DELIGHTING IN THE WORD

THE GOSPEL OF GOD

Romans

A BIBLE STUDY ON ROMANS FOR WOMEN

VOLUME 1 OF 2 / ROMANS 1:1-8:39

KERI FOLMAR

18 WEEKS

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Passionate about encouraging women to delight in the Scriptures, Keri Folmar runs women's Bible studies at the United Christian Church of Dubai where she is privileged to teach fascinating women from every inhabited continent. In addition to the *Delighting in the Word* Bible study series, she has written *The Good Portion: Scripture*, a book that encourages women to discover the treasure and enjoy the sweetness of God's word.

Keri is the wife of John, who is the senior pastor of UCCD, and they have three grown children. In a previous life, as chief counsel of House Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution, Keri was staff writer of the Partial Birth Abortion Ban.

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KERI FOLMAR

To my parents, Gary and Adele Harrison:
May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace
in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit
you may abound in hope.

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Praise for Keri Folmar's *Delighting in the Word* Inductive Bible Studies for Women

"With simple clarity, Keri Folmar guides us in learning to study the Bible… Keri encourages us to read God's Word carefully, to understand clearly, and to apply prayerfully… she encourages her readers first and foremost to listen well to God's inspired word."

Kathleen Nielson is author of the *Living Word Bible Studies*; Director of Women's Initiatives, The Gospel Coalition; and wife of Niel, who served as President of Covenant College, 2002 to 2012.

"Keri's Bible studies will not only bring the truths of Scripture to bear upon your life, but will also train you up for better, more effective study of any book of the Bible with her consistent use of the three questions needed in all good Bible study: Observation, Interpretation, and Application."

Connie Dever is author of *The Praise Factory* children's ministry curriculum and wife of Mark, senior pastor of Capitol Hill Baptist Church and President of 9Marks.

"It is hard to imagine better inductive Bible study tools than these. So many study tools wander from the biblical text, but Keri Folmar's studies concentrate on what the biblical author says… unfolding its message with accuracy and clarity."

Diane Schreiner, the wife of SBTS professor, author, and pastor Tom Schreiner and mother of four grown children, has led women's Bible studies for more than 20 years.

"No clever stories, ancillary anecdotes, or emotional manipulation here. Keri takes us deeper into the text, deeper into the heart of the biblical author, deeper into the mind of Christ, and deeper into our own hearts… these are great studies to do on your own or with others."

Kristie Anyabwile is a North Carolina native and graduate of NC State University with a degree in history. Her husband, Thabiti, serves as a pastor in Washington, DC, and as a Council Member for The Gospel Coalition.

"Keri is convinced that God is God-centered and that for the sake of our joy, we should be, too… She skillfully created these rich resources—and not only that, she has put the tools in your hands so you can study God's word for yourself… I highly recommend that you embark on these studies with some other ladies. Then you can all watch in amazement at how God gives you contentment in him."

Gloria Furman is a pastor's wife in the Middle East , and author of *Glimpses of Grace*, *Treasuring Christ When Your Hands Are Full*, and *The Pastor's Wife.*

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DELIGHTING IN THE WORD

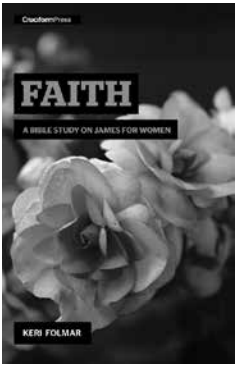
Bible Studies for Women

All new covers coming soon!

