RESTLESS
LEAD
BECAUSE YOU WERE MADE FOR MORE
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LEADERS,

I am excited to partner with you in your efforts to pour into the lives of women! I pray that these few short pages will help to equip and prepare you to lead this study. Many of you may have led plenty of groups in the past, or perhaps this is the first you’ve led. Whichever the case, this is a spiritual calling and you are entering spiritual places with these women—and spiritual callings and places need spiritual power.

My husband, Zac, always says, “Changed lives, change lives.” If you are not first aware of your own need for life change, the women around you won’t see their need. If you allow God into the inner struggles of your heart, the women following you will be much more likely to let him into theirs. These women do not need to see bright and shiny, perfectly poised people; they need to see people who are a mess and daily dependent on God for their hope and strength.

So, what are we going to do together here?

Every single one of us is designed to fit into a unique space with unique offerings. God’s will for each one of us will look different. There is a framework within the commandments of Scripture, and within it we are free to create lives reflecting God and his passions here.

First, we are going to chase down and tackle some of what is holding us back from obedience. Then, in part two, we are going to try to get our heads around God and what he is doing on this earth. Then we will consider exactly what pieces of life God has given you to participate in his story. In part three, we will explore what it looks like to live out our
purposes. Throughout, we will look at these heart issues in the life of Joseph, a man who dreamed God’s dreams and lived his part in God’s story. Joseph’s life, told of throughout Genesis 37 to 50, is the story of a life that at times must have felt wasted, and yet God was working in every moment that felt mundane and unfair and dark.

In the end, this is a book about God. It’s about the moment at the end of our lives when we will see him. It’s about facing the God of the universe and celebrating with him about the life and resources he gave us while we were here.

And because we all want that moment to go well, this is a book about discovering ourselves and getting over ourselves all at the same time. It’s about being brave enough to imagine a better world and how we may be used to make it that way. It’s about changing the world and changing diapers. About fears and suffering and joy and gifts. About all that is within our control and how nothing is in our control. It’s about vision and obedience.

This is a book about spending our lives completely on the glory of God.

We want to know: “What does God want me to do while I am here?” The answer seems hidden and complicated, yet we must go after it. We must not get to heaven and realize we have lived for all the wrong things.

We must not waste our lives. Let’s go.

Jennie
WHAT’S IN THE BOX

Each *Restless* kit includes:

**STUDY.** A copy of the study guide (each member of your group will need her own study guide). Additional study guides can be purchased separately (ISBN: 978-0-8499-2236-7).

**SEE.** A video with eight sessions

**ASK.** A set of conversation cards

**LEAD.** A copy of the leader’s guide

If you have a large group of women and need to break down into smaller groups during your study times, you may want to purchase additional kits so each group can have access to a leader’s guide and a set of Ask conversation cards.

We will discuss how to use each element of this kit on pages 12–16.
1. That God and eternity would get bigger and more real in your lives, and that as they do get bigger, you would feel compelled to live for eternity and Jesus Christ more than this short life. More than anything, I want you to fix your eyes on Jesus and fall more deeply in love with him.

2. That you would feel released and convicted to dream with the many unique threads that God has placed in your lives, and that you would each see how valuable and important your part in building the kingdom of God is.

3. That you would speak life and peace and freedom into each other. That you would encourage each other in your uniqueness rather than judge or condemn the different paths God may have each of us running.

In sum, here it is . . . this is my dream: That we would all fix our eyes on Jesus, throw off the small junk that holds us back, and run our marked races, cheering each other on.
Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

HEBREWS 12:1–3

The rest of this leader’s guide is aimed at equipping you to point the women of your group to God in ways that will change their lives.
PREPARING YOURSELF TO LEAD A GROUP

1. PRAY: Pray like the world is ending, pray like this is the last chance for people to know him, pray like your lives and futures depend on it, pray like the future of souls in heaven is at stake . . . pray like you need God.

Pray for your women:

:: That God would show them why they are restless, and what their hearts truly long for.

:: That they would feel safe to open up and process.

:: That they would want more of God and that God would meet them.

:: That the conversation would be focused on God.

