Need help unraveling the mystery of manhood? Read on.

*For Women Only: The Bible Study* by best-selling author Shaunti Feldhahn is for every woman who wants to understand and support her husband in becoming all that God intends him to be. Growing out of the popular *For Women Only: What You Need to Know About the Inner Lives of Men* and its eye-opening discoveries, this seven-week study can help you put your relationship under the searchlight of God’s Word.

Through video teaching sessions and weekly readings, Shaunti sheds light on the mystery that our men sometimes do appear to be! Her practical tips, growing out of biblical principles and extensive research with men, offer ways to put your new insights into practice day-by-day.

With its focus on understanding the inner lives of men, the primary application of *For Women Only: The Bible Study* is to marriage. Yet what woman would not wish for such help before marriage? Many of the principles can apply to women who are dating or who relate daily to their male co-workers in the workplace.

*For Women Only: The Bible Study* is not about changing him, but about changing you. It is about putting your needs aside to understand his. It is about new heart attitudes and new ways of acting. Your reward comes in seeing a wonderful side of your husband, one you may have never before seen, as he is being built up into the man God intends.

A leader guide, with teaching plans for seven group sessions, is at the back of this workbook. Also available for the group facilitator is the *For Women Only: The Bible Study Leader Kit* (Item 1-4158-3496-2), which includes two DVDs and a member book.

The inner lives of men is not a mystery to frustrate, puzzle, or even to solve, but God’s plan from the very beginning.
Your Love Is Not Enough

“If you had to choose, would you rather feel alone and unloved in the world OR would you rather feel inadequate and disrespected by everyone?” What kind of choice is that?, I remember thinking, probably like most of the other women attending that singles retreat years ago. Who would ever choose to feel unloved? Were we ever in for a surprise.

The retreat speaker turned to the men’s side of the room. “OK, men. Who here would rather feel alone and unloved?” A sea of hands went up, and a gasp rippled across the women’s side of the room. He then asked which men would rather feel disrespected, and we women watched in bemusement as only a few guys lifted their hands. Then it was our turn to answer and the men’s turn to be shocked when most of the women indicated they would rather feel inadequate and disrespected than unloved.

It may sound like a no-brainer … but men and women are different! We cannot begin to count all the books and articles that have been written about the differences between us—differences in our emotions, our love languages, our personalities. Scientists even study how differently our brains function!

We know we are different; yet, we sometimes act as though we are not. We often relate as if our man’s needs are the same as our own. Our journey together these next few weeks will challenge some of our assumptions.

Years after that landmark singles retreat, the research behind the trade book For Women Only tested this same question, among others. And the answers we received from these men were equally astounding. Seventy-four percent of those surveyed indicated they too would rather feel alone and unloved than disrespected or inadequate. Men and women appear to differ in this fundamental way: Women think in terms of love while men need respect.

In tallying the research results, a major lightbulb came on for me: If a man feels disrespected, he is going to feel unloved. And what that translates to is this: If you want to love your man in the way he needs to be loved, then you need to ensure that he feels your respect most of all. This surprising outcome affects many other discoveries we will share.
Appropriately, then, the first element of the inner life of men to enter our study is also your first Lightbulb. It is a foundational concept:

Men would rather feel unloved than inadequate and disrespected.
Men most need respect.

During this study, we'll have the privilege of placing ourselves under the scrutiny and discernment of the Holy Spirit. We'll see what the Bible has to say about Christ-honoring relationships. (While our primary application is to marriage, singles will benefit, too. I use the term ‘your man’ a lot to include both single and married women.)

We'll learn from men in the eye-opening interviews and research that were part of For Women Only, and we'll hear from some guys in our video. We'll start at the very beginning as we consider God’s plan for men and women.

So here we go. Prayerfully expect lightbulbs to come on in your thoughts and actions. Cast the spotlight on your relationship with your man. Point the searchlight of Scripture to your relationship with God and with your man. We'll give you some reminders along the way.

**Lightbulb**
Anytime you see this symbol in your workbook, be on the lookout for a revelation about the sometimes-surprising common inner wiring of men. Make your discovery personal by asking, What do I need to do as a result?

**Spotlight**
This is a call to put yourself in your husband’s place. Focus your attention on what he is thinking and feeling.

