about God. On the right, list what this psalm says about mankind. What do you discover about God? About yourself? Write a prayer of response, thanking God.

Suggested reading in *Thriving Not Just Surviving*

- Pages 83-85 *God’s Children*
- Page 95 *Taking Care of Myself*
- Pages 120-121 *How Deployment Worked for Me*



Scripture to memorize this week: “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up” Galatians 6:9).

Use this chart to track your time with God each day this week:

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Bible Reading							
Sit Down Prayer							
Journaling							

Strength Training

Notes:

God's Promise: Galatians 6:9

Faith in the Foxhole [10 minutes]

Turn to a partner and share one new skill you gained while your husband was deployed. How did God provide for you? How did you feel?

Basic Training [15 minutes]

Every stressful situation is an opportunity for God to reveal His goodness to us. For example, Joseph of the Old Testament was sold into slavery by his brothers, falsely accused, thrown into jail, and forgotten about. God revealed truth to Joseph in prison and used him to save the lives of many people. We believe in God's mighty works on behalf of Bible characters, but do we trust God to come through for us, in the heat of our stress?

Quietly read Marshelle Carter Waddell's article on pages 30-31 of *Thriving Not Just Surviving*. What are your thoughts?

Group Training [25 minutes]

When we look at an overwhelming situation, we often tend to view it through our natural abilities, rather than through God's supernatural strength. Read Matthew 11:28-30 and consider:

- What three things are we called to do?
- What does it mean to take God's yoke upon us?
- What results can we expect?

During deployment, we often find ourselves in circumstances we wouldn't necessarily choose. Is it really possible to thrive in such circumstances? Read Philippians 4:11-13, written by the Apostle Paul while in prison for his faith. What secret does Paul discover? According to verse 13, what is the source of Paul's contentment?

When we yoke ourselves to God and allow Him to carry our burdens, miraculous things—that otherwise seem burdensome—are accomplished. We reap contentment and God is glorified. Now create a slogan that you can use to remind yourself of these promises the next time you feel burdened and overwhelmed. With a team of 2 or 3, think of a t-shirt slogan to remind you to rest in God's promises—even during deployment.

Battle Buddies [15 minutes]

Tell a partner about a situation in which you felt hopeless until the Lord revealed His solution. Or tell about a time when there was no solution, but the Holy Spirit gave you peace in spite of the problem. If you don't have an example to share, tell about a time when you wish you had yoked yourself to God more fully. Pray for each other to rely on God.



Advanced Individual Training [at home]

During your private time this week, journal your thoughts to the following questions:

- Read Psalm 46. List below all the things the Psalmist reveals God will do. This is a powerful God! Do you view Him as an “ever-present help” in times of trouble? During your prayer time ask God to help you make Him your “first stop” in times of crisis. He will bring you rest.
- Long periods of single parenting are never fun, but they are opportunities to grow. Make a list of ways in which your parenting might improve during a deployment. Put a star next to the one that most excites you. Now pray that God would show you how to move forward in this area, whether or not you are experiencing a deployment.
- “Along the way, women sometimes lose their soft, feminine side as a result of weathering life’s storms alone for too long,” Marshale observes. Is this happening to you, or could you see it happening in the future, with repeated deployments? How can we reclaim our soft, feminine selves when circumstances force us to be superwomen? Meditate on Galatians 6:9 and Matthew 11:28-30 before you begin writing.
- Resentment is another one of the bitter emotions which can surface during deployment. It often stems—either consciously or unconsciously—from holding on to unforgiveness. Read Matthew 6:9-13. Why is forgiveness important? Is there anyone you need to forgive? Your spouse? Your children? The military? Make a list and bring these issues to God.

Suggested reading in *Thriving Not Just Surviving*

- Pages 69-70 *Apart or A Part?*
- Page 71 *“I Want My Daddy!”*
- Page 72 *Discipline Issues*

Scripture to memorize this week: “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” Psalm 139:23-24.

Use this chart to track your time with God each day this week:

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Bible Reading							
Sit Down Prayer							
Journaling							



Honest Conversations

God's Promise: Psalm 139:23-24

Faith in the Foxhole [10 minutes]

Turn to a partner and share: What comes as a result of honesty in our earthly relationships?