:: That we would be humble displays of God’s grace to these women.

:: That God would come and fall on your time together.

:: That many would come to a saving faith as they see God for who he is.
2. LEAN ON GOD. Allow the Holy Spirit to lead every moment together. We have provided you with tools that we will discuss in the next section; however, they are only tools to use as the Spirit leads you and your time together. God will have unique agendas for each of your groups as you depend on him. Lean into your own weakness and into his strength and direction.

When Jesus left his disciples to go back to his Father in heaven, he essentially said, “Don’t go anywhere until you have the helper I will send you” (see Acts 1:4–5). That helper was the Holy Spirit. We need to obey that same command. We shouldn’t begin until we are doing so with the power of the Holy Spirit within us. He is real and available and waiting to flood our lives and the lives of those around us as we serve and speak. But we have to wait for him to speak, ask him if we should speak and what we should speak, and ask him what to do in different situations. God wants us to need him and to depend on his Spirit. If this is not how you live on a daily basis, begin today.

3. BE TRANSPARENT. If you choose not to be vulnerable, no one else will be. If you desire women to feel safe with you and your group, be vulnerable. This is not an optional assignment. This is your calling as you lead these women.
4. LISTEN BUT ALSO LEAD. Listen as women share struggles. Some women are taking a tremendous risk in being vulnerable with you. Protect them by not interrupting but by empathizing instead. Do not feel the need to speak after each person shares. After most women have shared their answers to a question, turn it back to the scripture from the study guide and help them process the truth and hope in their struggles. Avoid lecturing, but do bring the women back to truth.

5. MODEL TRUST. Show your group how you are applying these difficult lessons. Ask God to convict you and lead out with how you are processing change in your own life.
This study is uniquely designed to work in any venue or location. I envision women leading this in their homes, on campuses, even in their workplaces. Church buildings are the traditional format for group Bible studies and *Restless* will be effective within the church walls, but the bigger dream is that women would find this study useful in reaching their friends, neighbors, and coworkers.

Whether you find yourself with 150 women in a church auditorium or with a few neighbors in your living room, this study is designed for small groups of women to process truth within their souls.

Because of the depth of the questions and topics, it is essential your group be small enough to share. A maximum of eight women in each group is ideal, but fewer is preferable. If you are in a larger group, divide into smaller groups with volunteer facilitators. With the help of the leader’s guide and the Ask conversation cards, those smaller groups should still prove successful with a little support.

**SESSION TOOLS AND HOW TO USE THEM**

**STUDY.** In the first meeting, distribute your groups’ study guides (or if women are purchasing on their own, remind them to bring their study guides to the first meeting). The lessons in the study guide (except for the Getting Started lesson) are meant to be completed during the week
before coming to the group meeting. Each week begins with a short intro before moving into the portion marked “Study.” The Study portion is followed by four application projects, then closing thoughts from me. The Study portion and projects can be completed in one sitting or broken up into smaller parts throughout the week, depending on each individual woman’s needs.

These lessons may feel different from studies you have done in the past. They are very interactive. The goal of the curriculum is to lead women to dig deeply into Scripture and uncover how it applies to their lives, to deeply engage the mind and the heart. Projects, stories, and Bible study all play a role. The projects in the study guide will provide several options for applying Scripture. You and your group members may be drawing or journaling or engaging in some other activity in these projects. At the group meeting, discuss your experience in working through the lesson.

SEE. These short, engaging videos are meant to set the tone for your time together, to draw women deeper into Scripture, and to set the stage for transparent sharing. Hopefully, each person has already deeply studied the scriptures for themselves before coming to the group, and the video will provide enough to jump-start a powerful time of reflection and processing how to apply all they have learned in personal study that week.

ASK. These cards provide a unique way of starting deep, honest conversations about what you’re chasing after. Each week’s cards are labeled with the appropriate lesson title. These should be pulled out after the video or teaching time.
1. Lay out the cards for the week, with the questions facing up.
2. Allow each woman to grab her favorite one.
3. Every week, go over the Ground Rules found in the front of the Ask deck of cards.
4. Begin by laying out the Scripture card for that week. Refer back to it as needed for help processing as you share.
5. Take turns having each woman ask the question on her card. Allow time for anyone who wants to share or respond to the question.
6. You may only get through a few of the questions. That is fine.