**Searchlight**
This feature will help you ask God to reveal the changes you need to make and then to give you the strength to do it! Using this workbook like a journal can help you see how God is working in your life.

Our feelings often follow our actions, meaning we can begin taking the hard steps we know to take even when our feelings aren’t there yet! That is why we have Weekly Challenges: to give you an attitude or action to practice on your own or with your man. Giving priority to these Weekly Challenges will begin to change you … which is what this study is all about, isn’t it?

**Weekly Challenge**
Your first challenge is: Choose to respect your man by not saying anything negative to him or about him to others. Begin each day with prayer that God will help you meet this new challenge.

**Memorize**

Therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your spiritual worship.

Do not be conformed to this age but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.

Romans 12:1-2
the bible study
for women only
what you need to know about the inner lives of men

Bible Study Sample
Feeling respect for our husbands but not overtly showing it is the same as their feeling love for us but not letting us know! One of the secrets to understanding the inner lives of men is discovering just what is affirming to them. Our words and actions can often leave them feeling distrusted, stupid, or lazy—even when that was not our intention!

May I remind you again: Our focus is on him. Just as there are areas in which you want your man to be ultrasensitive to your needs, you must be willing to recognize that he has issues we may think are silly but that matter a lot to him.

Lightbulb
Men need us to respect their judgment and abilities.

Respect His Judgment
You’ve heard the old joke: “Why do I have to tell my wife I love her? I told her that when we got married!” Are you, in turn, ever guilty of thinking “I married him, didn’t I and I’m still here, aren’t I? Of course he knows I respect him.” The truth is, we women often do tend to want to control things which, unfortunately, men can interpret as disrespect or distrust. Remember some of our dictionary definitions of respect? There are times when showing respect means to simply refrain from interfering.

At times, we are only asking for information and he hears us differently. At other times, we are convinced we are right. I can argue my husband into the ground if I think I am right! Oddly enough, most women don’t mind when our man argues with us, but because of how he is wired, he minds very much when we argue with him. Hear me on this: No matter what we think we are saying, what matters in the end is what the guy is hearing.

In the research, many men said the one thing they wished they could tell their wives was to “show more trust in my decision-making abilities”—which is code for (among other things) “I’m not stupid.” While they were not looking for wives with no opinions, many men wished their mates wouldn’t question their knowledge or argue with their decisions all the time. A man deeply needs the woman in his life to respect his knowledge, opinions, and decisions—what I call his judgment.

Check all that apply: When he expresses an opinion, do you frequently

- argue?
- question his decision?
- respond with “Oh, but what about . . .?”,”No, that’s not right . . .”, or “But why . . .?”

I want you to know I still do these things too! I need encouragement to do the hard things just as much as you do. So don’t give up; we’re in this together.

Check all that apply. According to Proverbs 21:9, a nagging wife

- provides a man much-needed help
- is to be avoided at all costs
- describes me occasionally
- can be found on a nearby rooftop

While the nagging wife is an extreme, the men who were surveyed were real touchy about the issue of his judgment. Several confessed that they felt as if their opinions and decisions
were actively valued in every area of their lives except at home. Some men felt that their work colleagues trusted their judgment more than their wives did, and I will bet that their wives were clueless.

**Respect His Abilities**

Another strong theme that emerged from the research was that men want—even need—to figure things out for themselves. It’s fun as well as affirming when they solve the big puzzle. Problem is, we want to help them—and guess how they sometimes interpret that? You’ve got it: distrust. And sometimes they are correct.

Look at some communication that might be going on at your house. Now I know what you meant, but notice what could be going through your man’s brain.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Man and his challenge</th>
<th>Her response</th>
<th>His thought</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Lost, trying to find his way</td>
<td>1. “Honey, please stop and ask for help.”</td>
<td>1. “C’mon—it’s fun to find my way. I have a clock on the dash. I know whether we’ll be late.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Dealing with a plumbing problem</td>
<td>2. “Call the plumber!”</td>
<td>2. “As protector of the home, I want to try this first.”</td>
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You might be asking, “Why can’t I tell him how to do it if I know the best way? We’re equals, and it gets the job done.” Well, of course you can. Remember though, he may hear what you say as a lack of trust, almost as if you view him as an idiot. Frequent media portrayals of men as comical, clumsy clods sometimes reinforce his thinking—and our actions.

