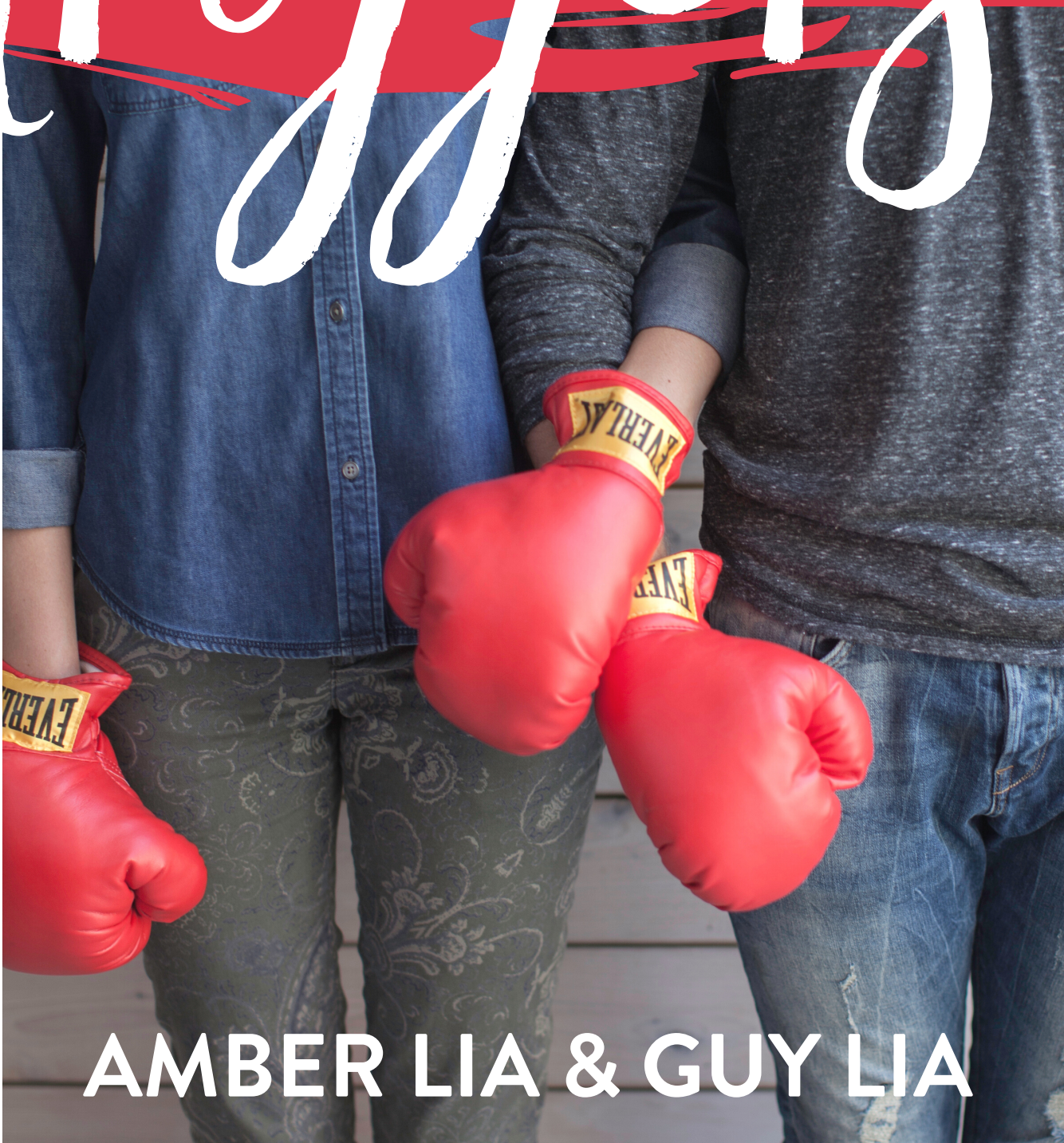


MARRIAGE

# Triggers

STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS



AMBER LIA & GUY LIA

# INTRODUCTION

1. Lou Priolo says, “If your anger is due to your recognition that a holy God has been offended by another’s behavior, that anger is righteous . . . On the other hand, if your anger is the result of not having your personal desires met, that anger is usually sinful.” Consider this explanation of righteous and unrighteous anger. Which category does your anger most often fall into?