Notes:

Basic Training [10 minutes]

Our God is a God of relationships. He communes even with Himself (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). Throughout the Scriptures we see His creative and relentless efforts to be in relationship with us. Relationships involve conversation, which is why angry and hurt silences can be so damaging. Quietly read Sue Faulk's article "Job and the Reserve Soldier's Wife" on pages 91-93 of *Thriving Not Just Surviving* and highlight whatever is meaningful to you.

Group Training [25 minutes]

As a group, take turns reading from Psalm 139:1-13.

- List all the things this passage says God knows about you.
- Given this intimate knowledge why is it still important to have honest conversations with Him? Doesn't He know already?

In the Old Testament book of Job, we find a faithful man whom God allows the devil to tempt in order to test his loyalty. As a result, Job loses his family—and much more—but he still chooses to come honestly to God, lamenting his circumstances, without "sugar-coating" his feelings.

- Read Job 16:7-8. Sue Faulk writes, "No one can blame Job for railing at God. For questioning his purpose in life. For being just plain mad about what was happening to him. For feeling deeply the loss of his family. Still, Job enters into conversation with God."
 - Why is it so hard to tell God directly that we're angry at Him or disappointed with some aspect of our lives?
 - What would we have to believe about God in order to be more honest with Him?

Silently read the third and fourth paragraphs on page 126 from Julie Self's article "Drawn to God through Struggles" in *Thriving Not Just Surviving*. She describes her husband withdrawing from her and even from himself. Yet she and her husband found ways to come back together—to re-start their conversation.

- How did they do it?
- How could these techniques work in our relationship with God?

Battle Buddies [15 minutes]

On the space below, jot down a significant issue in your life that you have yet to share with God. With the same partner from earlier, pray that God would break down the barriers of communication in your prayer life.

Advanced Individual Training [at home]

Refer back to the Battle Buddies section above. What issue did God bring to mind that you need to air out in prayer? Take time now to discuss it with Him. Journal your conversation.

Romans 12:15 tells us to “rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.”

- Do you find this hard to do? If so, write why.
- In what ways did Jesus fulfill this Scripture?
- Do these examples from Jesus’ ministry on earth convince you that God feels your pain and your joy? If so, thank Him for His compassion, and ask Him to strengthen your compassion for others.

Read Philippians 4:8.

- How does an honest woman tell God she’s angry/disappointed/bitter/exhausted/numb and still fulfill the words of Philippians 4:8?
- Is it possible to do both?
- Do you have personal examples? If so, journal them.
- Pray for wisdom in this area.

After being confronted by God, Job decides to place his hand over his mouth (Job 40:4). In other words, he decides to be still and accept that God is beyond understanding.

- During last week’s A.I.T. you read Psalm 46. How have you practiced verse 10?

Suggested reading in *Thriving Not Just Surviving*

- Pages 79-82 *Hope for the Home Front*

Scripture to memorize this week: “For you have been my refuge, a strong tower against the foe” (Psalm 61:3).

Use this chart to track your time with God each day this week:

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Bible Reading							
Sit Down Prayer							
Journaling							

A Refuge

Notes:

God's Promise: Psalm 61:3

Faith in the Foxhole [10 minutes]

With a partner, discuss the word pictures in Psalm 61:2-4.

Basic Training [15 minutes]

Quietly read "A Refuge" by Nashawn Turner found on pages 130-132 of *Thriving Not Just Surviving* and underline what strikes your interest. As a group, discuss the elements of a good refuge. How is God a good refuge?

Group Training [25 minutes]

Nashawn writes that she struggled when her husband left suddenly for war. What calmed her was remembering God claimed to be her strong tower. She decided to place her hope in the Lord.

There are moments when we may silently wonder if God is a "safe place" or if placing our hope in Him will lead to disappointment. Let's take some time to see what the Scriptures reveal about God.

Write down what the following verses reveal about God's character

Psalm 86:15 _____

Psalm 100:5 _____

Lamentations 3:22 _____

Colossians 1:17 _____

James 1:17 _____

Revelation 1:8 _____

- How does reading the above verses and seeing God's attributes affect your trust in Him?

Battle Buddies [15 minutes]

What stands between you and making God your refuge?
Share your answer with a partner and pray for one another.



Advanced Individual Training [at home]

During our group time, one Scripture we looked at was Lamentations 3:22. Turn back to Lamentations 3 and read verses 21-25.

