



INTRO
SESSION 1

• TO WARM UP

 **Light-hearted conversation starter:** Share how you two first met — and why you decided to have a second date.

• OUR STORY, AND WHY INVEST

Welcome to INVEST Marriage

Relationship is one of God’s greatest gifts, and what you build together in the months ahead sets the trajectory for the relationship you’re walking into. Research on couples who prepare intentionally before the wedding is honest, not a promise: it won’t guarantee you never struggle, but it does show real, measurable gains in how well you communicate and how clearly you understand each other, gains that are far easier to build now than after the wedding. This reality highlights the importance of the tools provided in INVEST Engaged, to help you build connection and purpose from the start, discover what genuinely draws you to each other, and step into relationship with open eyes and a shared foundation.

Over the years, we’ve seen countless testimonials from couples who have experienced the blessing of fullness in their relationship through this curriculum. Some were on the verge of quitting, feeling hopeless and disconnected, but found renewed strength and purpose as they journeyed through the principles of INVEST Marriage. And many, even in strong marriages, have discovered how proactively investing in their relationship can lead to incredible growth, joy, and unity.

As you begin, take a moment to reflect on the INVEST Marriage logo. The “I” in INVEST represents a match, symbolizing the spark we believe this curriculum will ignite — or reignite — in your relationship. The “V,” shaped like a check mark, is a visual reminder to **check your heart**, a vital step in preparing for the transformation this journey offers. The purpose of INVEST Marriage is to help couples intentionally build a thriving, God-centered relationship.

“Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

PSALM 139:23–24 (NIV)

This scripture reveals the **how** — how to check your heart. It begins with humility, confession, and repentance. Pause, reflect, and pray through this verse. Let it set the tone for the journey ahead and open your hearts to the **everlasting** fullness that God desires for your relationship.

Humbly seeking God is the foundation for experiencing transformation, unity, and joy, the promised land of the relationship the two of you are preparing to build. The tools and insights in this curriculum

are designed to help you start from that fullness and build a relationship that not only thrives but endures with purpose and passion.

This journey can impact generations to come as you build a relationship that reflects the fullness of what God intended. Through the *Mission Portrait* and the tools provided in INVEST Marriage, you'll proactively build a relationship that brings joy, stability, and life to your family and community.

We pray that this curriculum will ignite a deeper connection and joy as you invest in your relationship.

• OUR STORY • THE HIDEAWAY CABIN

Ten years into our marriage, we found ourselves disconnected, easily irritated, emotionally drained, and crying out in quiet desperation for help. Parenting four young children, with our youngest only six weeks old, had drained us completely. Unknowingly, we had neglected the very foundation of our family — our marriage.

In a desperate attempt to reignite the love we once had, Bill decided to do something bold and book a secluded cabin for a romantic, peaceful, and serene escape for us. While the weekend started out a little shaky, one of the first things we did when we got settled in was humbly confess and repent after a true heart check. This broke open the opportunity for us to communicate honestly and hear what the Lord wanted for our marriage. It became the most transformational experience of our relationship. We spent hours on the back porch, asking each other deep questions about how we could personally grow and improve in our marriage. Through raw discussions, journaling, and prayer, we rediscovered our connection and a vision for the kind of relationship God intended for us.

The INVEST Marriage curriculum emerged from that weekend of intentionally choosing to reignite, rebuild, and proactively invest in our relationship.



The Hideaway Cabin

• WATCH • INTRO TO INVEST



Scan to watch this session's video
invest.wildfireleadership.com/s/1

After reading part of our story, watch the “Intro to INVEST” video to learn how a pivotal moment transformed our relationship and gave birth to INVEST Marriage. This video provides a deeper connection to the heart of the curriculum, setting the tone for the journey ahead. After watching, return to the workbook to explore the scripture that sets the foundation for this session.

• SCRIPTURE TO SET THE TONE

“Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble.”

ECCLESIASTES 4:9-10 (NLT)

In what ways do you see that choosing relationship, rather than staying as you are, will make you better off?

• KEY CONCEPTS AND PRINCIPLES

Why INVEST?

This journey is about intentionally exploring the depths of your relationship. Just as we had to pour time, energy, and our hearts into healing and growing our relationship, this curriculum invites you to do the same.

The word INVEST was chosen deliberately, because thriving marriages don't happen by accident. They require care, nurturing, and prioritization. The acronym INVEST stands for:

I Intrigue — Rediscovering the fascination and curiosity that brought you together.

N No — Learning to say “no” to distractions so you can say “yes” to what truly matters.

V Venture Out — Embracing shared adventures to keep your relationship vibrant.

E Examine — Reflecting on and improving communication.

S Safeguard — Establishing healthy boundaries to protect your relationship.

T Teachable Spirit — Committing to continuous growth and learning.

Use this curriculum as a guide to help you rediscover intrigue, set boundaries, embrace adventures, improve communication, safeguard your relationship, and maintain a teachable spirit. Investing in each area will make your relationship more resilient, joyful, and deeply connected.