2. What are some of your “trigger moments”?

3. There are seasons in marriage where triggers can cause us to feel hopeless. Take a look at this verse: “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8:28, NIV) What comes to mind when you think of this verse in light of your relationship with your spouse?



# CHAPTER 1

1. Consider this verse: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" (Matthew 22:37–39, NIV) What would change in your relationship if you loved one another like this?

2. "Let's settle the matter, here in the first chapter. The moment you said "I do" to your wife or husband, your marriage became a match made in Heaven." Knowing that God brought you together as part of His good plan for your lives, are you willing to invest the time and energy to read through these short 31 chapters? Will you allow the Holy Spirit to lovingly convict you, focusing on your own areas of growth?



# CHAPTER 2

1. Mark 10:45 (ESV) says, “For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Jesus’ example to us is humbling. So often, our triggers stem from pride or self-centeredness, not because we relentlessly serve one another. In what ways do you serve your spouse? What are some of the most common ways they serve you? Take the time to list as many as come to mind.

2. “Whatever we do, we are to ‘work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men.’ Being more concerned with pleasing an audience of One, both in our work ethic and our attitudes toward our spouses when they fall short, is foundational in helping us overcome this conflict.” When we seek to honor God with our work ethic, our efforts take on a whole new level of purpose. Has this been a struggle for you? Do you get caught up in feelings of dread or frustration over mundane tasks, or do you look at them as opportunities to show God you love Him and desire to please Him?



# CHAPTER 3

1. Are you a backseat driver? Is your spouse? Which of the practical suggestions in this chapter might work for you as a couple to alleviate arguments when you get in the car?

2. What would an ideal passenger look like? An ideal driver? Work toward this goal with understanding and grace toward one another!



# CHAPTER 4

1. In the area of finances, where is your biggest issue? Is it budgeting, miscommunication, or general financial pressure? Think about the timing of when you have conversations about money. What might be a time that is a “trigger moment” for talking about finances?

2. 1 Peter 4:19: “So then, those who suffer according to God’s will should entrust their souls to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.” In any situation where we may be suffering, God instructs us to entrust ourselves to our “faithful Creator and continue to do good.” How can you “do good” even when faced with this trigger in your marriage? Work to be specific in your answer.



# CHAPTER 5

1. Do you struggle to set down your phones so you can be fully present with your family? How often do you take naps? Do you make plans to spend time, on a regular basis, doing nothing at all? When was the last time you felt like you had a handle on your life instead of feeling like your life had a chokehold on you?

2. Is it a habit for you and your spouse to go to a sound Bible-teaching church each week? What other ways can you determine to “rest” as a couple/family? Name at least one change you can implement this week to foster a more peaceful and restful atmosphere in your busy lives.





# CHAPTER 6

1. How often do you and your spouse pray together? When you are triggered by your spouse, do you pray for them before lashing out or discussing your frustrations?

2. "When the righteous cry for help, the Lord hears and delivers them out of all their troubles." (Psalm 34:17, ESV) Because God's Word is truth, we can trust that no trigger is too big for God to deliver us from. What's one "trouble" in your marriage that you need to trust God to deliver you from? Write out a simple prayer, asking in faith for Him to work in your marriage.





# CHAPTER 7

1. In in-law relationships, we can be used as a trigger or a testimony. Which do you think is the gentle biblical response? Examine your relationship with your in-laws. Have you been used as a testimony to them, or a trigger?

2. James 3:17–18 (ESV) is a guiding light for those of us triggered by our in-law relationships: “But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.” Name one thing you can do to be a peacemaker toward your spouse. Then, name one way you can be a peacemaker with your in-laws.



# CHAPTER 8

1. Take a moment and reflect on your image of life after marriage before saying “I do.” How is it different now from what you pictured? If it’s not the ideal scenario you hoped for, is there some anger residing in your heart? How is that evidenced in your reactions towards your spouse?