10 weeks

Joy! (Philippians)

10 weeks



Faith (James)

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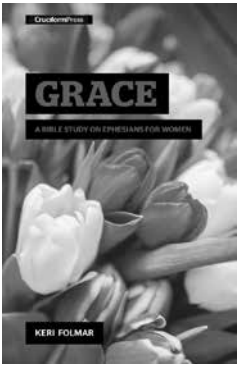

Grace (Ephesians)

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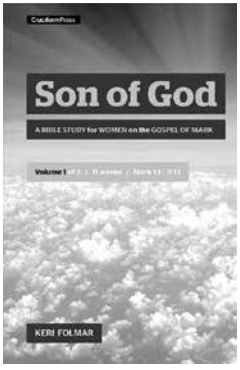

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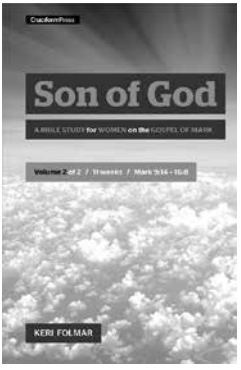

Son of God (Gospel of Mark, 2 volumes)

9 weeks

Zeal (Titus)

The Gospel of God – A Bible Study on Romans for Women (Vol. 1)

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INTRODUCTION: WHY STUDY THE BIBLE?

As we begin this study of Paul's letter to the church at Rome, we should think through why we are studying the Bible. Why not read some other book? Or why not just get together with some other women and chat?

Well, have you heard the story about the kindergarten teacher who had her class paint pictures of anything they chose? After observing a little girl who was working very intently on her painting, the teacher asked, "What are you painting?" The girl answered, "It's a picture of God." Amused, the teacher informed her, "No one knows what God looks like." Without looking up from her painting, the little girl responded, "They will in a minute!"

This might be a cute example of a precocious child, but many people paint pictures of God in their own minds. They "know" that God is a certain way, because they want him to be that way.

However, the one true God is transcendent. He is beyond our capacity to know. First Timothy 6:16 describes God, "[W]ho alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see." God existed before time. He is the Creator, and we are his creatures. Sinful man cannot approach the holy God.

How can we know this God if we cannot approach him? He has to approach us. The only way to truly know God is for him to reveal himself to us. He reveals his existence and power in creation. (See Psalm 19 and Romans 1:18–21.) However, if we want to truly know God in a personal way, it must be through his Word.

And God **wants** us, his creatures, to know him. Jeremiah 9:23–24 says:

> Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands

> and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth."

Do you boast in understanding and knowing the Lord? Do you want to know this God who practices love, justice, and righteousness in the earth? He wants you to understand and know him. He is ready to speak to you every morning when you wake up… throughout the day… and before you go to bed. You have only to open his Word.

A well–known catechism says, "The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever." That is what we were created for—to truly know and enjoy the God of the universe. Jeremiah the prophet cried out: "Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart."

The great preacher, C.H. Spurgeon, said:

> Believer! There is enough in the Bible for you to live upon forever. If you should outnumber the years of Methuselah, there would be no need for a fresh revelation; if you should live until Christ should return to the earth, there would be no necessity for the addition of a single word; if you should go down as deep as Jonah, or even descend as David said he did, into the depths of hell, still there would be enough in the Bible to comfort you without a supplementary sentence. (https://spurgeon.org/sermons/0005.htm)

This is why we study the Bible: it is God's revelation of himself to us. We need to know who God truly is and guard against painting our own picture of him. God has revealed himself to us not in paintings but in the words of Scripture and ultimately in his Son. God, the Creator, has spoken, and we, his creation, should listen to his words as life–sustaining truth and joyfully obey them.

The purpose of this Bible study workbook is to assist you in studying Romans in an inductive way. Inductive Bible study is **reading the passage in context and asking questions of**

the text with the purpose of deriving the meaning and significance from the text itself. We do this automatically every day when we read the newspaper, blogs, or even recipes. When we study the Bible inductively we are after the author's original intent (what the author meant when he wrote the passage to his original audience). In this workbook, you will figure out the author's meaning by answering a series of questions about the text while paying close attention to the words and context of the passage. After figuring out the meaning of the text, there will be questions to help you apply it to your life.

As you read through Romans 1–8, may the Holy Spirit give you a deeper understanding of the gospel, which is "the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16), and may that understanding result in joy that overflows to the glory of God.

How to Do Inductive Bible Study

Step 1 – Begin with prayer. "Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law" (Psalm 119:18).

Step 2 – Read the text.

Step 3 – Observation. ***The goal of this step is to figure out what the text is saying.*** These questions should be answered from the very words of the text.

