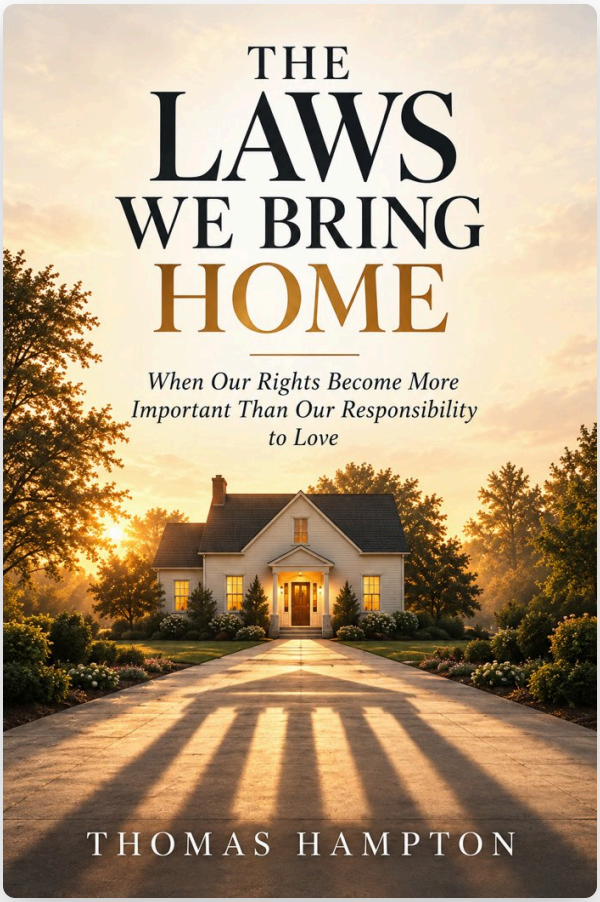


Study Guide

The Laws We Bring Home: When Our Rights Become More Important Than Our Responsibility to Love

THOMAS HAMPTON

Reflection questions for couples and small groups

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

How to use this guide

Each chapter of *The Laws We Bring Home* ends with a principle to carry home and five reflection questions. They are gathered here so you can work through them with a pen in hand.

- **As a couple:** read or listen to one chapter, answer the questions on your own, then sit down together and compare. One chapter a week makes a fifteen-week study.
- **In a small group:** read the chapter before you meet. Start with the principle, discuss two or three questions as a group, and leave the rest for couples to talk through at home.
- **On your own:** the questions work just as well for honest self-examination, even if your spouse is not reading along.

There are no right answers to grade. The point is not to win the conversation, which is the point of the whole book.

Listen to the audiobook free at thelawswebringhome.com

CHAPTER 1

The Right to Speak, but Not the Right to Wound

> *Freedom gives us the right to speak. Wisdom teaches us when and how. Love reminds us why the difference matters.*

Reflection: Before You Speak

1. Have I ever defended something hurtful by insisting I was only being honest or only expressing my opinion?

2. Do I speak more patiently to strangers, coworkers, or customers than to the person closest to me? Why?

3. In a disagreement, am I more concerned with being understood, with understanding my spouse, or with proving I am right?

4. Can I acknowledge the impact of my words without feeling that I have surrendered the legitimacy of my concern?

5. Is there a truth I have been avoiding because saying it would be uncomfortable — and what would it cost to keep avoiding it?

Talk together: Choose one question you each answered differently. Listen to understand before you respond.

CHAPTER 2

The Marriage Prosecutor

> *In a courtroom, the objective may be to establish guilt or innocence. In marriage, the greater objective is to establish truth, accept responsibility, repair what has been harmed, and protect the dignity of both people.*

Reflection: Are You Building a Case or Building Understanding?

1. When my spouse raises a concern, do I listen to understand or immediately begin preparing my defense?

2. Do I bring up past disagreements because they remain genuinely unresolved, or because they strengthen my argument?

3. Have I ever turned a specific mistake into a sweeping judgment about my spouse's character?

4. Can I hold someone accountable without humiliating them, dismissing their perspective, or assuming their motives?

5. Am I as willing to examine my own conduct as I am to identify the mistakes of the person I love?

Talk together: Choose one question you each answered differently. Listen to understand before you respond.

CHAPTER 3

The Right to Remain Silent

> *The right to remain silent can protect us from speaking without wisdom. But love requires us to recognize when silence itself becomes an expression of harm.*

Reflection: What Is Your Silence Communicating?

1. When I withdraw from a disagreement, am I seeking emotional clarity or trying to make my spouse feel the weight of my anger?

