

# **Lady Liberty: A Post-Abortive Story of Healing Workbook**

Revised 2010

**L**iberate  
**M**inistries

Copyright 2007 by Julie and Jeff Weber  
Revised 2010  
Second Printing: 2011

ISBN 978-0-9758553-1-7

Unless otherwise noted:

Scripture quotations marked KJV are taken from the King James Version of the Bible.

Scripture quotations marked NIV are taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 Biblica. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved. The "NIV" and "New International Version" trademarks are registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica. Use of either trademark requires the permission of Biblica.

Scripture quotations marked AMP are taken from the Amplified® Bible. Copyright © 1954, 1958, 1962, 1964, 1965, 1987 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. (www.Lockman.org)

Scripture quotations marked NASB are taken from the New American Standard Bible®, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission." (www.Lockman.org)

Scripture quotations marked NIRV are taken from the Holy Bible, NEW INTERNATIONAL READER'S VERSION®. Copyright © 1996, 1998 Biblica. All rights reserved throughout the world. Used by permission of Biblica. NEW INTERNATIONAL READER'S VERSION® and NIrV® are registered trademarks of Biblica.

Scripture quotations marked NKJV are taken from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked NLT are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright 1996, 2004. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved.

Scripture taken from *The Message*. Copyright ♦ 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002. Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Group.

© Cover art and design, Julie and Jeff Weber

# ***Lady Liberty: A Post-Abortive Story of Healing Workbook***

***“So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”  
(John 8:36, NIV)***

*There is tremendous healing power in the word of God.  
It is able to cut through and permanently remove any reinforced  
residue that abortion has left in you.  
There are few things more rewarding than to witness a changed  
life; healed, set free and restored.  
That is our desire for you as you  
start or continue on your healing journey.  
May you be blessed as you go through this course.*

***Julie and Jeff Weber  
Liberate Ministries***

## ***Acknowledgments:***

*My aborted child Innocence...*

*Our children Ethan and Sharon...*

*Our parents and our extended families...*

*There are so many others who have helped us get to where we are today. You know who you are that have touched our lives with your prayers, words of encouragement, and support for  
Liberate Ministries*

*Pastors Dale and Sandy Sisam, Life Church, MN.*

*Brent and Pam Greenlee, 2=1 Ministries*

*Harvest Network International*

*Operation Outcry a ministry of The Justice Foundation*

*Mark and Cynthia Kretschmar, Founders of P.A.T.H. Ministries*

*Colleen Tronson, Metro Women's Center*

*Ann Marie Cosgrove, Silent No More MN.*

*The Healing House, Metro Hope Ministries*

*We would like to thank all the students and their families who went through this course (After Class) while it was being developed.  
Thanks for trusting God and working with us.*

## Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Ground Rules for Group Use</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Ground Rules for Individual Use</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Suggested Reading List</b>	<b>10</b>
 <b>Lesson 1</b>	 <b>13</b>
<i>Identifying and Remembering the Feelings I Had When I Was Pregnant</i>	
 <b>Lesson 2</b>	 <b>23</b>
<i>I Had a Choice</i>	
 <b>Lesson 3</b>	 <b>37</b>
<i>Realizing the Consequences</i>	
 <b>Lesson 4</b>	 <b>51</b>
<i>Dealing With Guilt and Shame</i>	
 <b>Lesson 5</b>	 <b>73</b>
<i>Grieving Properly</i>	
 <b>Lesson 6</b>	 <b>89</b>
<i>Understanding and Asking for Forgiveness</i>	
 <b>Lesson 7</b>	 <b>101</b>
<i>Confidence in Him</i>	
 <b>Lesson 8</b>	 <b>115</b>
<i>Finding Life and Purpose</i>	
 <b>Lesson 9</b>	 <b>131</b>
<i>Committing My Child to Jesus</i>	
 <b>Lesson 10</b>	 <b>141</b>
<i>Release and Moving Forward</i>	
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>149</b>
<b>Endnotes</b>	<b>151</b>



# *Lady Liberty: A Post-Abortive Story of Healing Workbook*

## **Introduction**

**W**elcome! I'm glad that you have picked up this workbook and are reading it. If you have already read the book, *Lady Liberty: A Post-Abortive Story of Healing*, you might be asking yourself, "Why do I also need to go through a workbook?" The answer is simple: Reading a book about healing is not the same as actually spending time seeking God, learning all He has planned for your life and your specific situation. The workbook itself will not heal you; it is only a tool. The *Lady Liberty* book and workbook can point you to the Healer and let you know how much He loves you and desires to see you restored again. It offers a roadmap as God leads you along your healing path.