• REFLECTION TIME

Our Hideaway Cabin story is full of humor and adventure. Laughter can be a powerful connector together.

When was the last time you and your future spouse laughed like that together?

Reflect on how even the unexpected, awkward moments can turn into cherished memories that bring you closer. Think about where your relationship is now. This journey of investing in your relationship is about discovering new ways to bring joy and connection into your relationship.

Are there areas where you need to reignite a spark or make intentional time for one another?

• PRACTICAL STEPS

Rekindle connection through fun. Plan a playful or lighthearted moment this week. Maybe share a joke, try a spontaneous activity, or arrange a small adventure. Remember, the goal isn't perfection but enjoying each other's company.

Discuss INVEST together. Review the INVEST acronym and discuss which part excites or intrigues you the most. Is it the idea of protecting intrigue, or learning to say "no" to distractions? Share your hopes and dreams for how investing in each other now could shape the relationship you're building together.

Make it intentional. Choose one small way to show love this week. It could be a thoughtful gesture, a shared coffee break, or simply asking how your future spouse is doing. Small acts of love build a strong foundation over time.

Build a gratitude habit. Gratitude has the power to shift your focus from what's missing to what's meaningful. By intentionally looking for the good in your future spouse, you nurture love, respect, and connection. Each day, write five things you're grateful for about your future spouse. As you continue week after week, you'll be surprised how you start noticing more, and you develop a deeper level of gratitude.

Write five things now and share them with your future spouse:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

• READINESS CHECK-IN • WHERE WE'RE STARTING

Rate each statement from 1 (rarely true) to 5 (very true), no overthinking, it's just a snapshot. Rate on your own first, then share and compare gently; the goal is understanding, not grading each other. Notice the one or two areas you'd most like to grow, and let those guide what you pay closest attention to through the study. You'll revisit these same five in the final session to see how far you've come.

1. We feel emotionally connected right now.

1	2	3	4	5
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2. We communicate well, even about hard things, like money, in-laws, and how we each practice our faith.

1	2	3	4	5
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3. We've talked concretely about what day-to-day married life will actually look like.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

4. We are growing spiritually together.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

5. We've talked honestly about money, family, roles, and how we handle conflict, not just about the wedding.

1	2	3	4	5
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Rarely true

Very true

• BEFORE THE NEXT SESSION • TAKE YOUR SNAPSHOT

Those five statements are your own read on where you're starting. The **Snapshot** goes underneath them: where your relationship is already strong, how you're each wired, and how each of you most feels loved.

Take it **on your own phone**, separately, before the next session. That matters more than it sounds. Answering side by side turns it into a conversation about what you *should* say, and the whole value is in

each of you answering honestly first. You'll each get a link to send the other, and then you can look at both together.

Understand to Serve. That's the point of it: not a label for your future spouse, but a clearer picture of how to love them well.

About six minutes each, on your own phone. You'll get a link to share your results with each other.



Scan to take your Snapshot
invest.wildfireleadership.com/et/snapshot

GO DEEPER — OPTIONAL

For couples who want to linger. Skip it if you'd rather keep things light.

1. As you think about the story behind the INVEST Marriage curriculum and the Mission Portrait tool, consider how defining your core values can shape your relationship. What would it look like to regularly support your future spouse's mission and purpose?
2. Reflect on the idea that investing in your relationship is an ongoing process. How can embracing this journey open new possibilities for deeper connection and joy?

• OPTIONAL • THE MISSION PORTRAIT OVERVIEW

If you're unfamiliar with the *Mission Portrait*, the optional video linked above gives an overview of the tool couples use worldwide to identify and live out their core values and life mission as a couple. Statistics show that **87% of people don't fully understand their purpose**. Purpose is the anchor for identity and fulfillment — and when a person doesn't know their own, it becomes incredibly challenging to understand their purpose and identity together. Next week, you'll actually create your *Mission Portrait*. Watching this video first will help you start thinking about your personal core values and mission.

• NEXT STEPS

- 1. Weekly Challenge.** Choose one word from the INVEST acronym to focus on. Maybe “Intrigue” inspires you to plan a surprise for your future spouse, or “Safeguard” encourages you to set a healthy boundary. Take a small step this week that moves you closer to your goals for your relationship.
- 2. Dream Together.** Spend time journaling or discussing your hopes for this INVEST Marriage journey. Share your dreams with your future spouse and start envisioning what a flourishing, joy-filled relationship could look like. What are you excited to learn or experience as you invest in your relationship?
- 3. Legacy Reflection.** Often, people talk about the impact a person had on their life after they’re gone. Take time to think about the impact you hope your life will have on your future spouse. If your future spouse spoke at your funeral, what would you hope they’d say about you? Write down a few key phrases that reflect the legacy you hope to leave in their heart — then be intentional about being that person now. Share your thoughts with your future spouse so they can affirm the positive ways you are impacting them now.

• A CLOSING THOUGHT

Remember, every small investment you make now has the potential to yield significant returns in love, trust, and unity for the relationship ahead. Let this journey be one of growth, discovery, and building the bond you’ll carry into it.