2. Do I communicate when I need time away from a difficult conversation?

3. Have I ever withheld ordinary acknowledgment, affection, or communication to punish someone for disappointing me?

4. When I ask for time to think, do I make a genuine effort to return to the conversation?

5. Is there an unresolved issue in my relationship that I have avoided discussing because doing so would require humility, honesty, or accountability?

Talk together: Choose one question you each answered differently. Listen to understand before you respond.

CHAPTER 4

Beyond a Reasonable Doubt

> *Feelings deserve consideration, but they do not automatically determine the facts. Love calls us to honor emotional experience while remaining faithful to truth, discernment, and mutual accountability.*

Reflection: Must Your Spouse Prove Their Pain?

1. When my spouse tells me something hurt them, do I first attempt to understand or immediately begin defending my intentions?

2. Have I ever dismissed a feeling because I believed the person’s interpretation of an event was inaccurate?

3. Can I acknowledge the emotional impact of my words without accepting blame for motives I did not possess?

4. Do I sometimes expect my spouse to respond to my feelings with compassion while demanding extensive proof before acknowledging theirs?

5. How might my relationship change if I became more willing to say, ”I see why that hurt you,” even when I remember the situation differently?

Talk together: Choose one question you each answered differently. Listen to understand before you respond.

CHAPTER 5

The Statute of Limitations on Pain

> *Time may create distance from an injury, but responsibility, understanding, and meaningful change are often what make healing possible.*

Reflection: Has the Past Been Addressed or Merely Avoided?

1. Have I ever dismissed my spouse’s concern simply because the event happened a long time ago?

2. Do I distinguish between an apology and the actions necessary to rebuild trust?

3. Have I used a past mistake to gain an advantage in a disagreement unrelated to that event?

4. Am I willing to acknowledge genuine growth and changed behavior?

5. Is there a past hurt that needs an honest conversation about accountability, boundaries, or repair?

Talk together: Choose one question you each answered differently. Listen to understand before you respond.

CHAPTER 6

I Have a Right to Be Happy

> *Marriage does not require us to abandon the pursuit of happiness. Love requires us to pursue it without abandoning our responsibility to one another.*

Reflection: What Governs Your Pursuit of Happiness?

1. Have I ever used my desire for personal happiness to justify disregarding a responsibility to my spouse?

2. Do I give my spouse the same freedom to pursue meaningful interests that I expect for myself?

3. Have I confused ordinary sacrifice with unfair treatment, or unfair treatment with necessary sacrifice?

4. Do I expect my spouse to be responsible for emotional needs that I must also learn to manage?

5. How might our relationship change if we approached happiness as something we support in one another rather than something we compete to obtain?

Talk together: Choose one question you each answered differently. Listen to understand before you respond.

CHAPTER 7

What’s Mine Is Mine

> *Ownership may establish what we control. Love challenges us to consider how responsibly, generously, and fairly we exercise that control.*

Reflection: What Do You Call Yours?

1. Have I ever used the phrase ”my money” or ”my property” to dismiss a legitimate concern from my spouse?

2. Do I recognize the contributions my spouse makes that may not be measured by income?

3. Have we established clear and fair expectations for shared expenses and personal financial freedom?

4. Do I ever use money, gifts, or financial contributions to gain an advantage during disagreements?

5. How would our financial conversations change if we focused more on stewardship and partnership than on who possesses greater authority?

Talk together: Choose one question you each answered differently. Listen to understand before you respond.

CHAPTER 8

You Did It First

> *Being hurt does not remove our responsibility to love. We may need boundaries, accountability, and protection, but retaliation should never become our substitute for them.*

Reflection: Are You Responding or Retaliating?

1. Have I ever justified hurtful behavior by saying my spouse did something hurtful first?

2. Do I sometimes withhold kindness, attention, or affection in order to make my spouse experience my pain?

3. Can I distinguish between establishing a legitimate boundary and deliberately imposing punishment?

4. Have I delayed an apology because I was waiting for my spouse to apologize first?

5. What might change if I took responsibility for my own behavior without making that responsibility conditional on the other person’s conduct?

Talk together: Choose one question you each answered differently. Listen to understand before you respond.

CHAPTER 9

Keeping Score

> *Fairness should help us carry our responsibilities together. It should not become a scoreboard that turns two partners into competitors.*

Reflection: Are You Keeping Score?

1. Do I remember my own contributions more readily than those of my spouse?

2. Have I ever used something generous I did in the past to gain an advantage during a disagreement?

3. Are there responsibilities in our marriage that genuinely need to be redistributed?

4. Do I express appreciation for contributions that are different from my own?

5. Am I trying to create a fair partnership, or am I trying to prove that I give more than I receive?

Talk together: Choose one question you each answered differently. Listen to understand before you respond.

CHAPTER 10

Winning the Argument, Losing the Marriage

> *Being right is valuable. But being right does not excuse being unloving. The purpose of truth in marriage should be understanding, accountability, and wise action — not personal superiority.*

Reflection: What Are You Trying to Win?