The inspiration for the *Lady Liberty* book and workbook came in the city of Haifa, Israel, when my husband and I were teaching at a marriage conference. As part of the conference, I shared my abortion testimony to illustrate the principle of forgiveness. During the break, I was swarmed by the women attending the conference who wanted to hear more. I could tell that they knew personally the pain of abortion, but didn't want to reveal it amongst each other. Since I only had a limited time with them, I talked with them the best I could while they hung on every word. I desired to be able to leave something practical that could help them on their journey toward healing. That is where the need for a book and workbook was burned into my heart by God.

My hope is that this book and workbook are something that I can leave with you. May God use it for your benefit.

—Julie Weber

Liberate Ministries is a teaching ministry and offers no professional or clinical counseling. The staff at Liberate Ministries are not medical or psychological experts capable of dealing with severe emotional or psychological disorders. The Liberate Ministries *Lady Liberty* book and workbook and other materials offered are not intended as a substitute for professional or pastoral counseling.

## Getting Started

This workbook is written so that you may either work through it in a group setting led by a trained leader or as an individual working through it on your own. To get the most out of the material, the following ground rules need to be communicated. Please read either the Suggested Ground Rules for Group Use or Suggested Ground Rules for Individual Use. Be sure to sign the agreement between you and God; then you are ready to begin.

## Ground Rules for Group Use

1. Confidentiality is important.
2. If you have had multiple abortions, or a combination of abortions and miscarriages, I gently encourage you to get in touch with all those experiences and address them while going through this course for the first time. God is amazing in His ability to meet us where we are at and help us. None of us can be certain of the future and the time we have available for healing, so I'd again encourage you to deal with your entire past experience if at all possible.
3. What is shared in the group stays in the group.
4. Whether you agree or you disagree with what a person shares, please show respect by listening.
5. Your role as a student during sharing time is not to comment or discuss what others have shared.
6. As an instruction opportunity, your group leader may choose to highlight something that an individual has shared to the class as part of the learning and healing process.
7. Avoid distractions; this is your time to focus on healing. You may need to limit certain activities in order to deal with the issues you face. Example: limit your TV watching—it can numb your mind and keep you from thinking.
8. There will be a short 5-10 minute break time each week for personal time, such as bathroom break, phone calls, or book check out.
9. Please keep cell phones off during the class time.
10. Over the course of this workbook, I strongly encourage you to read books related to after-abortion healing outside of class. Your leader may bring some books to class for you to check out. If so, please sign out the book. Remember, all books are to be returned by the end of the last class. If your leader does not have books for you to check out, consider getting some of the books that helped me on the suggested reading list that follows.
11. No food is served during classes.
12. You are allowed one excused absence, but your group leader will want to do a makeup with you to keep you up to speed with the rest of the class. You will need to allow some time in your schedule for a makeup.
13. By committing to this class, you agree to stick it out to the end. Please take home the commitment sheet. Review it and sign it. Please keep this with your class materials.



## Ground Rules for Individual Use

1. Confidentiality is important. However, there are key moments of this course when it is helpful to have another person available to confide in. If at all possible, you will want to tell someone who will be supportive of you when you are working through this course. Be selective when telling people. Not because you have something to hide, but to protect your privacy as you focus on what is ahead. Others may mean well, but could disrupt the situation and keep you from receiving all that God has for you. When you confide in someone that you are going through the course, be sure to also ask them to pray for you daily. Their prayer support will be valuable to you.
2. If you have had multiple abortions, or a combination of abortions and miscarriages, I gently encourage you to get in touch with all the experiences and address them while going through this course for the first time. God is amazing in His ability to meet us where we are at and help us. None of us can be certain of the future and the time we have available for healing, so I'd again encourage you to deal with your entire past experience if at all possible.
3. Don't hurry. Try to complete the course in ten weeks. Pick a day and a time each week to move to the next lesson and the next homework assignment. If you can, choose a location where you can have private, uninterrupted time. You need time to process what you are learning.
4. Resist the urge to read ahead or skip to the end. Each lesson builds on the others. Some of the early lessons prepare you for what you will be doing later in the course.
5. Don't quit before getting through all of the lessons. Some weeks will be harder than others. This week's struggle often turns into next week's breakthrough.
6. Avoid distractions; this is your time to focus on healing. You may need to limit certain activities in order to deal with the issues you face. Example: limit your TV watching—it can numb your mind and keep you from thinking.
7. Keep your cell phone off during the time you are working through each lesson.
8. Over the course of this workbook, I strongly encourage you to read books related to after-abortion healing. Consider getting some of the books that helped me on the suggested reading list that follows.
9. By starting this healing process, you agree to stick it out to the end. Please read over the commitment below. Review it and sign it. Keep this with your class materials.