- What is the source of your hope?
- In verse 24 the author is telling himself the truth about what God gives him. Do you need to do some “self-talk” about where to find your hope? Jot yourself a note here:
- Are you looking for God’s “fresh” mercies every day? How could you do this? Throughout your day be on a mercy lookout! Write down what you find.

Read 2 Corinthians 12:9-10. Make a list of your weaknesses and thank God for them. It is through those weaknesses that He can shine. Your weaknesses can become your strengths.

- Read Psalm 61 and write down how God can be your source of encouragement and a refuge in times of trouble.
- Spend time at God’s feet every day in prayer and reading His Word. One suggestion is to read one chapter of Proverbs for the day (e.g. on March 12, read Proverbs chapter 12) and you can cover the whole book in one month.

Read Psalm 91:4 and Proverbs 18:10 and meditate on God as a refuge. Journal your response.

Suggested reading in *Thriving Not Just Surviving*

- Page 29 *God’s Plans Prevail*
- Pages 99-101 *What are Parents to Do?*
- Pages 102-104 *Chasing Drake*

Scripture to memorize this week: “In his heart, a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps” (Proverbs 16:9).

Use this chart to track your time with God each day this week:

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Bible Reading							
Sit Down Prayer							
Journaling							

Safety in War

Notes:

God's Promise: Proverbs 16:9

Faith in the Foxhole [5 minutes]

As you prepared for your spouse to deploy, what were some of your fears? Share your thoughts with a partner.

Basic Training [10 minutes]

When we say goodbye to our husbands and send them to war, our most fervent prayers are concerning their safety. We hope for the best yet prepare ourselves for the worse. Read Raeann Pajo's article on pages 42-43 of *Thriving Not Just Surviving*. As you read the article, try to put yourself in her shoes and jot down the emotions that you might be feeling if this happened to you. If it did happen to you, can you relate to her emotions?

Group Training [35 minutes]

Raeann makes a powerful statement on page 42. "God was telling me to trust Him—to really trust Him—and not merely to trust that my husband would live and come home to me. God wanted me to trust Him no matter what would happen because He is God Almighty, and He is in control." Raeann was acknowledging God's sovereignty. Define sovereignty.

Let's take a closer look at the concept of sovereignty. Make two columns titled "God" and "Man." Read each passage below and list what it teaches us about either God or man.

Deuteronomy 32:4

Jeremiah 17:9

1 Chronicles 29:11-15

Daniel 2:20-22

Psalms 39:4

Daniel 4:34-35

Proverbs 16:9

James 4:13-15

As a group discuss the following:

- What strikes you as you look at the two lists?
- How do these truths provide comfort and rest?
- How do the truths about sovereignty apply to Raeann's situation?
- What is a situation that you would dread where the concept of God's sovereignty/control would help you?

Battle Buddies [10 minutes]

With your partner, read Proverbs 3:5-6. Discuss ways you could stop leaning on your own understanding and trust God's sovereignty. Share examples in your life in which you did this, or wish you had. Pray for God's help in relinquishing control and trusting Him completely.

Advanced Individual Training [at home]

Often times our fear of roller coasters is diminished because we have faith in the designers and engineers. Do you have that same level of faith in the Lord? Do you trust that He is in complete control of all aspects of your life; living, dying?

Bill Bright, founder of the Campus Crusade ministry, likened our striving to understand God's sovereignty as trying to comprehend the complexity and beauty of a large puzzle by only examining one piece. Instead, we have to trust that our individual pieces, be they bright or with shadows, are but parts of an amazing picture. Spend time in prayer this week asking God to help you see your life and circumstances as being totally in His control—even though you can't see the whole picture of what He is accomplishing.

In her article, Raeann also touches on the subject of bitterness. Scripture paints a clear picture of the companions of bitterness. Take time to carefully read the following verses noting the characteristics associated with harboring bad feelings.

- Ephesians 4:31 _____
- James 3:14 _____

Bitterness in our lives basically indicates we're upset because things didn't turn out the way we planned or expected. How then are bitterness and God's sovereignty related?

The Bible provides two striking word pictures about bitterness in Acts 8:23 and Hebrews 12:15. Read and reflect on them. Poison and a stubborn root sum it up nicely! Have you ever tried to pull up a weed that had a deep root system?

Take time to examine your heart this week for poison weeds which may be growing there.