1. Have I ever continued emphasizing my spouse's mistake after the issue had already been acknowledged?

2. Do I sometimes confuse having accurate information with having the authority to dismiss another person's perspective?

3. When I apologize, do I feel as though I am losing?

4. Can I correct my spouse without embarrassment, ridicule, or contempt?

5. Before a disagreement, do I consider what a meaningful resolution would look like, or am I primarily focused on proving that I am right?

Talk together: Choose one question you each answered differently. Listen to understand before you respond.

CHAPTER 11

The Responsibility of Being Loved

> *Being loved gives us access to another person's inner world. Loving responsibly means treating that access as a privilege to honor, not a power to exploit.*

Reflection: What Has Been Entrusted to You?

1. Have I ever used something personal my spouse shared with me as ammunition during an argument?

2. Do I treat my spouse's vulnerabilities with the same care I would want shown toward my own?

3. Have I confused familiarity with permission to become careless?

4. Can I address difficult truths without exploiting fears or insecurities?

5. What do my everyday responses communicate about whether I can be trusted with another person's vulnerability?

Talk together: Choose one question you each answered differently. Listen to understand before you respond.

CHAPTER 12

Truth Without Cruelty

> *Truth gives substance to love. Love gives responsibility to truth. Neither should become an excuse to abandon the other.*

Reflection: How Do You Deliver the Truth?

1. Have I ever defended unnecessarily hurtful words by saying, ”I was only telling the truth”?
2. Do I distinguish between correcting behavior and attacking someone’s character?
3. Have I avoided necessary conversations because I feared upsetting my spouse?
4. Can I receive a legitimate correction without treating it as a personal attack?
5. Before speaking a difficult truth, do I consider whether my purpose is understanding, accountability, or humiliation?

Talk together: Choose one question you each answered differently. Listen to understand before you respond.

CHAPTER 13

Grace Without Permission to Harm

> *Grace makes room for human imperfection. Love makes accountability necessary. Neither should become an excuse to abandon the other.*

Reflection: Is Grace Becoming Permission?

1. Have I ever asked for forgiveness while resisting the responsibility to change?

2. Have I used biblical teachings about grace or forgiveness to dismiss another person’s legitimate concerns?

3. Do I distinguish between forgiving someone and immediately restoring trust?

4. Can I establish necessary boundaries without using them as punishment?

5. Am I willing to recognize genuine repentance while remaining honest about the consequences of harmful behavior?

Talk together: Choose one question you each answered differently. Listen to understand before you respond.

CHAPTER 14

Two People, One Commitment

> *Marriage does not ask two individuals to disappear into one another. It asks them to build a shared life in which both remain valued, respected, and responsible.*

Reflection: Are We Partners or Competitors for Freedom?

1. Do I respect my spouse’s individuality as much as I expect them to respect mine?

2. Have I ever confused reasonable consultation with an attempt to control me?

3. Have I ever used the language of unity to justify restricting my spouse’s legitimate independence?

4. Do our shared responsibilities leave room for both people to pursue meaningful personal growth?

5. How can we create clearer expectations about which decisions should be made individually and which should be discussed together?

Talk together: Choose one question you each answered differently. Listen to understand before you respond.

CHAPTER 15

Beyond Rights: The Covenant of Care

> *Love is not the surrender of our rights. It is the voluntary decision to exercise our freedom with wisdom, restraint, honesty, dignity, and responsibility toward the person we have chosen to love.*

Final reflection: The Law We Carry Forward

1. Which of the courtroom habits explored in this book have I recognized in my own behavior?

2. When my emotions are strongest, what principles actually govern my response?

3. Have I expected my spouse to demonstrate qualities that I have been unwilling to practice consistently myself?

4. What responsibility could I accept today that would help create greater honesty, dignity, and consideration in my relationship?

5. If my spouse described what it feels like to be loved by me, would their description reflect the love I believe I am giving?

Talk together: Choose one question you each answered differently. Listen to understand before you respond.

TO CARRY HOME

The covenant of care

From Chapter 15. Read it aloud to each other, and sign it if you choose.

I will not use my freedom as an excuse to disregard your humanity.

I will not demand consideration while refusing to extend it.

I will not confuse loving you with controlling you.

I will not confuse forgiveness with permission for harm.

I will seek truth without cruelty, accountability without humiliation, and unity without the loss of individuality.

And when my emotions tempt me to behave otherwise, I will remember that love is not merely what I feel toward you.

It is a responsibility reflected in how I choose to treat you.

> *The law tells us what we may do. Love challenges us to become the kind of people who know what we should do — and choose to do it.*

Signature	Signature	Date

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