Dear God,

I agree to give you the next ten weeks. Help me to walk it through and be faithful to read the lessons, do the homework, and be open to the new things that you have for me. I will trust you with a new heart. Thank you, God.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Suggested Reading List**

*The Bondage Breaker* by Neil T. Anderson, published by Harvest House Publishers

*First Aid For a Wounded Marriage* by Marilyn Phillipps, Eden Publishing Company

*Forbidden Grief, the Unspoken Pain of Abortion* by Dr. Theresa Burke, with David C. Reardon, Acorn Books

*Heaven, Close Encounters of the God Kind* by Jesse Duplantis, Harrison House, Inc.

*I'll Hold You in Heaven* by Jack Hayford, Regal Books

*Overcoming Depression* by Neil T. and Joanne Anderson, Regal Books

*Overcoming Negative Self-Image* by Neil T. Anderson and Dave Park, Regal Books

*The Anger Workbook* by Les Carter, Ph.D. and Frank Minirth, M.D., Nelson Impact, a division of Thomas Nelson Publishers

*The Freedom from Depression Workbook* by Les Carter, Ph.D. and Frank Minirth, M.D., Nelson Impact, a division of Thomas Nelson Publishers

*The Purpose Driven Life* by Rick Warren, Zondervan

*The Root of Rejection* by Joyce Meyer, Warner Faith

*Shame, Thief of Intimacy* by Marie Powers, Gospel Light





**Lesson 1**  
***Identifying and Remembering the Feelings I Had  
When I Was Pregnant***

**T**his week's goal is to reawaken the feelings you had during that crisis time of your life, when you found yourself pregnant. Reflect back to that time. Let's tune in together. You may or may not have gone through your abortion(s) alone at the time. It's okay. Today we are going to walk through it again with God's guidance.

**Take a moment and think back to the time when you first found out you were pregnant:**

How old were you?

Who was the father?

Was it your boyfriend?

Were you married?

Where did you live?

What people were in your life at the time?

Was this your first pregnancy?

How did you feel when you found out that you were pregnant?

Who did you tell that you were pregnant?

Write down other important details that come to your mind:

---

---

---

---

---

---

Share your story with others in the group. If you are doing individual study, share your story with the person you confided in and who is praying for you.

## Teaching: Who Is This Healer?

It can be painful thinking back to the time of your pregnancy and the circumstances surrounding the decision to abort. It was likely a time of great pressure, turmoil, and stress. There might have been very little mercy, peace, patience, and love. However, what we can observe in most cases is:

- What was supposed to be a solution to a problem only created more problems
- What was supposed to be a fresh start ended up being a lie

Jesus reveals His intentions in the Bible when He says:

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised* (Luke 4:18, KJV).

The Bible tells us more about Jesus and His purpose for coming: *The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil* (1 John 3:8b, NASB).

This is good news for us who have experienced an abortion(s), because Jesus came to heal us from what we are still struggling with related to the abortion experience.

*“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future”* (Jeremiah 29:11, NIV).

## Substitutes for Healing

When a woman has an abortion(s), she begins to lose self-respect for herself. There is much pain emotionally, mentally, spiritually, and physically. It is hard to describe what she is feeling at the time. She may consciously or subconsciously look for things or ways to fill up the painful void in her life now. Take a look at your life and see if you can identify with **some of the ways** listed, or maybe you have filled your painful void with something else.

Alcohol	Drugs	Promiscuity	Over-Achievement
Food Abuse	“Perfect” Mom	Replacement Baby	Co-Dependency

## The Father Reveals His Name

The more we know God and the power of His name, the better off we will be. The substitutes for healing are “at best” short term fixes, and “at their worst” may have left another set of problems in our life that need attention. For example, if we’ve chosen alcohol as a substitute for love, we soon learn that it has no power to satisfy—it only numbs us for awhile. On the other hand, if we go to God to find the “true love” we need, we are satisfied, because we’ve learned in His Word that God is Love.