The goals of the questions are to allow women to reflect on what they have studied and heard and have a chance to share their own hearts. Again, do not be afraid to lead the discussion back to God if it feels like things are getting off topic, but first allow everyone to concisely and clearly communicate their hearts. Several of the cards each week have Scripture on them to help you do that. Pull one of those if you feel the group needs to hear what God says about the issues.

**LEAD.** This guide serves as a tool to prepare you in leading this study and to encourage you along the way. Refer back to it each week to be aware of the goals for each lesson. The leader’s guide will help you effectively point your women to the overarching theme of each lesson and point them to the themes of the study.
SESSION FORMAT

This eight-week study is designed to go deep very quickly. Since women are busy and have full lives, the beauty of this study is it can be led in a living room over a one-hour lunch, or in a church Bible study spread out over two and a half hours. If you have the flexibility, extend the time of sharing in small groups. A frequent complaint is, “We wish we had more time to share.” When the group is given deep questions and space to reflect and respond, you’ll be surprised how beautiful and plentiful the conversations will be.

These tools are meant to have some flexibility. Here are some suggestions for how to structure your meeting to get the most out of your time together. However, you will be the best judge of what works for your group and the time you have together. Based on your group’s needs, choose any combination of going through the questions mixed with reflections from group members’ personal study.
HOMEWORK DISCUSSION [20–35 MINUTES]:

After welcoming everyone and opening in prayer, you may choose to begin by having the women discuss their personal reflections as they have worked through the study guide and Scripture that week. If you have more than eight members, break into small groups for this discussion time before reconvening for the video/teaching time.

VIDEO AND/OR TEACHING [VIDEO: 20 MINUTES]:

Watch the video to provide a foundation for that week’s lesson and to help transition to transparent sharing using the Ask conversation cards. Each video is approximately twenty minutes long. If you are supplying teaching in addition to the videos, we recommend you begin with your teaching and then play the video.

NOTE TO CHURCH GROUPS: Due to the nature of this study, we strongly suggest that each group have no more than eight to twelve women and that you have a kit for each group.

ASK CONVERSATION CARDS [30–75 MINUTES]:

Especially if there are more than eight group members, divide into smaller groups and have women go through the Ask conversation cards. This will be a time of deep sharing and discussion that is important to understanding how to apply all that has been learned that week. If your small group needs an extra deck of Ask cards, they are available for purchase at www.thomasnelson.com.
LEADING YOUR GROUP: TIPS AND THINGS TO WATCH OUT FOR

GUIDING CONVERSATION

You may come across some challenges when leading a group conversation. Normally these challenges fall into two categories. In both situations people will need encouragement and grace from you as a leader. As with everything in this study, seek the Holy Spirit’s guidance as you interact with your group members.

1. DOMINATING THE CONVERSATION: If one woman seems to be dominating the conversation or going into detail that makes the rest of the group uncomfortable, gently interrupt her if necessary and thank her for sharing. Avoid embarrassing her in front of the group. Ask if there is anyone else who would like to share in response to the original question asked (not to necessarily respond to the woman who was just speaking). If the problem persists, talk with the woman outside of the group time. Affirm her for her vulnerability and willingness to share and be prepared to refer her for more help if the need arises.
2. NOT SHARING AS MUCH AS THE OTHERS:

If you notice there is a woman who seems to not be as talkative as the others in the group, you may try gently asking for her input directly at some point in the conversation. Some women are naturally shyer than others; don’t try to force them into an extroverted role, but do let them know their input is valuable to the group. Remind them of the goals of the study and how being vulnerable with one another is one of the ways God shapes us spiritually. If a woman is just not interested in being in the study and is holding the rest of the group back, meet with her outside the group setting to discuss her further involvement.

