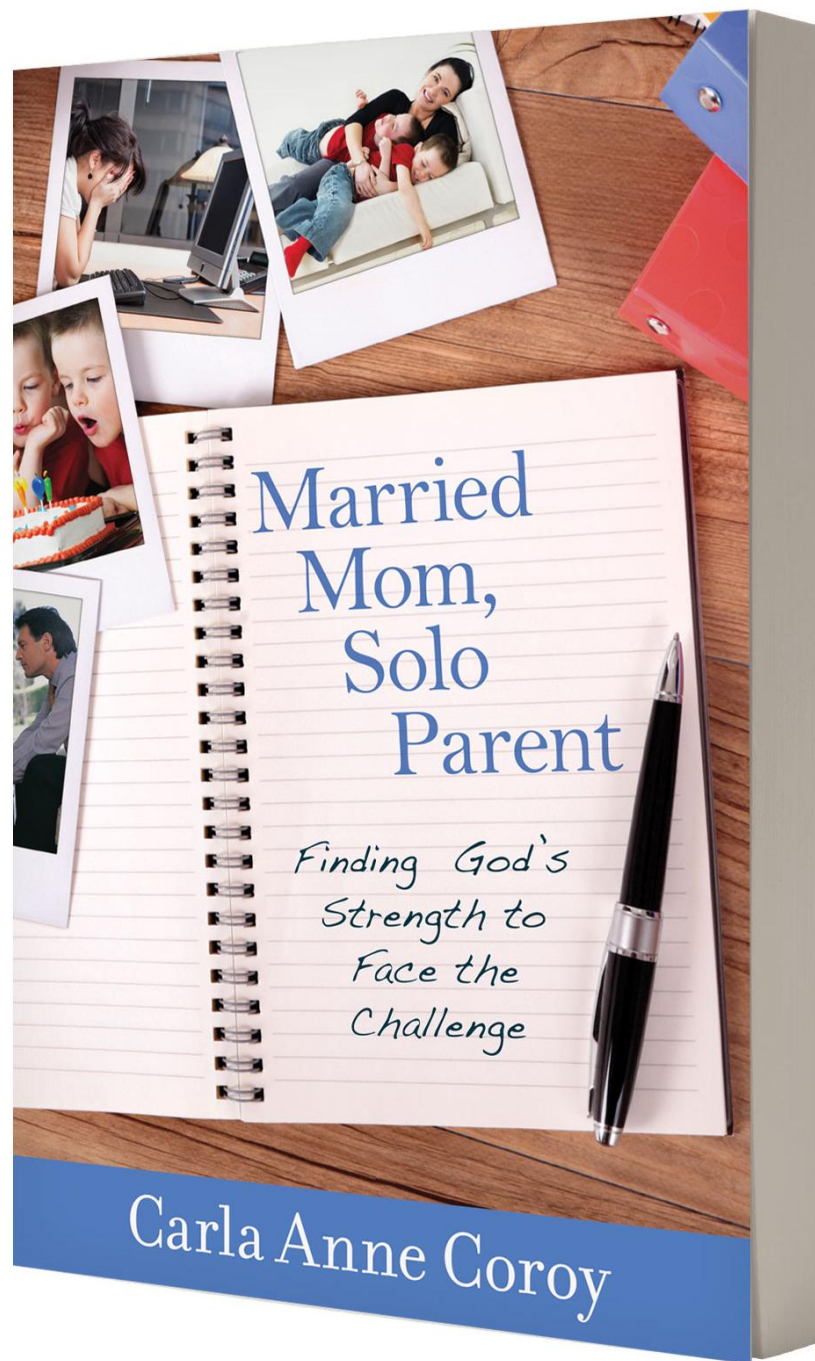


Personal Reflection Journal



Carla Anne Coroy

Welcome

How to Use this Journal

Hi there! I'm so glad you've decided to go a little deeper with *Married Mom, Solo Parent*. My prayer is that you will grow in your understanding of yourself and your situation, in how your family can thrive in your husband's absence, and in the understanding of yourself as a Daughter of the King.