We are here to learn about healing. There is healing in the Word of God and the names of God. The best way to start the healing process is to begin to replace any substitutes we

are using for healing with scriptures from God's Word. The scripture below illustrates God's intentions toward us as we meet Him in this course:

*And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin..." (Exodus 34:6–7, NIV).*

### **There is Power in the Name of God and the Name of Jesus**

There are many names for God and Jesus in the Bible that highlight their characteristics. Below are just a few names, chosen because they pertain to us as post-abortive women. Anytime you are in need, or feeling stressed or anxious during this course or in life, call out using the names of God and Jesus. Take a look at the following lists. They demonstrate His care for you and His protection of you.

This is an area in which you can do more Bible study if you would like to go deeper. Your Bible, other books, and carefully-selected internet sites are all places you could begin your study. For future reference, check the endnotes at the end of the workbook to find a website listing even more of the names of God and the names of Jesus.

Please read aloud the names of God and practice pronouncing them as best as you can. Then look up each of the scriptures in your Bible. As you read the scriptures, you will see the origin of the name listed.

*By myself I have sworn, my mouth has uttered in all integrity a word that will not be revoked: Before me every knee will bow; by me every tongue will swear (Isaiah 45:23, NIV).*

### **Names of God<sup>1</sup>**

*Jehovah*: The Lord—Exodus 6:2–3  
*Jehovah-Bara*: Lord Creator—Isaiah 40:28  
*Jehovah-Chatsahi*: Lord my Strength—Psalm 27:1  
*Jehovah-Eli*: Lord My God—Psalm 18:2  
*Jehovah-Jireh*: Provider—Gen. 22:14  
*Jehovah-M'Kaddesh*: Sanctifier—1 Cor. 1:30  
*Jehovah-Machsi*: Lord My Refuge—Psalm 91:9  
*Jehovah-Magen*: Lord My Shield—Deut. 33:29  
*Jehovah-Mephalti*: Lord My Deliverer—Psalm 18:2  
*Jehovah-Naheh*: Lord Who Smites—Ezekiel 7:9  
*Jehovah-Nissi*: Banner—1 Chronicles 29:11–13  
*Jehovah-Rohi*: Shepherd—Psalm 23  
*Jehovah-Rophe*: Healer—Isaiah 53:4–5  
*Jehovah-Sabaoth*: Lord of Hosts—1 Samuel 1:3  
*Jehovah-Shalom*: Peace—Isaiah 9:6

*Jehovah-Shammah*: Present—Hebrews 13:5  
*Jehovah-Tsidkenu*: Righteousness—1 Cor. 1:30

Please read aloud the names of Jesus listed below. Then look up each of the scriptures in your Bible. As you read the scriptures, you will see the origin of the name listed.

*...that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth* (Philippians 2:10 NIV).

## **Names of Jesus Christ<sup>2</sup>**

Bridegroom—Matt. 9:15  
Counselor—Isaiah 9:6  
Healer—Exodus 15:26  
Lamb—Rev. 5:6  
Life—John 14:6  
Light—John 8:12  
Lion of Judah—Rev. 5:5  
Love—John 3:16  
Passover—1 Cor. 5:7  
Peace—Luke 2:13–14  
Prince of Peace—Isaiah 9:6  
Rose of Sharon—Song of Solomon 2:1  
Shepherd—John 10:14  
Sun of Righteousness—Malachi 4:2  
Truth—John 14:6  
Vine—John 15:1–5  
Water—John 4:14–15  
Wisdom—1 Cor. 1:24  
Wonderful—Isaiah 9:6  
Word—John 1:1

We are only just beginning this course. You may not understand why you have to know these names? Or how they can even help you? By the end of the course, I believe that the above two lists: “Names of God” and “Names of Jesus Christ” will be even more alive and real to you.



## Homework

Now let's take some time to understand God's character, so we are able to fully surrender and trust God to heal us.

### Mercy

*It is because of the Lord's mercy and loving-kindness that we are not consumed, because His [tender] compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great and abundant is Your stability and faithfulness (Lamentations 3:22–23, AMP).*

Look up the additional verses on God's mercy below, and circle two that speak to you:

Isaiah 49:13; Psalm 6:2; Psalm 52:8; Psalm 62:12; Luke 1:78; Ephesians 2:4; 1 Peter 1:3

What did you learn about God's mercy?

---

---

---

---

### Love

*Finally, brethren, rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you (2 Corinthians 13:11, NASB).*

Look up the additional verses on God's love below, and circle two that speak to you:

Zephaniah 3:17; Isaiah 38:17; Jude 1:21; Romans 8:39; 1 John 4:16; 1 John 4:19

What did you learn about God's love?

