

CRAGER MINISTRIES PRESENTS

IS YOUR LIFE OUT OF ORDER

LEADERS GUIDE

A LEADERS GUIDE TO
"IS YOUR LIFE OUT OF ORDER?"



0320

SPECIFICALLY CREATED TO USE WITH
YOUR SMALL GROUP.

D.L. and **SHELLY CRAGER**



A MESSAGE FROM THE AUTHORS

Thank you so much for taking the time to lead a small group through this study. We believe it truly has the power to make a difference in your church and in your community of believers. We have prayed for you and the materials and we believe God is really going to do something miraculous in your group. We would love to hear from you. Visit **DLCrager.com** to share your story.

The Cragers



CRAGER
— MINISTRIES



CHAPTER ONE

IS THIS YOUR LIFE?

BREAK THE ICE

Go around the room and have each person or couple introduce themselves and share what area of their home is the most out of order. (Example: junk drawer, garage etc...)

OVERVIEW

Does dysfunctional and frustrating describe your family or even your marriage? Overwhelmed that there is so much to do and very little time, as purpose for everything has completely disappeared, and the point to life has lost its meaning? Where is your heart? The good news is your life is not broken it is just out of order! There is hope! As you progress through these chapters, we pray God helps you see the changes that need to be made so you can live your best life.

PLAY WEEK ONE VIDEO

DISCUSSION

When was the last time your heart was full? You know what we're talking about, when enthusiasm, gratitude and peacefulness swelled within you so much, it easily permeated out of you, by your actions as well as your words and attitude. Are you searching for a balanced, joyful, and content life that has hope again, which has been lost or forgotten somewhere down the road? Are you needing inspiration to have purpose to move forward and put your life back in order?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When was the last time your heart was full? Describe that time.
2. How would you describe your life right now?

If we are on the same page, let us give you a visual to help easily explain where your life might be right now. It has become exactly like a vending machine that's out of order. Look at the cover of this book. You're standing, looking into the vending machine (of your life), angry or disappointed. You see the packages of (life's) food that will satisfy your (life's) hunger. But you can't get anything because your (life's) machine is out of order.

3. What do you believe is contributing to your life being out of order? Maybe it's who?

Maybe you can't see your situation clearly. It's like standing too close to a painting. If you are too close to a painting, it seems askew. You can't see the big picture.

4. Have you positioned yourself physically, mentally, or emotionally so close to life's circumstances and hurdles that you have lost focus of the big picture of your and/or your family's life? What and why?

We are going to split up into two different defining categories of what we consider troubles or problems in our lives to simplify our thinking and understanding.

Obstacles and Hurdles – Pages 10-11

Situations and Circumstances – Page 12

5. Look at a list of possible Obstacles and Hurdles on pages 10 and 11 of the book. Which of these hurdles are a struggle in your marriage and/or family? Maybe you have multiple hurdles, which is common for many individuals and couples alike.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

6. Read page 12 of the book. What situations and circumstances are you facing in your life?
7. Are you ready to put your life back in order?

NOTES

[illegible]



WHERE DO YOU FIT IN?

BREAK THE ICE

Share your favorite cookie recipe. While everyone is talking and enjoying the cookies, begin discussion by talking about how important it is to follow the steps and recipe. Ask the class if they have ever made a mistake while baking. If one thing is out of order or missing, the entire recipe is ruined.

OVERVIEW

To help you realize that you’re not alone, and to begin uncovering the hurdles and situations in the different relationships of your life that may be out of order, our book has three different life scenarios. As you read through them, identify the area(s) in which you would say, “Yes, that’s me, or us!” Maybe it was your family growing up, or a mirror image of the family next door.

PLAY WEEK TWO VIDEO

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(Read Scenario 1 on page 15)

- 1. How many parts of this scenario ring true for your family?

(Read Scenario 2 on page 20)

- 2. Have you experienced a time when you were “at the end of your rope” in a relationship?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 3. Are you so focused on something it consumes every thought or all your time?
- (Read Scenario 3 on page 25)
- 4. Are you in a stalemate with your marriage?
- 5. Are you married, but feel alone?

NOTES

CHAPTER THREE

THE SECRET

OVERVIEW

We’re not talking about fixing someone. We are talking about first, finding out what the different relationships in our lives are. Then prioritize them in an order of importance, so we can finally see clearly what’s causing the frustration, pain, and chaos, so that we can begin healing and moving forward. Once at this point, we’ll finally have a compass to give us direction and a starting point, as well as a refreshed vision of purpose within all the relationships and in our own lives. This will finally lead us to enjoying life as our heart’s desires begin to be filled, and hope—maybe for the first time in your life— moves forward to lead the way.