The purpose of this journal is for you to grab a hold of the tools and resources in a very real and tangible way so you will be equipped to find God's strength to face the challenge of being a married mom who solo parents. I hope you will be full of hope and renewed motivation to be an outstanding mom, wife, woman, Christian, and friend as a result of this book and the study.

There are a few ways to use this journal.

BY YOURSELF

Read a chapter at a time and then stop to answer the questions in this journal. Take your time with the questions. Some will take more time than others. Some are very practical, while others are more personal and address the heart on a deeper level. Set aside as much quiet time as you can to go through the questions.

WITH A MENTOR OR FRIEND

If you have a mentor already, you are very blessed! Mentors are the kind of people who love us, yet nudge us further forward into the full purpose God has designed us for. A close friend may be able to do the same with you. If you do this with a mentor/friend, I suggest you both get a copy of the book and this Personal Reflection Journal so you can work through them at home on your own. Then get together once a week or so to discuss the questions and pray for each other.

WITH A GROUP

Perhaps you have a group of supportive friends: Women who encourage each other to be godly wives and mothers, and who are fun to be around! If so, you might work through portions of the book and this journal on your own, and then gather together to discuss some of the less personal questions in the journal. This will keep your whole group on the same page, and you'll have solid resources and tools with which to encourage each. You'll also have great discussion material!

If you would rather use a study guide for your group, the Small Group Study Guide for *Married Mom, Solo Parent* is available on my website free of charge.

SHARE YOUR FEEDBACK

I would love to hear from you. Please feel free to send me a note at my website, www.carlaanne.com.

Many blessings!

Carla Anne

Introduction

What Is a Solo Parent?

How would *you* define a married solo parent or married single mom?

Of the difficult questions listed on page 13, which have you ever asked? What other questions have you asked that are not listed?

How many other people do you know that are married moms, solo parents?

What do you hope to learn, experience, or receive as you read the book and go through this Personal Reflection Guide?

My prayers and thoughts....

Chapter One

This is Not What I Signed Up For!

At the beginning of this chapter, Carla Anne shares a brief summary of what life was like for her as a married single mom during the early years of her marriage. What circumstances in your life add up to make you feel like a married single mom?

Consider the title of this chapter. What specific things would you say you did NOT sign up for?

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Spend some time praying and asking God what kinds of expectations or desires He'd like you to have. Write them out here.

When do you feel the loneliest in your marriage? Why do you think that is?

What are some of your fears? Write them down here—no matter how silly or strange or scary.

Honestly consider how often you read the Bible and pray. Make a plan to go “RPO” (reading, praying, obeying) every day. Write down what time, where, and which days you will do this. Have a friend or Bible study group keep you accountable.

Make a list of ten things about your husband you can honestly thank God for. Share them with your friends.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

Does your family schedule need to be readjusted to allow you more rest, your family more time together, and your kids more down time? What are you doing well? What would you like to change?

How have you “lowered the standard” for yourself because of your extenuating circumstances? (i.e. What would you do differently, better, to a higher standard if only your husband . . .) Write out how you can make a change in this area.

Think about situations in your life where systemic anger has reared its head. Confess that anger. Then ask God for a few ideas on how to handle that. Jot them down here.

What thoughts and feelings come to your mind and heart when you consider that God has put his blessing on your marriage?

My prayers and thoughts....

