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keep showing up

BIBLE STUDY COMPANION

*Know the Truth. Live the Truth.
It changes everything.*





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Hey, there!

Welcome to the *Keep Showing Up* Bible Study Companion! Because this Online Bible Study is all about marriage, this companion was made specifically with the “wife” in mind — that’s you and me! This companion will help us take our Bible study experience deeper, and learn more about the role that God created us for.

Through these lessons, Wendy Blight will be taking us through the Scripture, topics and themes found in *Keep Showing Up*. Our heart is not only for you to grow in the season of marriage you’re in, but to grow in your relationship with God. And we believe that no matter where you are right now, God is for you and not against you. It says so in His Word, and so we know it to be true. When you know the Truth, and live the Truth, it changes everything.

Before you get started, here are a few things to keep in mind:

1. Check your calendar beforehand to set aside some time to make studying a priority!
2. Find a space that works for your Bible study needs, whether that’s your favorite cozy armchair, a local coffee shop or even in the carpool line!
3. Once you pick your ultimate study spot, make sure you have your Bible study tools: pens, highlighters, your journal and a Bible.
4. Pray! Ask God to prepare your heart for what He wants to teach you.

We are so excited to start studying with you.

Wendy, take it away!

Melissa

Senior Director of Online Bible Studies and First 5

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Lesson One

Bible Study Companion Leader: Wendy Blight



Hi, friend! So excited to dig into God's Word with you today. This week, Karen tells us that sometimes "[t]he trouble with our marriages isn't that we need more excitement in our lives. We need an attitude adjustment." Karen encourages us to take ownership of our attitude, reminding ourselves that it's not always about us.

Today's lesson shares a practical way to live out the assignment Karen gives us this week. As we begin, please know I write these words first to myself. This is a place with which I struggle and continually work on. It's hard for me to admit when I'm wrong. It's much easier to judge the other person's heart (and be offended) than to examine my own heart and admit fault. This is especially true in my marriage. Though my story is a marriage story, the lessons God taught me through my story apply to any relationship.

When I'm offended by my husband's words, my immediate reaction is to lash out. I want him to know he hurt me, hoping he'll feel bad and apologize. But, it doesn't usually happen that way. Instead, Monty gets defensive and a battle ensues.

On rare occasions, instead of engaging, I initiate the silent treatment, thinking that's better. But, it's not because what I'm really doing is pouting. I speak without words, sighing VERY LOUD and OFTEN, slamming doors and drawers.

In reality, silence is the best response when we feel offended. But not a pouting, punishing silence. What we need to enter into is godly silence. Prayerful silence that takes our eyes off ourselves and the alleged offender and places them on God. Silence that considers the offending words in light of our own hurt and our offender's true motives. Silence that invites God into the story to reveal truths from His Word to speak over and into our hearts.

Choosing to be offended initiates a cycle: Hurt feelings that stir up anger that turns into a quarrel which then turns into strife. And strife, my friend, is sin in the eyes of God.



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Let me bring this cycle alive for you.

I had spent the day making an Italian feast, including a new pasta dish and homemade bread, for my family ... especially my husband. My efforts consumed most of my afternoon. As icing on the cake, I set a beautiful table with candles and our best china. Throughout the day, I envisioned our family gathered around the table, enjoying each other and my amazing meal. I had high expectations for the night.

I scheduled dinner for 6:30, the time my husband usually walked through the door. 6:30 arrived. No Monty. 6:40 ... 6:45 ... 6:50. No Monty. No phone call. Anger reared its ugly head. I called the kids to eat. At 7:00, the phone rang. I was so mad, I didn't answer. He left a message. I didn't listen. When he finally walked through the door, I initiated the silent treatment. Didn't greet, address or speak to him. In front of my kids. His thoughtlessness, and disregard for all my hard work, had hurt my feelings. Now, remember, he had no idea I made this special dinner. I used the silent treatment to punish him. It led to a terrible argument that carried over to the next day.

What went wrong?

I chose to be offended. I allowed my flesh and my emotions, rather than the Lord, to rule over my heart. A few facts that would have been good for me to remember. First, my husband always called on his way home, so if he didn't call, there must have been a reason. Second, had I answered the phone when it rang, I would have learned why he was late and heard his sweet apology.

Do you resonate with my story? I'm hoping I'm not alone. For you, it may be other things that set you off. But, what we both need to understand is that this is not God's way.

God's way is not led by emotions and feelings. God's way is Spirit-led.

What if I had remembered my husband's thoughtfulness to always call? What if I had answered the phone and listened to his explanation and apology? But, most of



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all, what if God's Word filled my heart and mind? What if they were the weapon I could have used to combat my flesh and my emotions?

Friend, God's Word speaks truth into our emotions. Our circumstances. It's the key to *choosing* not to be offended.

Let's replay the night of Monty coming home late, but this time with a heart filled, and a spirit armed, with God's Word.

