

# Session 1

## Introduction to Course & Welcome

### Opening Prayer

**Distribute copies of Love Junkies:** Distribute books and plan to spend a few moments looking at the book as a group to get familiar with the content. As a group leader, it's best to order books before the first session to ensure that everyone has their books at the beginning of the study. There is nothing worse than getting off to a late start because some members don't have their book and have to play catch up or can't effectively participate in group discussion.

**Review Course Overview and Session Format:** Review the Course Overview on page 8 of the Leaders Guide and the Session Format on page 9 so that your ladies will understand the basic format for the 10-week *Love U for Love Junkies* session.

**Reading Assignments:** For your convenience, the Participant Handout section contains a pdf file titled Reading Assignment Schedule. (See example on page 2). You'll want to fill in the appropriate dates before you print out copies for your group. In this way, should a group member miss a class they will know what the next session will be discussing.

You'll notice that the Reading Assignment Schedule also includes details about how to complete the Soul Assessment Profile\* as well as details about homework. Let the participants know that although the first reading assignment to be read before session 2 is five chapters long (50 pages), the remaining sessions include three chapters per week.

\*If you want, take the Soul Assessment Profile before your first session so that you are better able to introduce it to your group.

### Watch the Introductory Video

### Group Discussion Time

## Session 1

### Reading Assignments

Before	Date	Read	Topic
Session 2	_____	Chapters 1-5	Getting Rid of Baggage
Session 3	_____	Chapters 6-8	Identity
Session 4	_____	Chapters 9-11	Forgiveness
Session 5	_____	Chapters 12-14	Imagination
Session 6	_____	Chapters 15-17	Prayer
Session 7	_____	Chapters 18-20	Resolve
Session 8	_____	Chapters 21-23	Accountability
Session 9	_____	Chapters 24-26	Yes
Session 10	_____	Retake SAP*	Love U More

\* Soul Assessment Profile

**Soul Assessment Profile:** Advise the ladies that before session 2, they will complete a soul-assessment profile online. The assessment can be accessed at <http://www.christyjohnson.org/soul-assessment-profile/>. There are 7 assessments, one for each step. Each assessment is a short quiz of 10 questions each. Instructions are on page 60 of the reading material.

**Homework:** There is no “written” homework for Love U. Rather, sessions 3-9 challenge participants to select action points from the reading material. Action points are detailed in the “strengthening” chapter of each step. Action points are hands-on exercises that encourage women to apply scripture truths to their lives. Instead of just memorizing scriptures, they are given ways to implement the Word into their daily lives. In this way, they can target their areas of vulnerability and strengthen their soul health.

## Session 1 (con't)

### Tips for Great Group Discussion Time

Now that you've had time to introduce the material and watch the first video, the rest of the first session is designed for your group to get acquainted. When ladies make a good connection in the very first session, the group stands the greatest chance of success with good attendance and heart-felt sharing. Ladies will want to come back when they not only feel welcome, but feel a warm atmosphere void of judgment and full of relevant conversation that offers hope and healing for their personal situations. First impressions really do make a great impact.

Don't rush the group introduction process. Introductions are vital for the group to connect. Women won't share much in future sessions if they don't feel an atmosphere of trust and common ground. As the leader it is important for you to establish the climate for this to happen. Pray for the ladies before they arrive. Pray that the Holy Spirit will create an atmosphere that will bring peace and trust.

There is a precious group synergy that happens when ladies bond. The Holy Spirit will prompt them to share things that minister to another lady in the group. The dynamics of the group will be such that you aren't the only minister in the room. One lady may connect to another lady in the group due to similar life experiences. There is no way to predict what will happen and you will be surprised how the Holy Spirit moves, so don't have such a firm agenda as a leader that you don't allow Him to move.

## Session 1 (con't)

### Start by Introducing Yourself

You might start off by saying something like, “I want this group to be a place of hope and healing. We gather as a group because of a common love junkie bond and for the next 9 weeks, I’m believing that the Lord is going to take us on a transforming journey to heal us from past hurts and change things in us that have led us to make some of the love junkie mistakes we have made. He that began a good work in all of us will be faithful to complete it. Amen?”

“As your leader, I’d like for you to know a few things about me...”

Here you may mention a few details of your choice such as your name of course, how many children you have, what you do for a living, whether you are married or single, what your greatest relationship struggle has been and why you decided to facilitate the group.