Hear the heart cry of one man from the survey who wished he could tell his wife, “Trust my judgment on everyday items. Have confidence in my general abilities of learning, application, fixing, rebuilding, repair without having to do it your way because you know it and think I do not.” Are you beginning to see how important it is for you to make the choice to trust and respect him?

**Spotlight**

Think for a moment about some areas in which your husband would rather have your trust than your advice. Make any notes in the margin to help you remember these thoughts.

When we force ourselves to trust our men in the small things, our efforts are interpreted as signs of our overall trust and respect for them as men. The next time your husband seems to stubbornly drive in circles, ask yourself what is more important: being on time to the party or his feeling trusted. No contest.
Day 3 • It’s Real When You Show It

So What Do I Do?

Ladies, changing the way we respond to our husbands so we can meet their deep inner needs is not easy; but, in Christ, you have the resources to do it! Remember what we are so good at—loving! We love because God first loved us. Through His Spirit, we can find the power to respect our man in the way he needs.

Agape love is available to us and through us as Christians. We often read the verses in the margin, 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, wishing, That’s the kind of love I want to receive! We also can erroneously view these verses as telling us how to love our husbands romantically. Remember, we are to love our man in the way he needs to be loved—by respecting him.

Focusing on him and how he needs to be loved, reread these verses. Match characteristics of agape love with efforts you can make to show trust in your man’s judgment and abilities.

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<tr>
<th>Agape Love Traits</th>
<th>Trusting Actions</th>
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<tr>
<td>a. Unselfish, does not envy</td>
<td>___ Support him in what he is attempting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Not boastful or proud</td>
<td>___ Give up being right all the time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Trusting and kind</td>
<td>___ Let him try.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Patient, not easily angered</td>
<td>___ Show confidence in his decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Not rude, keeps no record of wrongs</td>
<td>___ Defer to his judgment sometimes.</td>
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These areas stretch us, don't they? Are you uncomfortable putting your needs so far in the background? Afraid you will become a doormat or will lose your identity? Do you feel that supporting your man will condone his mistakes?

According to 1 John 4:18, what is the antidote to fear?

God's perfect love drives away fear. We can extend that kind of love to others because it comes from Him (see 1 John 4:7). I am asking you to be an instrument that delivers to your man the love and respect God says he requires. When you are unsure whether you can trust, defer to, or respect your man, trust God to achieve the victory through you.

When her husband became a private pilot, Tracie worried about his lack of concern for realistically judging time. She fretted about his unwavering attitude that everything would always work out in his favor. The couple often found themselves in awkward situations that could have been avoided had he listened to her.

Before John left on his first flight, Tracie pleaded, “Please promise me that if there is ever any doubt, you won’t take off. Promise me you will wait and won’t misjudge the amount of time you need.” He promised.

A few days later she got a call. John had taken off too late in the day. With no authority to fly at night, he had had to make an emergency landing. He was fine, but the plane was wrecked. Tracie knew by the tone of his voice that her husband was devastated. She had never heard him so despondent.
What do you think John was expecting Tracie to say or do? What would you do?

Now let me tell you the end of this story. Tracie knew that her tendency was to say, “I told you so.” After all, she was right again, wasn’t she? As she rounded each curve of the long, dusty road to the small town where he was staying, she prayed, “Lord, help me to watch my tongue. Help me to be positive and reassuring. Enable me to help my husband and not say, ‘I told you so.’”

Tracie will tell you she doesn’t remember what she said when she arrived. However, she does remember a sense of Wow! I don’t sound like I usually do, and I like it. God and I are doing this together. The Lord had smoothed her rough edges and allowed her words to be a soothing touch instead of an abrasive cut.

You Can Do This!

I hope you are beginning to see that when you decide to trust him this time even though he blew it last time, it is not demeaning to you. You are actually living the love that is taught in 1 Corinthians. Oh, you can try to hold onto your pride and maintain your rights. But according to the Apostle Paul, you gain absolutely nothing if you don’t have this kind of love (see 1 Cor. 13:3). Instead of your respect bringing you down, it lifts both of you up.

Will you have to make sacrifices? Probably.

What did God give up for you, according to 1 John 4:10? __________  __________

What are some attitudes or actions you may need to give up in order to show respect for your man’s judgment and abilities?