Suggested reading in *Thriving Not Just Surviving*

- Pages 32-33 *God Is In Control*
- Page 40 *Rocket Rabe*



Scripture to memorize this week: “If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:14).

Use this chart to track your time with God each day this week:

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Bible Reading							
Sit Down Prayer							
Journaling							

Praying for Our Chaplains, Our Leaders, and Our Land

Notes:

God's Promise: 2 Chronicles 7:14

Faith in the Foxhole [10 minutes]

Gather in groups of three or four and discuss the following questions:

- From your view, how is a military chapel/chaplain different from a local church/pastor?
- How are they similar?

Basic Training [15 minutes]

Read the article "Chaplains and Deployment" by Susan Causey on pages 88-90 in *Thriving Not Just Surviving*.

As a group discuss:

- What are your thoughts on the article?
- For those in the class not associated with the chaplaincy, was this a new perspective?
- What value is there in looking beyond ourselves and our immediate community during deployment?

Group Training [25 minutes]

As a class, read 1 Timothy 2:1-4 and answer the following questions:

- What are we instructed to do in this passage?
- What will be the personal benefits of these instructions?
- What are the larger purposes or benefits of these instructions?
- Use a chart or dry erase board to list the various authorities in our lives as military women.
- Why do these leaders need our prayers? What specific needs might you be able to lift up in prayer for them?

Battle Buddies [15 minutes]

Silently read Galatians 6:10. With a partner, take this time to pray together for leaders and authorities in your lives, especially chaplains and the soldiers in their care. Try to pray specifically, as we read in Timothy.

Jot here the name of one chaplain/family you can specifically encourage this week through prayer, a note of encouragement, or some other way.



Advanced Individual Training [at home]

As you study, pray, and meditate on God’s Word at home this week, use your journal to capture any thoughts or insights that God reveals to you. Ask God’s Spirit to enlighten the eyes of your heart (Ephesians 1:18) so that you are able to have a knowledge that leads to depth of insight and discernment (Philippians 1:9-10) allowing you to *thrive* during deployment!

What do the following verses say about praying on behalf of your nation or culture?

- 1 Samuel 12:23 _____
- Nehemiah 1:3-4 _____
- Psalm 9:19-20 _____
- Psalm 33:8 _____
- Romans 13:10 _____
- 1 Timothy 2:1-2 _____
- Titus 3:1-2 _____

Is your life characterized by prayer on behalf of others, as commanded in the Bible? If not, stop now and confess this to God and ask Him to give you a passion to pray for your community, your leaders, and your nation. He is willing and able!

Throughout the Bible God speaks not only to individuals but also to nations, regions, and people groups. For example, much of the Old Testament is a narrative of Israel’s history, and several of the New Testament books are addressed to regional churches, such as Ephesians, written to the people of Ephesus (in modern day Turkey). If God were to send a letter of encouragement or exhortation to the military unit with which you are associated, what might He say? Take some time now to turn your perceptions into prayers for the military culture in which God has placed you and your loved ones. Don’t forget to pray for the chaplains and leaders in the chain of command who influence the tone, atmosphere, and morale of the group.

Finally, remember to encourage your chaplain and his/her family this week by writing a note of encouragement. Express your appreciation and let them know you are praying.

Suggested reading in *Thriving Not Just Surviving*

- Page 61 *Shepherd of Warriors*
- Pages 96-97 *Who Needs Help? Me?*
- Pages 108-109 *Just Ask*

Scripture to memorize this week: “Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching” (Hebrews 10:25).

Use this chart to track your time with God each day this week:

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Bible Reading							
Sit Down Prayer							
Journaling							



*Thriving Not Just Surviving:
Deployment Perspectives for Today's Military Families*
Lesson 10

Community

Notes:

God's Promise: Hebrews 10:25

Faith in the Foxhole [10 minutes]

Turn to a partner and share your story of being introduced to Christianity. Who were the key players? When and where did it take place?

Basic Training [15 minutes]

God has designed us, as Christians, to grow within community. Read Colette Pappal's story on pages 105-107 of *Thriving Not Just Surviving*, making note of the ways God used community in her ongoing story of redemption and transformation.

As a class, discuss the following questions:

- What was Colette able to experience because of her exposure to Christ and His community?
- How did Colette's perspective on deployment change as she encountered Christ and His community?

Group Training [25 minutes]

As a class, read Romans 12:3-13.