Monty's late. I wonder where he is. Why he hasn't called. Anger rises up. Right before I call the kids to sit down and start dinner without him, I see the following Scriptures posted above my kitchen sink.

Find and write in the spaces provided each of the following Scriptures.

Psalm 86:15

Proverbs 15:1

Proverbs 29:11



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Ephesians 4:32

Armed with God's powerful, life-giving, life-transforming Truth, God reminds me of His character in Psalm 86:15, and I remember that I'm created in that image. Proverbs 15:1 reminds me of the effects of harsh and gentle words. Proverbs 29:11 teaches me what a wise woman chooses. Finally, Ephesians 4:32 reminds me of what Jesus did for me.

These truths bring order to my thoughts. Allow me to think clearly. I remember Monty usually calls if he'll be late, so there's probably a good reason he didn't. In scenario 2, instead of ignoring his call, when he finally calls, I answer. I hear his explanation and sincere apology.

So, this time, when Monty walks in the door, I greet him, invite him to the table, and we enjoy a wonderful meal as a family ... experiencing love, grace, forgiveness and joy.

Which is the better scenario, my friend?

The difference between the two? God's Word. Knowing and studying God's Word. Keeping it ever before me.

Hiding God's Word in our hearts sets us up to hear God's voice over the voice of the evil one who seeks to divide and destroy marriages, families and friendships. It equips us with the truth we need to combat the lies that lead to hurt feelings. To believe the best instead of the worst in people.

So, how do we recognize the lies we believe and the sin hiding in our hearts?



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God led me to some powerful biblical principles that required me to answer some hard questions ... questions I'll share with you today.

God instructs those who have a teachable heart.

Do you have a teachable heart? [Psalm 119:33-36]

God teaches those who fear Him. Fear, as I use it here, isn't trembling, terrifying fear. It's recognizing God's holiness and being in awe and reverence of Him because of His holiness.

Do you fear God? [Proverbs 1:7]

God speaks to those who have "listening ears."

Do you listen? [Luke 8:4-15]

God works in the lives of those who pray.

Do you pray? [Matthew 21:21-22, Ephesians 6:18]



God blesses obedience.

Do you obey? [Deuteronomy 6:1-3, Luke 11:28]

The bottom line is that life-change begins with a teachable heart ... a heart that willingly receives the Lord's instruction.

a **humble** heart

a **willing** heart

a **surrendered** heart.

a **disciplined heart willing to sacrifice.**

Now, let's reflect!

Which of the above do you struggle with the most and why?

What is one step you can take to have a more teachable heart? Yes, just one, even if you have more.



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We must be willing to pray as David did in Psalm 139:23-24 (ESV):

*Search me, O God, and know my heart!
Try me and know my thoughts!
And see if there be any grievous way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting!*

To this day, I struggle with fully confessing my sins to God. Those ugly places I don't want anyone to see. But, it's pointless to hide anything from God because He knows everything. He sees directly into my heart.

That's why David's words help. If we're humble enough to confess our sin, God will be faithful to reveal what displeases Him. He'll open our eyes to our sin, move us to confess it, forgive us and best of all, through the power of His Holy Spirit, enable us to turn and walk in a fresh new way with Him.

Friend, remember this is a journey ... a process. I have so many places yet to surrender, and I'm guessing you do too. Don't be discouraged when you commit to doing the right thing, pray about it and then blow it. When you can't seem to make your heart, tongue or your mind obey what the Word commands. Paul addressed this very topic in Romans 7:21-23

What does Paul say here? How does this encourage you?



As we close today, I pray these three words guide you to choose not to be offended.

Persevere.

Process.

Pray.

Believe God for victory.

He tells us it's already ours in 1 John 4:4, "The one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world" (CSB). The more we expose our heart and mind to God's truth, God will renew our minds through His Holy Spirit. We'll think more like the One in whose image we were created.

Read Romans 12:2. How does this speak to what we're talking about today?

Let's commit to putting what we've learned into practice.

Examine our words.

Check our motives.

Ask hard questions.



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Do we lash out to get even or do we work toward reconciliation? Do we spout off words that hurt or words that heal? Do we act in ways that divide or in ways that unite?

These are difficult questions, but ones we must answer to win the battle of choosing not to be offended.

As you begin putting what we've learned into practice, I promise you one thing. You'll find great freedom in *choosing* NOT to be offended ... in choosing to prayerfully listen to someone's words before judging them. In allowing your humble, teachable, prayerful heart to sift through each word before a single word flows past your lips.

Let me pray for us:

Father God, thank You for Your Word. Thank You that it's LIVING and ACTIVE, meant for us today. Father, will You help us this week to put a guard at our mouth? Through the power of Your Holy Spirit, will You convict our hearts to think and pray before we speak? Keep our hearts focused on You and not on ourselves. Give us ears to hear others' words through Your Word. Father, thank You that in You ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE ... even taming our tongue. We ask this in the powerful and effective name of Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.