Step 4 – Interpretation. ***The goal of this step is to figure out what the text meant to the original hearers.*** It is easy to skip this most important step. However, incorrect interpretation leads to incorrect application. We cannot understand what God is saying to us if we don't first understand *what* he was saying to the original audience, and *why* he was saying it.

Your job in interpretation is to figure out the main point of the passage and understand the arguments that support the main point. Your interpretation

should flow out of your observations, so keep asking yourself, "Can I support this interpretation based on my observations?"

Step 5 – Application. ***Prayerfully apply the passage to your own life.*** The application should flow from the main point of the text.

Keep God's Redemptive Plan in Mind

Luke 24:44–47 says,

> Then [Jesus] said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem."

We study the Bible so that we can know Christ, repent, be forgiven, and proclaim him to the nations. We must keep Jesus in mind when we study Scripture. Adrienne Lawrence writes, "God has one overarching redemptive plan—to glorify himself by creating and redeeming a people for himself through Christ. Christ is at the center of God's plan. All of Scripture in some way speaks to that plan. Keep this in mind as you are doing your study of Scripture."

[Note: This "how to" has been adapted from Adrienne Lawrence's pamphlet on Inductive Bible Study.]

Notes on This Study Guide

The first week of this inductive study will be an overview of Romans. In the following weeks you will study smaller segments

of the letter and answer observation, interpretation, and application questions. The questions were written based on language from the English Standard Version of the Bible. However, you are welcome to use any reliable translation to do the study.

To assist you in recognizing the different types of questions asked, the questions are marked by the three different icons seen below.

 Observation

Look closely at the text to figure out what it is saying. Get answers directly from the text, using the words of Scripture to answer the observation questions.

Interpretation

Determine the author's intended meaning by figuring out what the text meant to its original hearers.

 Application

Based on the author's intended meaning, *apply* the passage to your own heart and life today.

Because Scripture interprets Scripture, many of the questions cite passages in addition to the one you are studying in Romans. If the question says, "Read…" you will need to read the additional verses cited to answer the question. If the question says, "See…" the additional verses will help you answer the question but are not necessary. "See also…" signals you to read the additional verses if you would like to study the answer to the question further.

You only need your Bible to do this study of Romans, and, in fact, I highly recommend first answering the questions directly from your Bible before looking at any other materials. That said, it might be helpful for you to confirm your answers, especially if you are leading others in a group study. To check your answers

or for further study, there are good commentaries by Thomas R. Schreiner, John Murray, R.C. Sproul and John R.W. Stott. I also found *Teaching Romans* by Christopher Ash helpful in my studies.

To increase your enjoyment of studying the Bible, read my book, *The Good Portion: The Doctrine of Scripture for Every Woman*. For more instruction on how to study the Bible, read *Bible Study: Following the Ways of the Word*, by Kathleen Buswell Nielson, and *Dig Deeper! Tools to Unearth the Bible's Treasure*, by Nigel Beynon and Andrew Sach. Bible study teachers and students who want a better understanding of New Testament theology can read Thomas R. Schreiner's, *Magnifying God in Christ: A Summary of New Testament Theology*.

Notes for Leaders

This Bible study guide can be used by individuals alone, but the best context for Bible study is in the local church. Studying the Bible together promotes unity and ignites spiritual growth within the church.

The study was designed for participants to complete five days of "homework," and then come together to discuss their answers in a small group. The goal of gathering in small groups is to promote discussion among women to sharpen one another by making sure all understand the meaning of the text and can apply it to their lives. As women discuss, their eyes may be opened to applications of the text they didn't see while doing the study on their own. Believers will encourage one another in their knowledge of the gospel, and unbelievers will hear the gospel clearly explained. As a result, women will learn from one another and come away from group Bible study with a deeper understanding of the text and a better knowledge of how to read the Bible on their own in their private times of study and prayer.

If you are leading a small group, you will have some extra homework to do. **First, know what Bible study is and is not.** Bible study is not primarily a place to meet felt needs, eat good

food and chat, receive counseling, or have a free–for–all discussion. Some of these things do happen in a women's Bible study, but they should not take over the focus. Studying the Bible means digging into the Scriptures to get the true meaning of the text and applying it to lives that change as a result.