2. “We may not have control over how our lives have turned out, but we always have the power to make the best of the life we have.” This is what makes us as Christ-followers different from the world. What attitude shift do you need to make, right now, in order to embrace God’s plan for your life?



# CHAPTER 9

1. Do you argue in front of your kids? What impact has that had on your home and your children?

2. Take the time to put yourself in your child's shoes. How would you feel if you were being parented with your current methods? What do you need to reconsider? How does your parenting compare to the long-suffering attitude of God as He parents you? Do your parenting goals reflect the love of Christ? Are they biblical or just based on your traditions or peer group?



# CHAPTER 10

1. Do you need to surrender your marriage to the Lord, letting go of your idols? Write out a brief prayer here, offering your desires to the Lord and inviting Him to take first place in your heart.

2. A heart of gratitude is an excellent starting point to rid ourselves of idols. Make a list of what you are grateful to God for regarding your spouse and your marriage. Was this exercise hard for you to do? Why or why not?



# CHAPTER 11

1. Our sex lives can actually be a proactive force against the temptation toward unrighteous anger in our marriages! The closeness we achieve through making sex a priority is a buffer against Satan's attempts to tempt us toward anger and distance in our relationship. What other ways do you see Satan attempting to cause division in your marriage when it comes to intimacy?

2. One of the main points we hope you take away from reading "Marriage Triggers" is that great marriages don't just happen — they take intentionality. And the same is true when it comes to your sex life. What's one way you can make progress toward intimacy with your spouse?



# CHAPTER 12

1. God lovingly and gently calls us to dig deeper than we think we can. He is our strength when we are weak. In what way do you feel weak today? How can you “dig deeper” so as to fulfill your wedding vows?

2. Has caring for your sick spouse become a burden to you? Take a moment to repeat the prayer from the end of the chapter. What else do you need God to do for you or within you to press on in your current circumstances?



# CHAPTER 13

1. When you were growing up, what were the roles of your mother and father like? How are the roles in your own marriage similar or different?

2. In this chapter, we see how Jesus' love was directly linked to His willingness to serve others. In what ways do you and your spouse serve one another? Name one or two specific ways you can improve in this area.





# CHAPTER 14

1. Name one or two ways having an emotional connection to someone other than your spouse is harmful to your relationship. What's one boundary you might need to put in place?

2. Is there a need for you to forgive your spouse for an emotional affair, or even something less personally devastating? Have you been punishing them in some way? How can forgiving them and laying your burden down at the feet of Jesus provide healing for you personally and for your marriage?



# CHAPTER 15

1. During your growing up years, was spiritual leadership modeled in your home? If yes, what did it look like? If not, how did that impact your family?

2. What is your spiritual leadership style? What does your spouse's spiritual leadership style look like? In what ways do you need to rethink this issue in your marriage?



# CHAPTER 16

1. The Bible is clear about how seriously God takes lying and deceit. Biblically, we are called to confess our sins to one another. This is your chance to be honest. Has there been any deception in your marriage?

2. Sometimes, we think that “little white lies” are harmless, but that is also a lie. What’s one specific and practical way you can ensure that trust is actively being built in your relationship with your spouse?



# CHAPTER 17

1. Do you or your spouse resort to yelling? What's one concrete thing you can begin to do instead of yelling when you feel like you are going to blow your top?

2. Do you feel misunderstood or unknown in your marriage? What leads you to feeling this way the most? How can you communicate this to your spouse in a way that is honest, but also kind and respectful?



# CHAPTER 18

**1. What aspect of your life contributes the most to your feelings of weariness or exhaustion? Is there a practical step you can take to alleviate some of the pressure you feel?**

**2. Imagine laying your burdens down at the feet of Jesus. What changes happen in your heart? Your mind? Your physical body?**



# CHAPTER 19

1. Marriages ebb and flow, and so do our feelings for one another. When was the last time you felt like you and your spouse were truly in sync and triggers were not problematic?

2. Lazy spouses make for bad marriages. We all have room for improvement, so let's do a little self-examination. What's one area you may have become lazy in regarding your marriage?