- Why do you think verse 3 says, "Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought"?
- Why does God give instructions—not simply to each individual but to the group of believers?
- How does living in community with one another help us better reflect God's character?
- How can living in community help during deployment?

Battle Buddies [15 minutes]

Romans 12:4 says we are one body, as a church, with many different functions. With a partner, share some of the ways in which God has uniquely "hard wired" you to contribute to the community in which He has placed you. Is there something unique God is currently prompting you to do, or something you are currently doing, that requires wisdom and energy? Pray for your partner, that God would increasingly strengthen and guide her as she lives in community.

Advanced Individual Training [at home]

As we read Colette’s story this week, we saw how Christian camps can be a tool for spiritual growth. Taking time to “retreat” with God is vitally important, and it doesn’t happen only at retreat centers. Jesus himself set this example in Mark 1:35: “Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.” Take time to get away with God this week, even if it means locking yourself in the bathroom while the kids are sleeping! Take your Bible, notebook and pen or laptop and investigate these questions and listen as God speaks to you through His Word:

Read Ephesians 3:14-21.

- What kind of community do we have in Christ (verses 14-15)?
- What is our intended source of strength, as Christians (verse 16)?
- What does Paul want us to grasp, and why (verses 18 and 19)?
- How does living in community help us better attain the truths in Ephesians 3:14-21?

Read the “Let’s Take a Trip” article on page 73 of *Thriving Not Just Surviving*. Do you go on trips/vacations/spiritual retreats while your spouse is deployed or away? Are you currently in need of a “retreat?”

How is our spiritual growth, within community, highlighted in the following verses?

- Matthew 5:23-24 _____
- Matthew 28:19 _____
- Ephesians 2:19-22 _____
- Ephesians 4:7-16 _____

Now, in an effort to personalize this study, answer these questions honestly for yourself.

- Do I enjoy authentic relationships during deployment, or am I in survival mode?
- What are hindrances to meaningful relationships in my life?
- Am I yielding difficult relationships in my life to God, so that I can mature and grow?
- Is there anyone to whom I need to apologize? Is there anyone I need to forgive?
- Is there someone with whom God is prompting me to cultivate a relationship?

Suggested reading in *Thriving Not Just Surviving*

- Pages 86-87 *In the Presence of Heroes*
- Page 98 *Encouraging Others*
- Page 133 *Strength and Tears*

Scripture to memorize this week: “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things” (Philippians 4:8).

Use this chart to track your time with God each day this week:

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Bible Reading							
Sit Down Prayer							
Journaling							

Count Your Blessings—Literally!

Notes:

God's Promise: Philippians 4:8

Faith in the Foxhole [10 minutes]

On the chart below, jot down hard times in your life and what God brought out of each circumstance. Share what you have discovered.

Past Trial or Difficulty	Blessing God Brought from that Circumstance

Basic Training [15 minutes]

Quietly read Holly Hacker's article "The Blessings of Deployment," on pages 110-111 of *Thriving Not Just Surviving*. Discuss as a group:

- What were some of the blessings that Holly experienced?
- Holly said the exercise above helped her "shift her thinking." Why is it important to think accurately?
- Read Romans 12:2. Why is it important to have a renewed mind? How are our minds renewed?
- In the second paragraph, Holly says, "It is so easy to equate God's goodness with the good things He's doing in our lives, rather than because His character *is* good." What is the logical extension of both of these lines of thought? In other words, what do I believe about God in each statement if I'm facing trials, difficulties, or deployment?

Group Training [20 minutes]

Many people equate hope with idealism. Yet the biblical view of hope is confident expectation in God's goodness—whatever our circumstances. As we abide in Christ, with thanksgiving, we can have joy and peace.

- Previously we studied Philippians 4:8. Let's read Philippians 4:4-8.
 - In verse 4, why does Paul repeat the command to rejoice?
 - In verses 4-7, what specific commands are we given to obey?
 - What promise does God make as a result of our obedience?
 - In verse 8, what are we to dwell on? How easy is this to do? Is there something in your life that you need to stop dwelling on?

Battle Buddies [15 minutes]

What can you be thankful for right now? With a partner, begin to list some of the ways God has grown you recently, and things for which you can be thankful. Pray together, rejoicing in God's goodness.