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<th>Attitudes</th>
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Searchlight

You can do all things because you have God’s love on which to rely and lean. Conclude your study today by reading 1 John 4:12 in your Bible. Pray, asking God to fill you with His love so that you can make trust choices that are respectful to your man.

In 99.9 percent of relationships, the principles we discuss are hard to do but worth the effort. We want to acknowledge that cases of serious emotional or physical abuse call for more intensive intervention than we can get into here. If you are in such a situation, I strongly encourage you to seek help from a professional Christian counselor, who can help you walk through your crises in a God-honoring way.

Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 1 John 4:10

Thank God that His perfect love can calm your fears about what you may have to give up. In the margin write characteristics from 1 Corinthians 13 that you most need to cultivate, and ask for His strength in these areas.
for women only
what you need to know about the inner lives of men
Leader Guide Sample
Leader Guide: Session 1

Your Love Is Not Enough

Before the Session
1. Display the house visual and the spotlight and chair display used in the Introductory Session.
2. Prepare to write on a whiteboard or make a poster with the letters R-E-S-P-E-C-T written vertically.
3. Prepare discussion/activity assignments and be ready to clarify information. Look at options if you have more time available than an hour.

During the Session
Welcome and opening remarks; video
1. Greet the women as they arrive. Open with prayer. Welcome any newcomers. Make sure that each participant has a workbook and has registered. If you have new participants, briefly review the study material.
2. Ask whether women have questions related to their homework. Indicate that Shaunti, on video, can help.
3. Turn on the spotlight. Ask, When you put your men in the spotlight this week, what did you learn was their foundational need? Display the letters R-E-S-P-E-C-T.

Ask, Are you gaining a new understanding about the difference between respect and disrespect? Using these letters as a starter, share some phrases that indicate what you have learned about respecting our men this week. For example: Seek to meet his needs instead of satisfying my own. Allow 3 to 4 minutes for brainstorming.
4. Ask women to turn to the viewer guide on page 33 and to fill in blanks during the Session 1 video. Ask the group to listen for their own Video Reflections that could add detail to the R-E-S-P-E-C-T chart. Be sure to ask for their ideas after viewing the video.

Discussion
5. Distribute assignments to cover the week’s main points. If needed, move into smaller groupings as you have planned. Be prepared to fill in any gaps.

✔ a: Respect is sometimes seen as being earned by people who are worthy for what they have done. How does that differ from what you studied in Ephesians 5:33? Lead women to share one thing they appreciate about their men. (p. 19)

b: Talk about the respect Job received (Day 1). Which indicators are also important to your man? Describe how he must feel to be the object of high esteem.

c: What are some roadblocks to showing our man the respect he needs?

d: Read Job 30:9, NCV (p. 25). Were you surprised by how joking in public or teasing makes men feel? Why or why not? Lead women to share possible reasons women make these comments (p. 26).

e: So What Do I Do?—Begin by trying to give “Better” responses in day-to-day situations (p. 30 activity) Changing the way we respond takes practice!

Debrief and conclude
6. Debrief assignments as a total group or by small-group reports. Provide more information as needed.

If a group had assignment c, call on someone to share attitudes and actions they might need to change to better show respect for their man’s abilities. Remind them that what is shared in the group is confidential and no one should feel pressured to share. As they do, however, they can encourage others.

Share these “Better” responses for activity e: 1. No response, trust him; 2. “I would love for us to have time together. Could you help the children with their baths while I finish this project.” 3. “Is there something you would like to do?” (Then do it gleefully!)

7. Repeat together the memory verse, Romans 12:1-2. Highlight verse 2 as the overall study verse.
8. Display the house outline. Say, It is hard to build a house by yourself. This week you discovered that you are an important support to your husband. Read Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 aloud. Say, This verse also applies to us; we need to support each other in the weeks ahead. Suggest that an accountability/prayer partner can be valuable.

9. As women join hands, lead in prayer for the group.
10. Dismiss by previewing Week 2. Say, You already have begun work on your Weekly Challenge. If you need a reminder, look back to page 28 and go for it!

If you have more time
Choose from these topics to expand your schedule:

✔ 1. What implications does Philippians 2:2-5 have for your actions as you try to show greater respect to your man?

2. Share the most important new fact (knowledge) or insight (wisdom) you have acquired this week.

3. How do the three stop signs about assumptions help you change your responses to your man? (p. 31)

✔ appropriate for singles in the group