# CHAPTER 20

1. What qualities of friendship attracted you to your spouse when you were first getting to know one another? What qualities of friendship do you value the most now?

2. It's important to foster your friendship with one another. Name one thing you can do together this month that will help build a friendly rapport with each other.





# CHAPTER 21

1. Do you tend to give your spouse the benefit of the doubt in your communication, or do you tend to assume the worst? What is your biggest communication trigger?

2. Broken communication can be deeply frustrating for any couple. What heart and behavior changes do you need to allow the Holy Spirit to make in you so that your communication is filled with understanding and grace?



# CHAPTER 22

1. In what ways do you have a biblical “me first” attitude? Give an example of one way your spouse displays positive “me first” attitude in your marriage.

2. Is there an attitude or even a nagging conviction you often feel about your thought life regarding your spouse? Take the time right now to confess it to God and invite Him to replace those thoughts and attitudes with godly ones.



# CHAPTER 23

1. Does your marriage feel aimless? What's one vision you have for your marriage that, so far, has gone unfulfilled?

2. As a couple, you and your spouse are one. Do you feel unified? What do you believe would help you become more on the same page with each other? If this feels out of reach, commit to praying about this issue and trust God to answer!



# CHAPTER 24

1. What three words would you use to describe your personality? What three words would you use to describe your spouse's personality? Use one word to describe your unique marriage personality.

2. Consider the personality trait in your spouse that often triggers you. What's one way you can begin to view it as an asset instead of a trigger?



# CHAPTER 25

1. When we enter seasons of questioning God's presence and care for us, it's good to reflect on His faithfulness to us in the past. Describe a time when you saw God's hand working in your life and you knew He saw you in your circumstances.

2. Take a look back at Hebrews 11:1 — how might this season in your life and marriage be a time when you can step forward in faith? What do you sense God is teaching you?



# CHAPTER 26

1. In what ways was your childhood similar to your spouse's? How were they different?

2. In what ways has your marriage refined you to be more like Christ, especially in light of your personality differences? Does that help you think about your personality triggers as positive opportunities?



# CHAPTER 27

1. What practices or habits do you have in place that might be stealing needed time away from your family? Cell phones? Sports? Ministry?

2. It's important to carve out time for ourselves and to enjoy hobbies and leisure time. Some of us spend too much time doing so while others neglect any kind of self-care at all. How can you and your spouse find a healthy balance and support one another's needs in this area?





# CHAPTER 28

1. How might your relationship change if you stop fighting your spouse in order to start fighting your true enemy, Satan? How would that look practically?

2. Look at the description of biblical love in 1 Corinthians 13 — which area do you feel a conviction to work on with the help of the Holy Spirit?



# CHAPTER 29

1. Have you ever considered yourself to be a vehicle of healing from God for your spouse as they recover from past wounds? How might you do so?

2. When we said our wedding vows, we committed to one another for life. Some of us didn't realize the challenge that might become down the road. What can you do this week to recommit to loving your spouse biblically, so that you can both find healing from past wounds in your childhood, or even from your triggered marriage?



# CHAPTER 30

1. Do mole hills become mountains in your marriage? Being quickly provoked to anger is foolish, according to the Scriptures. Are there things that you can brush off or overlook?

2. Being proactive with our pain is always better than nursing it. Think of a time recently when your feelings were hurt. How can you turn that into a positive opportunity?



# CHAPTER 31

1. Your story isn't over. Have hope that God can do anything and that He is FOR you. So many people throughout Scripture got "do-overs." Name one such example from the Bible where God redeemed a life that seemed on the brink of disaster, and yet He brought about His Kingdom purposes in the end.

2. Are you at a place of surrender in your marriage? Take a moment to offer your heart, your pain, your spouse, to the Lord. Write out a simple prayer, inviting God to give you a do-over.

3. Congratulations! You have completed "Marriage Triggers: Exchanging Spouses' Angry Reactions for Gentle Biblical Responses." How has your relationship with the Lord grown as you read through these chapters? How has your marriage been impacted?