Keep in mind that no two women are alike, but keep the best interests of the group in mind as you lead. Encourage group members to follow the Ground Rules for Group Discussion Time (listed below and also found on pages 5–6 in the study guide.) Review these items together as often as needed in order to keep the conversation on track:

:: **BE CONCISE.** Share your answers to the questions while protecting others’ time for sharing. Be thoughtful. Don’t be afraid to share with the group, but try not to dominate the conversation.

:: **KEEP GROUP MEMBERS’ STORIES CONFIDENTIAL.** Many things your group members share are things they are choosing to share with you, not with your husband or other friends. Protect each other by not allowing anything shared in the group to leave the group.
:: **RELY ON SCRIPTURE FOR TRUTH.** We are prone to use conventional, worldly wisdom as truth. While there is value in that, this is not the place. If you feel led to respond, please only respond with God’s truth and Word, not “advice.”

:: **NO COUNSELING.** Protect the group by not directing all attention on solving one person’s problem. This is the place for confessing and discovery and applying truth together as a group. As a group leader, you will be able to direct a woman to more help outside the group time if she needs it.

**WHEN TO REFER**

Some of the women in your care may be suffering beyond the point you feel able to help. This study may bring the pain of circumstances or behaviors to the surface. To leave women in this state would be more damaging than helpful. Don’t try to take on problems you do not feel equipped to handle. If you sense that a woman may need more help, follow up and refer her to someone.

:: Check with your church or pastor for names of trusted Christian counselors. Some major indicators of this need would be: depression, anxiety, thoughts of suicide, abuse, or a broken marriage. These are the obvious ones, but honestly, some women who are stuck in hurt from their past, minor depression, or fear could also benefit from counseling. I believe counseling is beneficial for many. So keep a stash of names for anyone you may feel needs to process further with a professional.
:: Look for the nearest Celebrate Recovery group and offer to attend the first meeting with her (www.celebraterecovery.com).

:: Suggest further resources and help to make a plan for their future growth and well-being.

:: Communicate with the leadership at your church about how to proceed with care.

:: Do not abandon these hurting women in a vulnerable place. This may be the first time they have opened up about painful hurts or patterns. Own their care and see it through. If they have landed in your group, God has assigned them to you for this season, until they are trusted to the care of someone else. Even then, continue to check in on them.
TYPES OF LEARNERS

Hopefully, you will be blessed to be leading this study with a group diverse in age, experience, and style. While the benefits of coming together as a diverse group to discuss God outweigh the challenges by a mile, there are often distinctions in learning styles. Just be aware and consider some of the differences in two types of learning styles that may be represented. (These are obviously generalizations, and each woman as an individual will express her own unique communication style, but in general these are common characteristics.)

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNERS

These are women who are more transparent, don’t like anything cheesy, want to go deep quickly, and are passionate. Make a safe environment for them by being transparent yourself and engaging their hearts. These women may not care as much about head knowledge and may care more deeply how knowledge about God applies to their lives. They want to avoid being put in a box. Keep the focus on applying truth to their lives and they will stay engaged.

PRAGMATIC LEARNERS

These women are more accustomed to a traditional, inductive, or precept approach to Bible study. They have a high value for truth and authority but may not place as high a value on the emotional aspects of confessing sin and being vulnerable. To them it may feel unnecessary or dramatic. Keep the focus on the truth of Scripture. These women keep truth in the forefront of their lives and play a valuable role in discipleship.
Because this study is different from traditional studies, some women may need more time to get used to the approach. The goal is still to make God big in our lives, to know and love him more, and to deal with sin by instructing with Scripture. These are the goals for all believers; we all just approach them in unique ways to reach unique types of people. I actually wrote this study praying it could reach both types of learners. I am one who lives with a foot in both worlds, trying to apply the deep truths I gained in seminary in an experiential way. I pray that this study would deeply engage the heart and the mind, and that we would be people who worship God in spirit and in truth, not just learning about sin but going to war with it together.