PLAY WEEK THREE VIDEO

But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There are no laws against these things.

GALATIANS 5:22-23

Make allowance for each other’s faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.

COLOSSIANS 3:13

Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away. Each time he said, “My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.” So now I am glad to boast about my weakness, so that the power of Christ can work through me. That’s why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

2 CORINTHIANS 12:8-10

DISCUSSION

Before thinking about what might need to be fixed with your spouse, career, children, and activities, consider first, the things your spouse or others might suggest need to be fixed with you and all your relationships.

Let's divide up our relationships in to 5 categories:

- A. Children, family, and friends
- B. Career
- C. God
- D. Activities
- E. Marriage

Marriage, the big one. More than likely, if you are reading this book, it's the main relationship you're focused on, and desiring the most to fix, or more accurately, put back in order. At least, that's what you think is the only one that needs to be put back in order.

Before we dive deeper into our marriage topic, answer these questions.

Question: What's the one main thing that has changed in your relationship since the day you got married to now?

Question: What was your expectation of where your marriage would be right now when you got married?

Question: For those not married, what is the one main unexpected change that has happened in your life?

Question: Has your love grown or changed in an unexpected direction with your spouse since you got married?

It is important to know where your marriage relationship is positioned, in comparison to your other relationships and understand with it being in that specific slot of priority, your marriage will get better, like fine wine.

There are also five powerful intellectual and emotional lubricants to help improve your marriage.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1.** Putting extra effort, hard work, consistent prayer, and going the extra mile
Question: Are you seeking after extraordinary, or are you just satisfied with ordinary?
- 2.** Research each other's personality types, communication styles, and love languages.
Question: Are you and your spouse similar fruits? How are you different?
- 3.** Loosen up and let go of what you perceive is wrong about the other person, and focus and encourage them with what is right about them.
Question: What are three things you really appreciate about your spouse?
- 4.** Unmet expectations lead to disappointment and frustration.
Question: What expectations do you have that often lead to frustration?
- 5.** Who's your master?
Question: What are all the so-called important things you do every day?
Question: How much time do you spend on each of these important things every day? Why?
Question: Are these things honestly so important that you are willing to sacrifice important family relationships?
Question: What or who has been your master/Master?

Now let's put those into the right order!



CHAPTER FOUR

WHO'S LEADING?

OVERVIEW

Now let's begin to put our relationships in their appropriate order of importance for an organized, balanced, joyful, and content life. Out of all these five, by now you probably know from how we've been talking, and what your heart is telling you, which is number one. **Yes, it's God.**

PLAY WEEK FOUR VIDEO

They know the truth about God because he has made it obvious to them. For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.

ROMANS 1:19-20

Why do we continually—consciously or subconsciously—drop God down in our priority list of relationships? We're going to focus on 3 reasons.

1. Communication – we stop communicating with God.

A: Are you communicating with God daily? (Prayer and Bible Reading)

- Did you know communicating with God requires both sharing and listening?
- Are you always trying to get something out of Him, or are you giving to Him?

2. Trust – We stop trusting God.

Jesus says, "Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me"

JOHN 14:1

"We know dear brothers and sisters, that God loves you and has chosen you to be his own people"
1 THESSALONIANS 1:4

"I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit."
ROMANS 15:13

Question: Can you clearly state that you trust God with all aspects of your life?

3. Love – we stop loving God.

Jesus replied, "The most important commandment is this: 'Listen, O Israel! The Lord our God is the one and only Lord. And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind and all your strength.'"
MARK 12:29-30

"But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love."
1 JOHN 4:8

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life"
JOHN 3:16

Question: Do you have something else that is the "master" of your life besides God?

In an orchestra, all the musicians are watching the conductor, waiting on his instructions. Why do they do this? He has the knowledge and experience of every instrument and knows the composition in detail for each instrument to perfectly harmonize all at once with precise and perfect timing.

Question: Have you ever come to realize that God can orchestrate our future path? Do you let Him be the conductor in your life?

When God is first in all our relationships, we have set in play the only firm and eternal foundation there is known to man, strong enough to build all other relationships upon.

*"When the earth quakes and its people live in turmoil,
I am the one who keeps its foundation firm"*
PSALM 75:3

*"Fear of the Lord is the foundation of true knowledge,
but fools despise wisdom and discipline"*
PROVERBS 1:7

Question: Are you getting a clear picture that God has to be the first priority to have your life in order? What do you need to do to start putting God first?

