



My husband, Jeff, and I began teaching a Newly Married Life Group class in November 2022 after a group of young adults completed **Together For Life**. After a dozen years teaching in student ministry, we were drawn back to disciple young married couples as we had done previously. We helped recruit Steve and Jeannie Rice to teach with us, and later, William and Rebekah Black joined the teaching team. It's a great combination of teaching styles and life experiences. We all have a heart to help young married couples grow in their relationship with one another and, more importantly, with the Lord. Building friendships is so important for married couples. We love encouraging these couples to find Christian friends. These friendships will play a major role as they share in the ups and downs of life, as they pray for each other, and as they challenge each other to seek and honor Christ individually and as a couple.

Several members of our class often tell us that the community has been the greatest part of being in this Life Group. A member who has been with the class since the beginning said, "It is rare to find a solid group of believers in the same life stage and that is exactly what we have found!" Being able to provide a place for these couples to meet, study God's word, and build friendships is what we desired. Several of the couples are new to the Birmingham area, so Dawson, and specifically this class, provides community. Class members express that they are so thankful for the friendships the Lord has provided.

In addition to leading Bible study every Sunday morning, we also led a Wednesday night book study over the summer where the ladies and guys met separately. This helped the class members get to know one another better and grow even closer. It also allowed for more prayer time and opportunities to share on a more personal level. One couple said, "We have been challenged by other couples to love one another like Christ loves the Church. We are able to dive into a biblical perspective of marriage and hold one another accountable." As the leaders of the class, this is exactly what we had prayed for before the class was ever formed.

Not only do we have weekly Bible study together, but we also share in some pretty fun social activities. Game night is the biggest hit for this competitive group! Another favorite for the ladies was a flower arranging and baking night. (The guys were invited to join us but they chose to go out for barbecue and Topgolf instead.) Recently, we began to include service opportunities for the class at Kids Connection, KidLife and in the community. We hope to provide more opportunities for the couples to volunteer and serve in the future.

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Jeff and I still remember the friendships we made early on in our marriage and we still have many of those today. Those relationships are so precious to us and have been a vital part of our lives. To be able to bring these couples together, to motivate them to study Scripture, to pray together, to navigate trials together, and to celebrate joys together is such a gift to the both of us. As is often the case with serving others, we are the ones receiving a great blessing as they keep us feeling more like a young married couple. We see their excitement and joy in the newness of marriage and love. It motivates us to not let complacency and staleness seep into our own marriage. Instead, these couples remind us the need to constantly grow and celebrate our own love. Our desire for strengthening and bringing unity to their marriages spills over into our marriage. While we are the ones teaching, the energy and enthusiasm that they have as newlyweds is inspiring. As we spend time with these couples, we experience their thirst for God's word, and we are confident in this next generation and how they will step up to lead at Dawson in the years to come.



**Laura Glaze** and her husband, Jeff, have been married for almost 30 years and Dawson members for a majority of that time. They have three adult daughters and one son-in-law. They are passionate about teaching, encouraging, and mentoring young married couples, and they enjoy spending time with their family, traveling, and drinking good coffee.