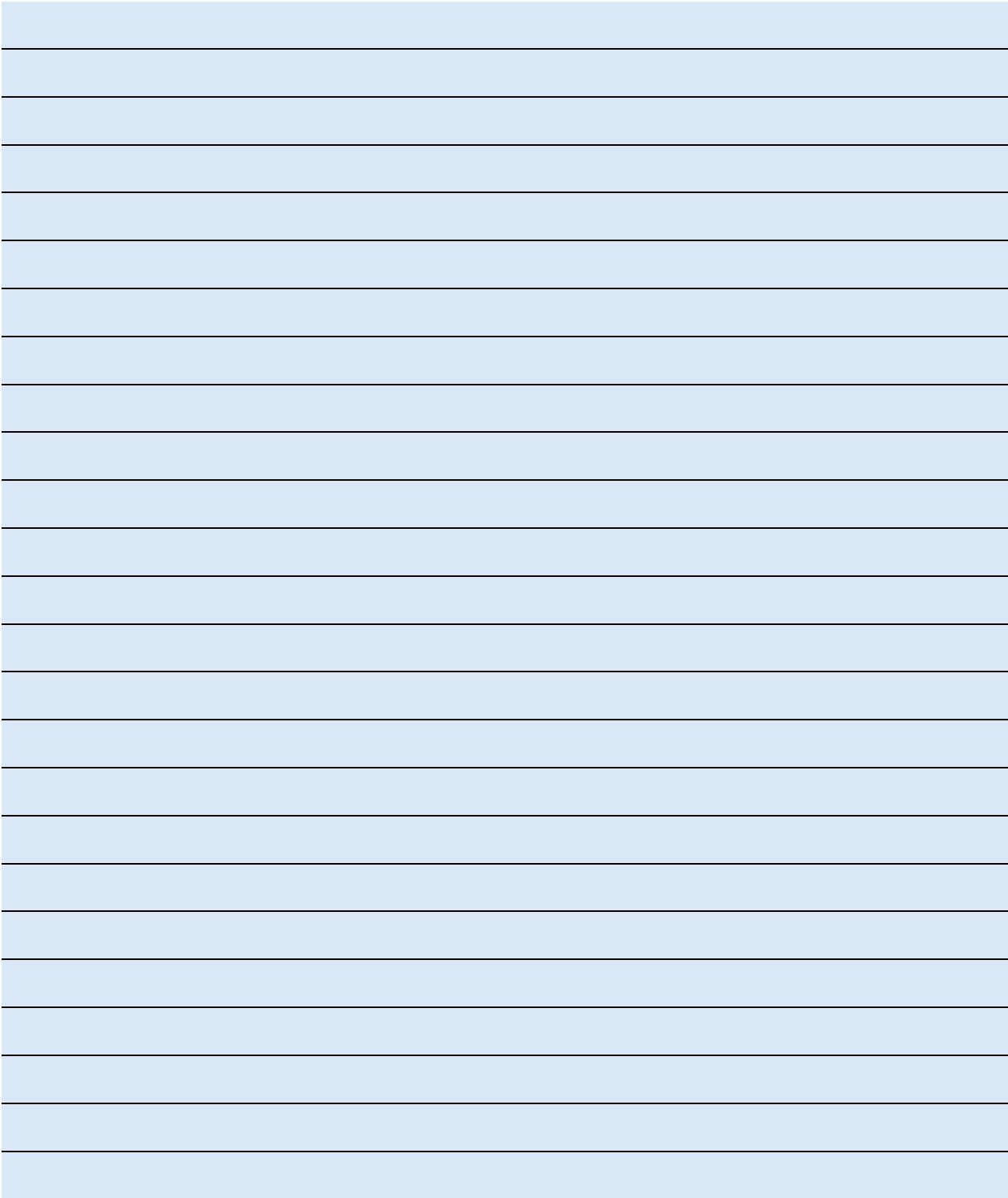
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Some women question whether emotional divorce is really all that bad. Others go so far as to say it benefits a marriage. Write down two or three reasons why *you* think emotional divorce can devastate a marriage.

Do you wait to talk to your husband about difficult issues until you have heard from God through His word and prayer? What might change in the way you communicate and in your marriage if you did that regularly?

Give an example of a healthy boundary you have set or one you might need to set.

My prayers and thoughts....



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Chapter Five

Discipline Divided

How are your parenting styles different from your husband's? How do you complement each other?

Carla Anne explains discipline as “caring, loving ways to guide our children to something, or guard them from something, someone or themselves”. What is your opinion of this definition? How would you describe healthy discipline?

What are some creative consequences that you have used, have heard of, or that you can come up with, that match the crime?

When are you tempted to let your kids off the hook? What is the weak spot you need to watch out for in your own discipline style?

Does Carla Anne's explanation of Proverbs 22:6 ("train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it") give you a feeling of freedom or responsibility? Explain.

My prayers and thoughts....