Second, make sure you know the main points of the text before leading discussion by carefully studying the passage and checking yourself using a good commentary, like one of those listed above. You may also find a Bible dictionary and concordance helpful. Second Timothy 3:16–17 says, "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man [or woman] of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." Scripture is powerful. That power comes through truth. Scripture is not like a magical incantation: We say the words and see the effect. We must know what the text of Scripture means before we can faithfully apply it and see its work of transformation in our lives. Your job as a discussion leader is not to directly teach, nor to simply facilitate discussion, but rather to lead women in finding the meaning of the text and help them see how it is "profitable" and can make them "complete, equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16–17).

Third, pray. Pray for the women in your group during the week while you prepare. Pray as you start your small group study, asking the Holy Spirit to illuminate the Scripture to your minds and apply it to your hearts. And encourage women to pray at the end of your small group based on what they studied. Ask the Holy Spirit to use his sword, the Word of God, in the lives of the women you are leading.

Fourth, draw women into discussion and keep your discussion organized. Choose what you determine are the most important questions from the study guide, focusing the bulk of your discussion on the interpretation and application questions. Ask a question, but don't answer it! Be comfortable with long pauses or rephrase questions you think the group didn't understand. Not answering the questions yourself may be a

bit awkward at first, but it will promote discussion in the end because the women will know they have to do the answering. Feel free to affirm good answers or sum up after women have had time to discuss particular questions. This gives clarity to the discussion. However, don't feel the need to fill in every detail and nuance you gleaned from your personal study. Your goal is to get your group talking.

Fifth, keep your focus on the Bible. The Holy Spirit uses the Scriptures to change women's hearts. Don't be afraid of wrong answers. Gently use them to clarify and teach by directing attention back to the text of Scripture for the right answer. If someone in your group goes off on unhelpful tangents, direct her back to the question and address the tangent later, one on one, or with reading material. However, if the tangent is on a vital question that goes to the gospel, take time to talk about it. These are God–given opportunities.

Sixth, be sure to discuss the gospel. In your prep time, ask yourself what the text has to do with the gospel and look for opportunities to ask questions to bring out the gospel. Hopefully, your church members will invite unbelievers to your study who will hear the glorious good news. But, even if your group is made up of all believers, we never get beyond our need to be reminded of Christ crucified and what that means for our lives.

Lastly, enjoy studying the Scriptures with your group. Enjoy studying Romans! Your love and passion for the Word of God will be contagious, and you will have the great joy of watching your women catch it and rejoice in the Word with you.

Paul's Letter to the Church at Rome

The apostle Paul was a former Pharisee who had persecuted the church. His life was transformed when he was personally commissioned by the risen Jesus to take the gospel to the Gentiles—the non–Jewish peoples (see Acts 9). Paul then traveled the known world, spreading the gospel and planting churches. While Paul knew many of the believers in Rome (see chapter 16), he had not planted the church. He wrote the letter to the Roman church probably around A.D. 57 toward the end of his life.

Christians met together in Rome from very early on. Originally, the church was likely made up of Jewish converts. Over time, Gentiles in Rome also became Christians. In A.D. 49 the Roman emperor Claudius commanded all Jews to leave Rome (Acts 18:2). Over time, some of the Jewish Christians returned to Rome, so the church was made up of both Jews and Gentiles.

Paul's letter to the Roman church is his longest and most theologically comprehensive letter. However, it is not meant to be a systematic theology. It has a pastoral purpose as a missionary letter. Paul expounds the gospel in the hope that the church at Rome will support him in taking it to the unreached people of Spain (Romans 15:24, 28).

WEEK 1: ROMANS OVERVIEW

Begin each day this week asking God to give you insight into his righteousness, mercy, and grace.

When the church at Rome received this letter from the apostle Paul, it would have been read aloud to the entire church. There were no printing presses, so no copies would have been distributed to take home. Reading through the whole letter this week will give us a feel for what happened in the first century and also will give us an overview of what the letter is about as we notice the progression of Paul's arguments and repeated themes throughout.