Advanced Individual Training [at home]

In the military and in the church, we hear all sorts of phrases such as “Bloom Where You’re Planted,” have “An Attitude of Gratitude,” or adopt “The Power of Positive Thinking.” Though motivational, such quotes overlook the supernatural power of Christ in us which makes our victory possible and praise-able!

What do the following verses have to say about the *source* of our hope, joy, and peace?

- John 14:27 _____
- John 15:5 _____
- Colossians 3:15-17 _____
- 1 Thessalonians 1:2-6 _____

What do these verses say about our mindset in the midst of trials?

- Philippians 4:11-13 _____
- 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 _____
- James 1:2-4 _____

Throughout God’s Word, we are repeatedly instructed to give thanks to God, to pray with thanksgiving, and to bless God in the midst of our circumstances—good or bad. Using the chart below, list the specific burdens you are carrying (on the left) and ways you can thank God (on the right). If you can think of nothing to thank God for in your circumstance, thank Him that you’re in prayer, and thank Him that He is good, even if your situation is not.

Present Burden, Trial, or Difficulty	What I Can Thank God for in this Circumstance

Let’s conclude this homework session in prayer, thanking God for His work in our circumstances, and for His Son’s sacrifice which makes our peace possible. You might conclude by asking God to fill you up by the power of His Spirit (Ephesians 5:18), so that you can thrive and not just survive!

Suggested reading in *Thriving Not Just Surviving*

- Page 23 *Staying Connected Spiritually*
- Pages 74-75 *Handling Home Front Holidays*



Use this chart to track your time with God each day this week:

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Bible Reading							
Sit Down Prayer							
Journaling							

Teaching Resources

Lesson	Scriptures	Thriving Not Just Surviving articles
<p>1 – Begin with the End in Mind</p> <p>Central Truth: <i>Life is like a spiritual “race” (Hebrews 12). Victory comes from being mindful of Christ and focused on the finish line. This helps us, as Christians, have an eternal view of circumstances.</i></p>	<p>Hebrews 12:1-3 1 Corinthians 9:24-25 Jeremiah 29:1-14</p>	<p>Begin with the End in Mind 16-18 Keep it all in Perspective 19-21 From the Front 45-48 A Routine Day 117-119</p>
<p>2 – Refinement</p> <p>Central Truth: <i>Trials are to be counted a joy because our faith is developed and matured (James 1). Like precious metals, heat burns off our impurities and we more accurately reflect God’s goodness.</i></p> <p><i>You might want to research metal refinement.</i></p>	<p>James 1:2-4 1 Peter 1:6-7 Romans 5:3-5 1 Peter 4:12 Exodus 33:14</p>	<p>Daddy, I Don’t Want You to Go! 12-15 I Am Not Alone 113-114 Balancing Act 115-116</p>
<p>3 – Share My Calling</p> <p>Central Truth: <i>God has a noble calling for our lives, and we are to yield to His purposes—even when we can’t see the end of the story.</i></p>	<p>Ephesians 2:10 2 Timothy 1:8-9 Genesis 2:18 Romans 12:13 Ephesians 4:29, 31 Philippians 2:14-15 Titus 2:3-5 1 Peter 4:10-11</p>	<p>Share My Calling 37-38 A Senior Spouse’s Thoughts 34-36 Gift of Prayer 41 Daddy’s Letter to Son 57-58</p>
<p>4 – Battle Ready</p> <p>Central Truth: <i>The full armor of God (Ephesians 6) is a picture of God’s provision for us including truth, righteousness, the gospel, faith, salvation, and the Word of God. We are to don this battle gear daily, and all the more so during trials such as deployment.</i></p>	<p>Ephesians 6:10-18 Colossians 3:12-14 Psalm 68</p>	<p>Deployed...Again 76-78 God’s Children 83-85 Taking Care of Myself 95 How Deployment Worked for Me 120-121</p>
<p>5 – Strength Training</p> <p>Central Truth: <i>The strength we need to thrive comes from linking ourselves to God. As we rely on Him, seek Him, and spend time with Him, He gives us the ability to go beyond surviving. Jesus’ burden is light (Matthew 11).</i></p>	<p>Galatians 6:9 Matthew 11:28-30 Philippians 4:11-13 Psalm 46 Matthew 6:9-13</p>	<p>Double Duty for a Solo Spouse 30-31 Apart or A Part? 69-70 “I Want My Daddy!” 71 Discipline Issues 72</p>
<p>6 – Honest Conversations</p> <p>Central Truth: <i>God desires to be in relationship with us and it is through relationship with Him that we are truly changed. True relationship comes from honest interactions.</i></p>	<p>Psalm 139:23-24 Psalm 139:1-13 Job 16:7-8 Romans 12:15 Philippians 4:8 Job 40:4 Psalm 46:10</p>	<p>Job and the Reserve Soldier’s Wife 91-93 Drawn to God through Struggles 125-127 Hope for the Home Front 79-82</p>
<p>7 – A Refuge</p> <p>Central Truth: <i>We are to turn to God in tough times. Often we look for safety and assurance from earthly sources. Scripture is full of examples of God’s faithful provision for His people. The key question is: We may say we believe God is trustworthy, but do our actions confirm this?</i></p>	<p>Psalm 61:3 Psalm 86:15 Psalm 100:5 Lamentations 3:22 Colossians 1:17 Hebrews 10:23</p>	<p>A Refuge 103-132 God’s Plans Prevail 29 What are Parents to Do? 99-101 Chasing Drake 102-104</p>