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Chapter Six

Those Should Be *His* Chores!

How did your mom and dad (or those who spent the most time raising you) divide up the chores and roles in your childhood home?

How have you and your husband divided up the chores? Is there a difference between what you have talked about, and how the chores have ended up being divided?

Of all the tasks involved in running a household, which task do you find the most difficult? What are some creative ways you could get that done, or who could you recruit to help you with that?

Have you left room in your household for your husband to be needed, or have you taken over everything?

How are you, or how could you, pass the mantle of leadership on to your children, especially your son(s), to build up their confidence so they will grow into mature, responsible, hard-working adults?

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Chapter Seven

Keep My Mind *and* the House?

Which rooms in your house cause you the most mess stress? What would a stress-free house look like?

Make a plan here on how and when you will get vicious with making your house less stressful. List the rooms in your house. For each room write the date you plan to start uncluttering and optimizing, and the date you plan to have this completed by.

ROOM	START DATE	FINISH DATE

My prayers and thoughts....

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Chapter Eight

Make the Most of Mealtime

What was mealtime like in your childhood home? How would your children describe mealtime at your house? In the next twenty-four hours, ask your children (if old enough) to describe your mealtimes and ask what *they* think a family meal should be like.

How did the Child Trends Data Bank 2003 Child Trends Report surprise you or confirm what you suspected? Knowing what you know now, how important will it be to your family to establish a family meal and what do you think might change in your home if you did?

Which meal would be the easiest to establish as a family meal? List some quick and easy meal ideas you could use to make this new routine as pain-free as possible to integrate into your life.

MEAL: _____

MEAL IDEA #1: _____

MEAL IDEA #2: _____

MEAL IDEA #3: _____

MEAL IDEA #4: _____

Brainstorm some great open-ended questions that might get your family talking around the kitchen table. Write them down here and then use them this week! For more conversation starters and other helpful tools check out the resources section of Carla Anne's website, www.carlaanne.com.

What kinds of distractions and interruptions will you need to manage in order for you to make the most of the family meal? How will you manage those distractions?

My prayers and thoughts....

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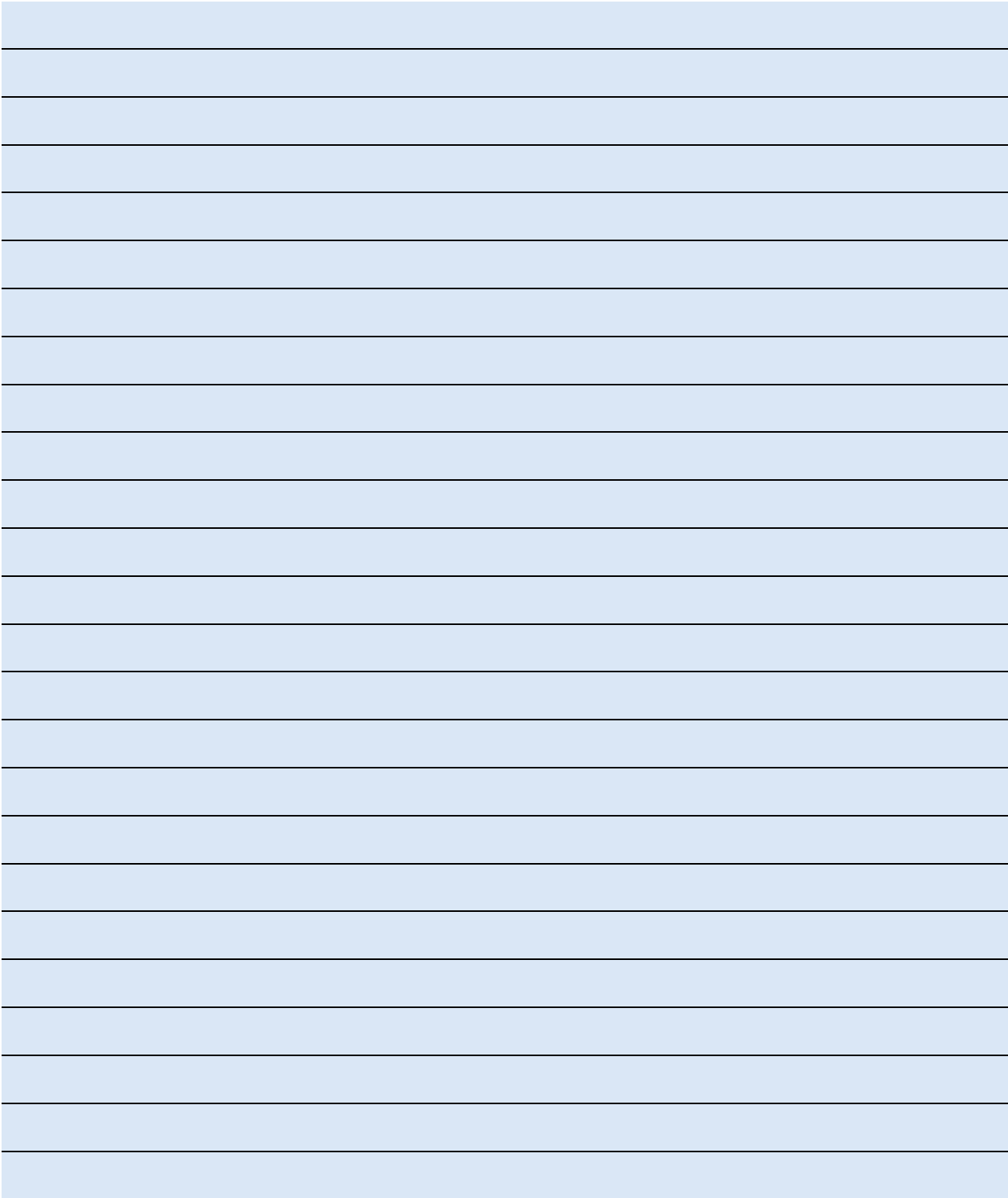
Chapter Ten