DAY 1

Pray, then read Romans 1–4.

1. Write down any repeated words, phrases, or ideas that you notice:

2. What do you learn about Paul in these chapters?

3. What do you learn about the church at Rome?

✦ 4. What do you learn about Paul's relationship with the church?

✦ 5. What do you learn about God?

♥ 6. What stands out to you from these chapters?

✦ 7. How would you briefly summarize chapters 1–4?

DAY 2

Pray, then read Romans 5–8.

👁 1. Write down any repeated words, phrases, or ideas that you notice:

✦ 2. What do you learn about Paul in these chapters?

✦ 3. What do you learn about the church at Rome?

✦ 4. What do you learn about Paul's relationship with the church?

✦ 5. What do you learn about God?

❤ 6. What stands out to you from these chapters?

✦ 7. How would you briefly summarize chapters 5–8?

DAY 3

Pray, then read Romans 9–11.

1. Write down any repeated words, phrases, or ideas that you notice:

2. What do you learn about Paul in these chapters?

3. What do you learn about the church at Rome?

4. What do you learn about Paul's relationship with the church?

5. What do you learn about God?

6. What stands out to you from these chapters?

✦ 7. How would you briefly summarize chapters 9–11?

DAY 4

Pray, then read Romans 12–16.

👁 1. Write down any repeated words, phrases, or ideas that you notice:

✦ 2. What do you learn about Paul in these chapters?

✦ 3. What do you learn about the church at Rome?

✦ 4. What do you learn about Paul's relationship with the church?

✦ 5. What do you learn about God?

♥ 6. What stands out to you from these chapters?

✦ 7. How would you briefly summarize chapters 12–16?

DAY 5

Pray, then read Romans 1:1–7, 16–17, and 15:14–16:27.

✦ 1. What is Paul's work and what are his goals?

✦ 2. What words and phrases do you see in Romans 1:1–7 that are repeated in 16:25–27?

✦ 3. What is Paul's hope for his visit to the church in Rome?

✦ 4. You've now read through all of Romans. Why did Paul write this letter to the church at Rome? What was his purpose?

✦ 5. How is Romans 1:16–17 a theme for the whole book?

♥ 6. Romans is a letter power–packed with theology that encourages church unity and gospel proclamation to all nations for the glory of God. What do you hope to gain from studying Romans?

NOTES

WEEK 2: ROMANS 1:1–7

Pray this week for a deeper understanding of the gospel of God.

DAY 1

Pray, then read Romans 1:1–16.

Romans 1:1–2

1. Who wrote this letter?

2. How does he describe himself?

3. What was Paul called to be, and what was he set apart for?

4. What is an apostle? See Acts 1:21–26; 1 Corinthians 9:1 and Galatians 1:1.

5. Notice the words "called" and "set apart." What is Paul referring to? See Acts 9:1–22. See also 1 Corinthians 15:8–11 and Galatians 1:11–17.

♥ 6. How does this calling give authority to the words Paul writes?

✦ 7. Paul was "set apart for the gospel of God." What is the gospel of God? See Romans 1:16–17 and 3:23–26.

👁 8. Who promised this gospel and through whom was it promised?

✦ 9. What is the significance of this gospel being promised beforehand? Why is this important for Paul to point out?

👁 10. Where can we find these promises?

✦ 11. Read Isaiah 52:3–10 where the gospel—the good news—is promised. From where does salvation come?

♥11. What does verse 2 tell us about the importance of the Old Testament to Christians today?

♥12. What should we keep in mind when we read the Old Testament? How does this change the way you read Old Testament stories, wisdom literature, and poetry?

♥13. The Old Testament has been summarized as "Promises Made," and the New Testament by "Promises Kept." What are some promises you can think of that God has made and kept?

♥14. How does knowing this affect your view of Scripture?

♥15. What do these promises being made and kept reveal about God's character?

DAY 2

Pray, then read Romans 1:1–7.