Lesson	Scriptures	<i>Thriving Not Just Surviving</i> articles
7 – A Refuge (concluded)	Revelation 1:8 Lamentations 3:21-25 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 Psalm 61 Psalm 91:4 Proverbs 18:10	
8 – Safety in War Central Truth: <i>God is sovereign—all knowing, all powerful, all good, and in control of all that happens in heaven and on earth. God is working all things for His purposes and to bring Himself glory. Trusting God provides comfort during challenging circumstances when we have no control or feel anxious.</i> <i>This lesson may be difficult for the group. Injury and death are tough realities. It may be helpful to acknowledge this difficulty at the beginning of class and remain sensitive.</i>	Proverbs 16:9 Deuteronomy 32:4 1 Chronicles 29:11-15 Psalm 39:4-5 Proverbs 16:9 Jeremiah 17:9 Daniel 2:20-22 Daniel 4:34-35 James 4:13-15 Proverbs 3:5-6 Ephesians 4:31 James 3:14 Acts 8:23 Hebrews 12:15	Safety in War 42-43 God is in Control 32-33 Rocket Rabe 40
9 – Praying for Our Chaplains, Our Leaders, and Our Land Central Truth: <i>Chaplains carry spiritual authority and need our prayers.</i> <i>You may find it helpful to learn more about the chaplaincy in advance of the class or consider having a member of the chaplaincy briefly come to your class.</i>	2 Chronicles 7:14 1 Timothy 2:1-4 Galatians 6:10 1 Samuel 12:23 Nehemiah 1:3-4 Psalm 9:19-20 Psalm 33:8 1 Timothy 2:1-2 Titus 3:1-2	Chaplains and Deployment 88-90 Shepherd of Warriors 65 Who Needs Help? Me? 96-97 Just Ask 108-109
10 – Community Central Truth: <i>We should look not only upward, but outward during deployment. When we practice humility of heart (Romans 12) this becomes easier. It might also be helpful to differentiate between true humility and low self-esteem.</i> <i>While tempting, it is probably not helpful to get into the specifics of the different gifts mentioned in the Group Training passage.</i>	Hebrews 10:24 Romans 12:3-13 Ephesians 3:14-21 Matthew 5:23-24 Matthew 28:19 Ephesians 2:19-22 Ephesians 4:7-16	Refreshment in the Rockies 105-107 Let's Take a Trip 73 In the Presence of Heroes 86-87 Encouraging Others 98 Strength and Tears 133
11 – Count Your Blessings—Literally! Central Truth: <i>Whatever we focus on gets bigger. Satan would have us focus on the negatives of deployment and our situation, while God instructs us to dwell on things which are excellent and praiseworthy.</i> <i>This is your last study. Consider a special way to end class that commissions your students to go out and live the truths God has revealed this semester.</i>	Philippians 4:4-8 Romans 12:2 John 14:27 John 15:5 Colossians 3:15-17 1 Thessalonians 1:2-6 Philippians 4:11-13 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 James 1:2-4 Ephesians 5:18	The Blessings of Deployment 110-111 Staying Connected Spiritually 23 Handling Home Front Holidays 74-75



Thriving Not Just Surviving

Deployment Perspectives
For Today's Military Families

A Bible Study for Women

by Officers' Christian Fellowship
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