Give Me a Break!

Most married single moms say they don't get enough time to take care of themselves. Why do you think this is so very important for every mom? Why is this particularly important for married single moms?

Have you ever hired a babysitter? If not, why not? If you have had babysitters in the past, do you ever hire a babysitter just so you can rest and rejuvenate or do you leave it for those times when you *have* to be gone? What would need to change so you could hire a babysitter to allow you to get some rest?

My prayers and thoughts....



My prayers and thoughts....

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Chapter Twelve

I Have Needs Too, You Know!

Carla Anne talks about modesty of the heart. How would you define what that is? Do you feel like you consistently live with modesty of the heart? How could you improve in this area?

Have you committed emotional adultery in your heart? Is there someone—other than God or your husband— whose words, glances, and touch cause your heart to race? What about comparing your husband to others, or working toward compliments and affirmations from other men? If so, take time now to confess that to God and to make a commitment to live with a pure heart and mind. Write out some of your prayer here.

What action do you need to take (such as no longer reading romance novels, watching soap operas, or engaging in online forums) to end, or protect against, any fantasy relationships and to renew your mind?

If masturbation and fantasy have been part of your life, ask God to reveal to your heart His passion for purity and passion within your marriage. Ask Him for words of counsel and hope that will keep you motivated to maintain purity and to wait for the fulfillment of passionate love within your marriage. Write down those words of hope here.

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Chapter Thirteen

The Father Your Kids Need

What effects does your lifestyle have on your kids? How does your husband contribute to that (positively or negatively)? How do you contribute to that (positively or negatively)?

If your children were asked (why not try asking them?) what you have taught them about Jesus and the power He can have in their lives, what would they say? Do you feel you have done everything in your power to introduce them to the Jesus who can heal and hold hearts?

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Put yourself in your husband's place for a few minutes . . . What might it be like to finally be home and not fit in, not know the schedule, or feel like you are in the way? What can you do practically to help him fit in again?