Common struggles like fear, stress, anger, shame, and insecurity are not respecters of age, religion, or income level. These struggles are human. But I have seen that as women are honest about them, we transcend the typical boundaries of Christian and seeker, young and old, single and married, needy and comfortable, coming together and to God in a unique and powerful way.
In the following pages and notes for each *Restless* lesson, I hope I have given you enough guidance that you do not feel lost, but enough freedom to depend on the Holy Spirit. These are only suggestions, but hopefully these notes will help surface themes and goals to guide you through your discussion of group members’ homework and through the discussion of the Ask conversation cards. The video, homework, and cards should provide more than enough material for great discussions, but stay on track and be sure people are walking away with hope and truth.
GETTING STARTED :: RESTLESS

Because you were made for more.
During this first meeting you will be getting to know each other, handing out the study guides, walking through the Instructions and Expectations (found on pages 4–10 of the study guide), walking through the Getting Started lesson (found on pages 11–30 of the study guide), and watching the first video.

Here are some general goals and thoughts for your time together this week:

\[\begin{align*}
&\quad \text{Make the women feel safe.} \\
&\quad \text{Get to know each other and the things that are making you restless.} \\
&\quad \text{Set expectations for the study.} \\
&\quad \text{Have the people in your group go through the Respond section of the introductory lesson and discuss your responses.} \\
&\quad \text{Instruct group members on how to use the study guide and Ask conversation cards.} \\
&\quad \text{Reinforce that all of us are restless for something and that God wants us to live our everyday lives in light of eternity. But this is sometimes difficult to do.} \\
&\quad \text{Introduce Joseph.}
\end{align*}\]
**LEADER:** This first session’s suggested format is different from the others since it is your first meeting and there is no homework to review.

**VIDEO AND/OR TEACHING**

For this first meeting, it is best to begin by watching the video session *Restless*.

**DISCUSSION TIME**

1. Together take some time to read Instructions and Expectations and the Getting Started lesson in the study guide either aloud or to yourselves and discuss.

2. When you reach page 29 in the Getting Started lesson of the study guide, have participants choose the three things holding you back from dreaming. Give everyone time to think about this and write down in their guide their three things.

3. If you are in a large group, break into small groups and give each person the chance to open up about the three things keeping her from dreaming right now. Leaders, share first and be transparent.
4. After all the women have shared, you may transition to the Ask conversation cards to continue your discussion. The cards for this week are labeled “Restless” on the front. Distribute this week’s Ask cards and guide the women to ask and answer the questions on the cards. Review the Ask card instructions together. Remember to begin with the Scripture card and end by stressing the scriptural truth group members can apply to their lives as a result of what they discussed in your group time. Close this discussion in prayer.

Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith . . . so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

**HEBREWS 12:1–3**
The place where your restless soul meets God is the place where nothing ever feels small again.
**MAIN IDEA:** We were built to live for this eternal story, even in our everyday mundane lives. Often we forget the weight of the spiritual and miss how God wants us to participate.

This week we will be wrestling with our places in this very big story that God is building. Rather than feeling small in it, help your people to see that this is an honor to be a part of, and it could change the way we view every part of our lives.

Here are some general goals and thoughts for your time together this week:

:: Identify what is difficult to believe about God’s story. Encourage open, honest sharing. We all doubt God at times.

:: Dream about how God’s story could impact our day-to-day life.

:: Discuss God’s love for us in this story. How does that change you?

:: Discuss how this story could and should affect our dreams and hopes for our time here.
MAIN GOAL: That you would be transformed by the story of God and compelled to live for the story of God.

HOMEWORK DISCUSSION

Here are some suggested places to focus as you go over the homework together. Ask the group:

:: Share what you learned as you studied God’s work on the earth in Hebrews 10:36–12:3.

:: How did John 17 speak to you based on where you are in your life right now?

:: Discuss your response to Projects 2 and 3.

:: What else did you learn as you studied and interacted with the lesson and Scripture this week?

VIDEO AND/OR TEACHING

Watch video session: God’s Story
ASK CONVERSATION CARDS

If you are in a large group, break into small groups of five for discussion time using the Ask conversation cards. Distribute this week’s Ask cards and guide the women to ask and answer the questions on the cards. Remember to begin with the Scripture card and end by stressing the scriptural truth group members can apply to their lives as a result of what they discussed in your group time. Close this discussion in prayer.

I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do.

JOHN 17:4