NOTES



CATAPULT THE FAMILY

BREAK THE ICE

Have everyone share their prayer requests specifically for their family. What do you pray over your family? Do you take time to pray as a family?

OVERVIEW

Since we have established that our relationship with God must be number one in our lives, we can move on to our second priority relationship, which is our marriage relationship.

PLAY WEEK FIVE VIDEO

So why is the marriage relationship second in order of the five? Answer these questions to find out.

Which relationships in our lives have the ability to continuously mature and change, but will not go away because of time or age? Second, which relationships mature and change, and will go away because of time or age?

“Haven’t you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.’”

MATTHEW 19:4-5

The career relationship changes for most people about every five to ten years. We change jobs for multiple reasons: better pay, hours, position, retirement, and so on.



CHAPTER SIX

GIVE THE BEST GIFT

BREAK THE ICE

We’re talking about kids! Throw a baby shower in your group. Have members bring their favorite baby shower food, and play your favorite baby shower game.

OVERVIEW

The children, family, and friend relationships is our next priority on our list. Having our children smack down in the middle of all five of our relationships is perfect! They have the ability from this perspective to look in both directions of their parents’ lives and see what could be in store for them in their future. It’s up to the parents to demonstrate and prioritize a balanced life in order, for them to have a vision, and the possibility and ability to have a joyful, content, and successful life of their own.

PLAY WEEK SIX VIDEO

Question: How would you say you are doing in this area? Are you modeling a life in order for your children?

Question: Can your children—young or old—see their parents having a prosperous relationship with God?

God is to be our foundation and first-priority relationship in our lives. But, for an innocent and helpless child growing up until they come of age, we parents are, and need to be, their first foundation and a consistent foundation of love. All while being the representation of God and reflecting His character.

As their temporary first foundation, parents need to be the ones to introduce them to the living God. What are they seeing and experiencing firsthand through their parents’ lives, that Jesus is their true foundation and the ultimate foundation for everyone?

Question: Who influenced you in your life? What was it about them that makes you think of them as good or bad role models?

But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.

MATTHEW 7:26

We usually act or react from our own life experiences and how we grew up, good or bad.

How many times in the confusion of this world, even with good intentions, do we maintain the course of a child’s life being out of order, or sway the pendulum way too far to the other side, so our children don’t grow up like we did? Subsequently and subconsciously, we put ourselves in a spot and become somewhat their holy spirit to protect them and not let God be God.

When Jesus saw what was happening, he was angry with his disciples. He said to them, “Let the children come to me. Don’t stop them! For the Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children.”

MARK 10:14

How we parent can be very simple, but we make it difficult because of a plethora of stuff! We’re going to explain four primary ways, out of many, that we parent to extremes. Read through these examples on pages 72-78.

1. Hovering or sheltering parents - Some parents become their child’s shield in everything because of their lack of faith with fear nesting in their hearts, so they excessively protect their child from experiencing this world in any healthy manner.

“Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”

EPHESIANS 6:13-17

Question: Would you classify your parenting in this category? Do you hover too much, or do you provide them the tools to allow God to influence and direct them?

2. The great giving parents - These parents continually give their children, young and old alike, anything and everything, every time their children want or need something.

Question: Do you provide everything your children want? Have you taught your children the difference between wants and needs, while teaching them Jesus is the ultimate provider?

3. Parents with no boundaries — This is where many parents are at with their children today, believing that life without boundaries will help them succeed, as boundaries only keep their children caged in from reaching their potential.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life”

JOHN 3:16

Question: Have you created clear, consistent, and fair boundaries for your children?

4. Shoveling and stomping parents - These parents are usually on a completely unrealistic mission. A mission to shovel or force as much information, training or intelligence into their children, such as: doctrine, personal beliefs, opinions, religion, job skills, athletics, academics, etc.

Question: Are you allowing or encouraging your children to grow and strengthen with their own personalities, talents, and skills that God blessed them with? Or have you been trying to live out your life through your child's life?

NOTES

YOUR HEART'S DESIRE

OVERVIEW

The fourth relational priority is a struggle for many, our career relationship.

Our career is our financial pipeline. Our career is how we classify ourselves professionally. Our career dictates how much time we spend with our families. Our career is what gives us identity. Our career helps us feel accomplishment and satisfaction.

— PLAY WEEK SEVEN VIDEO

"Make it your goal to live a quiet life, minding your own business and working with your hands, just as we instructed you before. Then people who are not believers will respect the way you live, and you will not need to depend on others."