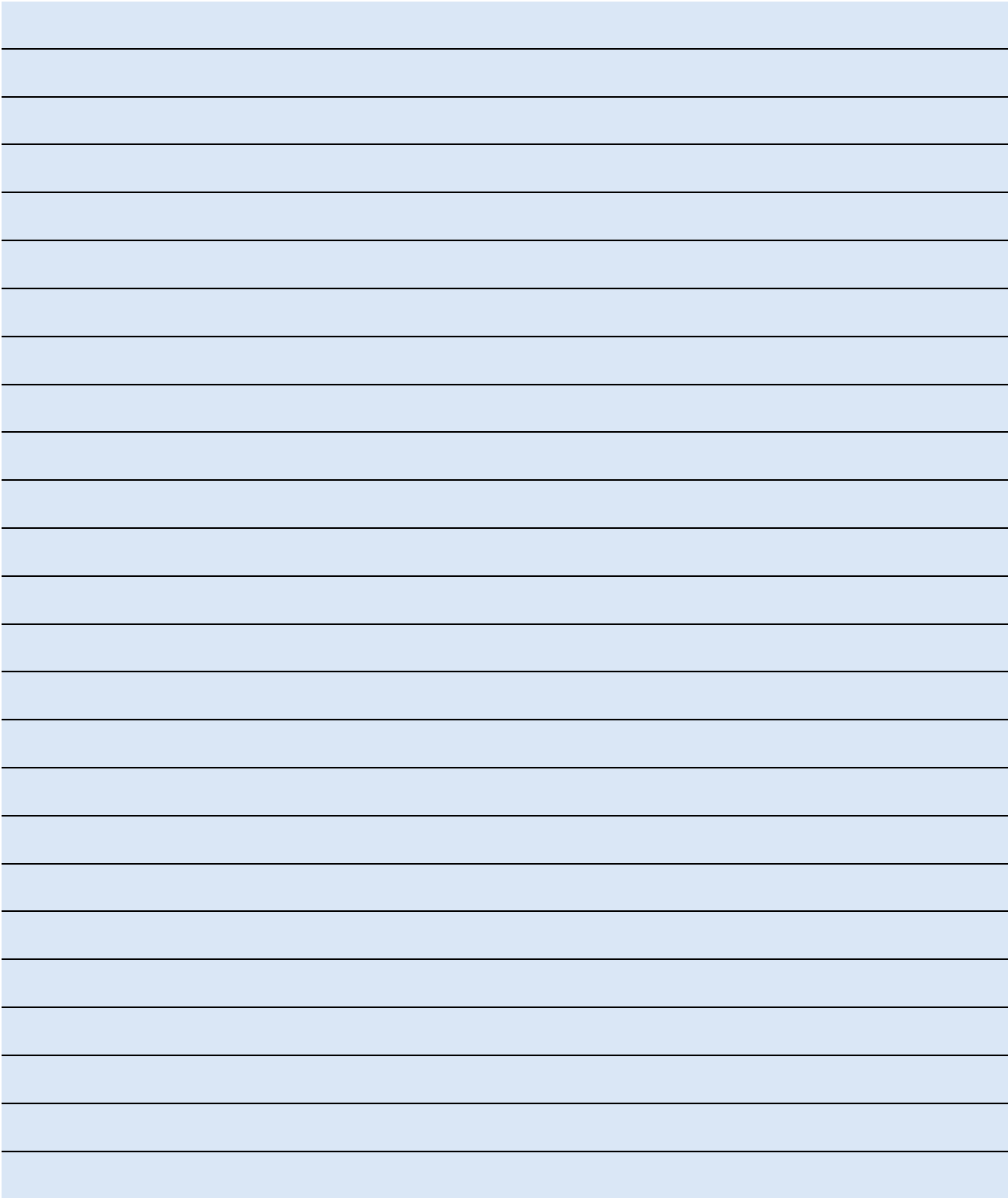
Forgiveness is necessary and the most needed ingredient in your marriage when your husband comes home. How can you practice quick forgiveness—both before he comes home and after he has arrived—to make your marriage and home a safe refuge for your man?

How will you live for the eternity that has been planted in your heart?

My prayers and thoughts....



Spend some time asking God for His vision of your husband and His plans for Him. This might take a few days, but during that time every time you feel like God is giving you a glimpse into His bigger picture for your husband, jot those thoughts down here.



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My prayers and thoughts....