The important thing is for women to know that this is a place of common ground, connection and healing, so take a couple of minutes to let the group get to know you. If you simply announce your name, others will follow suit and the whole introduction will be over in seconds without creating an opportunity to group connection.

Share some candid heartfelt things about yourself. In doing so, you are setting the precedent for other ladies to know that this is a safe place to share. If you are too reserved about your own life, they may feel that it is inappropriate for them to open up. The more vulnerable you are, the more liberty you give the group to share their own struggles, weaknesses and challenges.

When you share about your own past or current difficulties, you also let them know that you are not perfect. Ironically, it’s when we expose our own weaknesses that we often give others the most hope. Our weaknesses provide the backdrop for God’s redemptive restoration process.

There is so much healing that takes place when we realize we are not alone and that others have faced the same issues we have faced.

Paul said in 2 Corinthians 12:9, “Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.”

## Session 1 (con't)

I also love what Paul said in Galatians 6:2. "Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ." So don't be afraid to be real. This first meeting can really set the climate for the rest of the group session. **You are the conduit that allows the ladies in your group to begin the journey of releasing the hurts of their past to provide hope for the future.**

### Discuss Confidentiality

To make your group a safe place where everyone can share freely, it's important to create an atmosphere of confidentiality. Participants should not betray the confidence of other participants. Remind them that what they hear in the room is not to be carried outside the room, unless they have permission from the person who shared. When others are speaking, participants should be great listeners, refrain from interrupting, and respond with kindness and compassion, not judgment or criticism.

### Go Around the Room

After you share, announce, "Let's go around the room and get to know a bit about each other."

Ask each lady to state her name and share a bit about herself and perhaps why she decided to take the course. Some will open up right away, and some ladies may be more reserved. For those who are a bit more timid, don't be afraid to ask a question or two to prod her along. Make it conversational but try to keep the balance so everyone gets equal talk time.

**Discussion Questions:** Go around the room and allow the ladies to respond to the following questions.

- What item that Christy pulled out of her baggage do you relate with the most?
- What has been your greatest relationship challenge?
- What lies about relationships do you hope to change during Love U?

If this session is done well, you have created the opportunity for women to connect. Let them talk. Let them share. Let the bonding begin.

### Optional Discussion for 1<sup>st</sup> session

If you have additional time, you may choose to go over the next section, "Lifestyles of the Broken Hearted." If your time is up, advise the group of the reading assignment for next week and close in prayer.

## Session 1 (con't)



### Assignment for Next Week:

Read Chapters 1-5

Complete online Soul Assessment Profile

The Soul Assessment profile is to be completed online. It contains 70 questions. Advise the ladies that it will take approximately 45 minutes to complete. Additional instructions are included in chapter 5 on page 60.

### Lifestyles of the Broken Hearted (Optional)

#### Leader's Instruction:

Print out the Lifestyles of the Broken Hearted handout for class members. The link to the pdf file is contained on the [Session Downloads](#) page at [www.christyjohnson.org](http://www.christyjohnson.org).

After you **read the text in the blue section below out loud**, go around the room and have the participants take turns reading the bulleted items from their handout. Encourage group members to share and make comments after each item is read.

The most well-known relationship junkie in the Bible is the woman who met Jesus at the well. Although she lived over two thousand years ago, the feelings she faced were no different than the emotions women deal with today. We don't know anything about her background or her age, but the woman at the well could just as easily have been one of the following girls.

See if you recognize yourself in any of the following women. Maybe one of these women pegs you perfectly or maybe you're a combination of two or more. As we take turns reading the profiles, place a check mark by the characteristics that you identify with. Identification of our weaknesses is the first step to bringing change. Jesus can't heal what we ignore and refuse to surrender. Correction and change is always preceded by clarity and understanding.

None of these women or their relationship issues are beyond hope. Maybe you've done things the same way all your life, but until now, you've never realized that some of your romantic responses are responsible for your relationship issues. It's a good thing when we can see where we've veered off course because recognition of our issues is the first step to correcting them. Only after we notice our unhealthy responses can we replace them with effective responses.

## Lifestyles of the Broken Hearted

### The Compromiser

- ❑ Jennifer wants a strong Christian leader for a husband but lacks the resolve to wait. She settles for much less in relationships, convinced that what she desires is too hard to find.
- ❑ Denise has a habit of feeling sorry for the men she dates. She picks men she wants to fix.