Romans 1:3

1. With whom is the gospel of God concerned?

2. Who is his Son? See the end of verse 4.

3. From whom was Jesus descended?

4. According to what?

5. Who was David and why would Paul emphasize that Jesus was descended from him? Read 2 Samuel 7:8–16. See also Psalm 89:35–37, 132:11–12; Jeremiah 23:5–6 and Ezekiel 34:22–24.

6. Why would Paul include the phrase "according to the flesh" after "descended from David"? What is he emphasizing with that phrase? What do we know about the Son by way of contrast with that phrase?

✦ 7. What do we learn about the person of Christ from verse 3?

♥ 8. How does the fact that the Son of God became flesh affect your life? If you are a Christian, consider your salvation, your ongoing sanctification, and your prayer life.

♥ 9. How does the fact that Jesus is God affect your life? Again, consider salvation, sanctification, and prayer.

♥ 10. The gospel of God concerns this God–man, Jesus. What other concerns can tend to displace Jesus and the gospel from the center of your life? What can churches tend to be concerned with other than Jesus and the gospel of God?

♥ 11. How can we make sure to keep the true gospel of God, concerning his Son, at the center of our lives?

❤ 12. How can churches make sure to keep the true gospel of God central?

DAY 3

Pray, then read Romans 1:1–16.

Romans 1:4

👁 1. Who was Jesus declared to be?

👁 2. In what and according to whom was this declaration made?

👁 3. By what was this declaration made?

✦ 4. What does this tell us about the Spirit and his involvement in Jesus's resurrection from the dead?

✦ 5. What does "Spirit of holiness" mean, and why would Paul call the Holy Spirit the "Spirit of holiness" here?

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Bible Studies for Women

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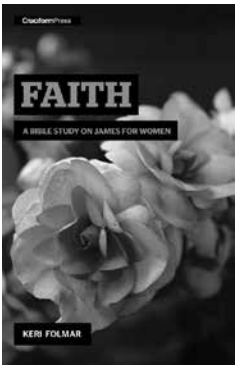
10 weeks

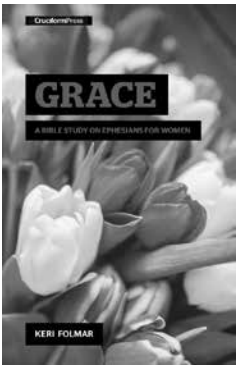
Joy! (Philippians)

10 weeks



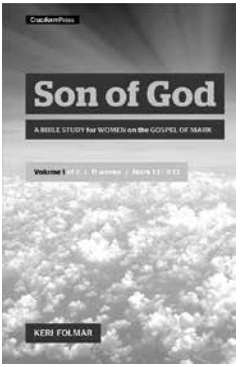
Faith (James)

10 weeks

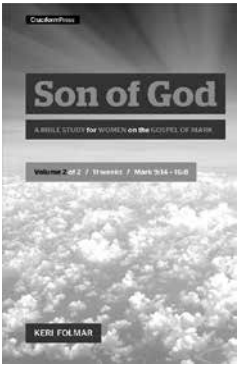


Grace (Ephesians)

11 weeks



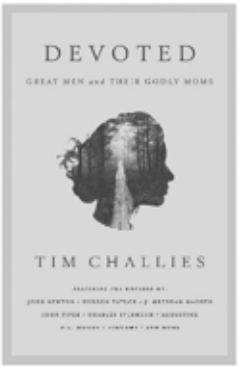
11 weeks



Son of God (Gospel of Mark, 2 volumes)

9 weeks

Zeal (Titus)



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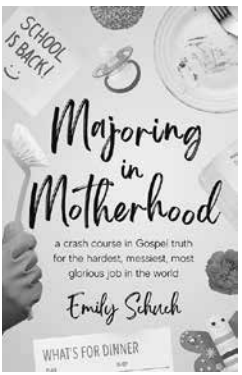

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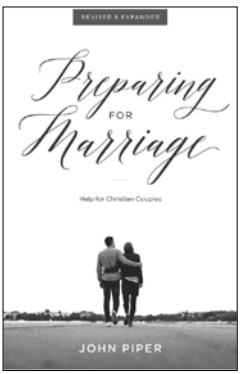

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