1 THESSALONIANS 4:11

Here are some questions about your job we need to ask before going on:

- Are you always doing more or extra than what's required of you?
- Are you one that never says "no" when asked to do more than your normal duties?
- Are you working overtime, all the time?
- Are you addicted to your work?
- When was the last time you took a full vacation?
- Do you bring your work home or work extra hours when you don't need to?
- Do you put more faith in how much you do, and in your job, than what God can do?
- Do you worry that if you don't do the extras, you'll be replaced?

Question: Which of these would describe your working habits? How long has it been going on?

People can accomplish great things because they have a dream, but we need to go beyond a dream, and understand what a dream really is. Which leads us more importantly to uncover specifically what is our heart's desire. Our dreams come from our minds, as our heart's desires come from our hearts.

Read about dreams and heart's desires on pages 83 and 84.

Question: What is your heart's desire?

Question: How is this different from your dreams?

Joy comes from the heart and has its greatest impact on us when our world continues to change and let us down. Our relationship with God can always be the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. God is the One that wants to fill our heart's desire, because He put it there in the first place. But first, we must begin to have a close relationship with Him to understand this supernatural gift and blessing. In His supernatural ways, He can take all the things that we've explained about dreams and paint a true picture that will help guide us to have a successful and content life.

Question: Are you content with your life and career? If not, why?

Everyone has these "secret powers" within them:

- The power of having nothing is comparing an empty treasure box to a full trash can.
- The power of failure is having hands-on experience and knowledge of what success is and being able to understand its limits.
- The power of flexibility is the ability to move around filled with power, and be reshaped by God to fit different environments
- The power of a vision is being inspired by God for a purpose to move forward towards a different and better future which will fill our heart's desires.
- The power of time is like jumping off a cliff with or without a parachute.
- The power of attitude is comparing a piece of paper to a sponge when drench in water.
- The power of the heart is comparing us standing on soft sand versus a firm rock.
- The power of faith goes beyond our reach and understanding. Without it, emptiness will always be our destiny, as our worldly dreams only remain life's illusion of triumph.

"My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts," says the Lord. "And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts."

ISAIAH 55:8-9

Question: Are you surprised about these "secret powers?" Which of them do you use?

Question: Which ones are missing that could best impact your life?

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7

"And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them."

ROMANS 8:28

The gift of having a heart's desire aligns perfectly with who God is and what His purpose is for us, in all we do. That includes our careers!

Question: What changes do you need to do in your career to finally begin to fulfill your heart's desire, and healthily grow your relationship with your family and God?

NOTES

THE POWER SOURCE

OVERVIEW

We are finally to number five, our activities relationship: hobbies, sports, video games, social media, watching television, working out, reading, ministry, entertainment, etc.

PLAY WEEK EIGHT VIDEO

Question: What do you and your spouse do that fits into this fifth relationship?

The next questions below are doozies, when we first ask this one perplexing question. Having our fifth relationship basically meant for hobbies, recreation, entertainment, relaxation, doing good works, etc., does it put the other four natural and necessary relationships in danger because we do it, or them so much?

- Does it put your family at risk of being financially harmed?
- Does it put your family at risk of having minimal, to no time spent together?
The family basically gets your leftovers.
- Does it put your family at risk of having your attention and responsibility stolen from them?
- Does it put your family at risk of not knowing who their mother or father, husband or wife is?
- Does it put your family at risk of being misdirected, mislead, led astray, led to dead ends, however we want to put it, that will lie or influence them to wrongly prioritize their own relationships? This is especially for your children and their future.

"But if you cause one of these little ones who trusts in me to fall into sin, it would be better for you to have a large millstone tied around your neck and be drowned in the depths of the sea."

MATTHEW 18:6

We understand that we need to take a break to have fun and relax here and there, it's healthy. We understand that some activities inspire us in healthy ways. We understand that some activities bring the family closer together in a healthy manner. We understand we have gaps in the day with nothing to do at times, so we fill it with our extra activities. We also understand that our activities can give us an elusive purpose and a false identity that will eventually control us to the point, it can destroy us, and all our relationships combined.

Read the story in the book starting on page 95.

Question: What is your story?

Question: Can you think of ways that can positively influence the generations below you if you put your own relationships in order right now?

The moral of this book is that God must always be our first relational priority, so the rest of our relationships can grow and thrive. God will persistently and lovingly, in any way He can — as He has done for us many times — keep drawing us to Him. Read pages 98-103.

Question: Are you ready to put your life back in order? What is your first step?



NOTES

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

NOTES

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a template for writing. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE GREAT RESOURCES

DLCRAGER.COM

C R A G E R
— MINISTRIES

0320