### The Fantasizer

- ❑ Diane isn't even in a relationship, but Dennis, a successful married man at the office, is all she thinks about. She often writes flirtatious messages on his Facebook wall and even bought him a gift card from a local restaurant for his office birthday party, suggesting that they "do lunch." Before Dennis, there was a string of other unavailable men with whom she was obsessed.
- ❑ Amanda has had relationship issues ever since her obsession with romance began in college. Filled with unrealistic expectations about romance, she imagined that falling in love would happen instantly and passionately, like it did in *The Titanic*.
- ❑ Courtney's parents won't allow her to date yet, but she is involved with Dillon, a twenty-year-old college student that she met online. A few months into their relationship, she started "sexting" Dillon. (Sexting is an alarming trend among teenagers that involves sending nude or semi-nude photos from cell phone to cell phone.) Now Courtney is convinced that Dillon is in love with her, even though they have never met.

### The Frequent Flyer

- ❑ Michelle got sucked into addictive relationships in junior high. In order to fit in with the popular crowd, she had to have a boyfriend. Later in life, having a relationship became as essential as a drivers license; it was merely the vehicle that took her places.
- ❑ Amy is addicted to the rush of romance. She gets easily bored after the chemistry in a relationship fades. In the past five years, she's been engaged three times and has been in over twelve serious relationships.
- ❑ Samantha made a negative vow after seeing her parents break up that she would never give her heart to a man. Instead she hops from relationship to relationship.

## Lifestyles of the Broken Hearted

### The Minimizer

- ❑ Ashley insists David is in love with her, even though he has told her he wants break up. In her desperation for love, she tells herself that he is afraid in order to console herself and minimize his rejection.
- ❑ Cynthia's husband has been distant and rude, frequently canceling dinner plans. Lately he has scheduled business out of town on weekends. She discovered that he purchased two airline tickets to Cozumel. Instead of confronting him, she excuses his behavior as stress.

### The Replacer

- ❑ Suzanne was devastated after her fiancé, Chad, broke off their engagement. Two weeks later, she moved in with Matthew, a guy she met at Starbucks. She and Chad are still hooking up. Matthew doesn't know.
- ❑ Dominique started having an affair after her husband refused to work on their relationship. When she ran into an old boyfriend and found out he was divorced, they caught up over dinner. Soon she found herself caught up in adultery. She wants to stop but doesn't know how.

### The Rerouter

- ❑ Carol has been unhappy in her marriage for years but afraid that a divorce will bankrupt her lifestyle. Driven by a lack of attention, she keeps her Day-Timer filled with appointments—personal trainers, tennis lessons and massages...all handsome young men.

Paula didn't realize how relationship addiction had its grip on her until after her husband filed for divorce. For years, Paula ignored the discontentment with her marriage by pouring herself into her children, her career and her community pursuits. She didn't realize how much her identity was tied to her title. Now, instead of Mrs., she's Miserable.



## Lifestyles of the Broken Hearted

### The Tolerator

❑ Like I often did, Emily rushes into relationships. She frequently settles for less than what she wants. She'd rather be miserable in a relationship than be alone.

❑ Linda tolerates unacceptable behavior in relationships. Her low self-esteem keeps her trapped in a relationship with a man who cheats on her because she doesn't think she deserves any better.

❑ Sandra doesn't want to be alone. After her marriage of twenty-nine years ended in divorce, she met Frank playing Bingo. Frank isn't her type but they spend almost every day together. Sandra's settled for a casual companion instead of a significant other.

### The Truster

❑ Debbie's is fascinated with online dating sites. She assumed that Jim was safe because he said he was a Christian and attended church. She went out on several dates with Jim before she found out he was married.

❑ Tiffany is confused about relationships because she has never seen a healthy one modeled. She already has three children with three different fathers. Now she is pregnant again with the child of another man.

❑ Heather is a bad judge of character. When she and Dan first started dating, Heather believed everything Dan told her about his financial success. When she discovered that he owed \$60,000 in credit card debt, she was furious and broke up with him. When he accused her of being selfish and materialistic, she felt guilty about breaking it off and went back to him. In the two years that they have been dating, Dan has been fired from three jobs and is now unemployed. Heather sees no future with Dan but feels compelled by her commitment and Dan's manipulative accusations to stay in the relationship.