---

---

---

---

### Forgiveness

*How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered! (Psalm 32:1, NASB).*

Look up the additional verses on God's forgiveness below, and circle two that speak to you:

Daniel 9:9; Psalm 130:4; Luke 1:77; Luke 24:47; Acts 10:43; Ephesians 1:7

What did you learn about God's forgiveness?

---

---

---

---

### **Faithfulness**

*Your lovingkindness, O LORD, extends to the heavens, Your faithfulness reaches to the skies (Psalm 36:5, NASB).*

Look up the additional verses on God's faithfulness below, and circle two that speak to you:

Psalm 33:4; Psalm 89:1; Psalm 89:5; Psalm 91:4; Psalm 98:3; Psalm 100:5

What did you learn about God's faithfulness?

---

---

---

---

### **Healing Power**

*O LORD my God, I cried to You for help, and You healed me (Psalm 30:2, NASB).*

Look up the additional verses on God's healing power below, and circle two that speak to you:

Genesis 20:17; Psalm 107:20; Isaiah 53:5; Jeremiah 17:14; Mathew 4:24; Mathew 8:16; Mathew 12:15; Mathew 14:14; Mathew 15:28; Mathew 21:14; Mark 5:29; Luke 5:15

What did you learn about God's healing power?

---

---

---

---

God has many more parts to His character. We have only explored His mercy, love, forgiveness, faithfulness and healing power. God is also kind, trustworthy, compassionate, all powerful, all grace, eternal, holy, unchanging, impartial and incomprehensible.

Do you feel better about trusting Him for your healing, now that you know more about His character?

---

---

---

---

Do you have any hesitation about trusting God? If so, what is the hesitation?

---

---

---

---

When you were pregnant, how was your relationship with God at the time? Did you care what He thought about your situation?

---

---

---

---

Do you want God to help you deal with any remaining issues related to your abortion(s)? If so, tell Him what you are feeling.

---

---

---

---

If you don't have a relationship with God, this homework will be hard. Have you accepted Jesus Christ to be your Lord and Savior? If not, today would be a wonderful day to do so! I invite you to pray a prayer like the one below:

**“Jesus, please forgive me for all of my sins. Come into my heart and meet me where I am. I acknowledge you as my Lord and Savior. Thank you for dying on the cross and rising from the dead so that I can live. I desire the gift of eternal life that you promise. Thank you, Jesus.”**

If you have just prayed this for the first time, *congratulations!* If you have wandered through the years and prayed the prayer to get back close to Him, *congratulations* to you too! I encourage you now to go back through the homework and answer those questions you couldn't answer before. Jesus will help you.

**Instructions for the week:** Continue to focus on what we learned about the character of God. Think about His mercy, His love, His forgiveness, His faithfulness, and His healing power.

**Prayer:** Dear God, thank you for helping me remember a difficult time in my life. Help me to understand what was going on then. Also, God, please make your character real to me so I can get to know you better as I go through this workbook. While I walk through this crisis time in my life again, help me to apply your character traits. Help me to put my trust in you. *Amen.*

**Notes:**

**Notes:**



## Lesson 2

### *I Had a Choice*

This week's goal is to reflect on the circumstances surrounding the decision you made at the news of your pregnancy. The lesson is not about condemning you for making the choice to abort, but at the same time, it is also not about going back and trying to justify the choice so you feel better. The lesson is about acknowledging your choice and being accountable and responsible for it.

#### **Let's take some time to remember how you came to the decision to abort:**

What were the feelings going through your mind at the time?

Who do you feel let you down?

Did you ask anyone for help? Were they unwilling? Unable?

Who were the closest people in your life at that time? Why couldn't you go to them?

Who was involved with you in making the decision?

Are those who were involved in making the decision still in your life today?

Did you make the decision to abort quickly or slowly?

Did anyone encourage you to consider other options?

Did anyone urge you or pressure you to abort?

Was lack of finances a part of your abortion decision?

Did you talk with your doctor about the decision? Your pastor or priest? Your parents?

What was your primary reason for deciding to abort your child(ren)?

Write down other important details that come to your mind:

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Teaching: Choosing Life; Accountability and Responsibility

### Choosing Life

*I call heaven and earth to witness this day against you that I have set before you life and death, the blessings and the curses; therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live (Deuteronomy 30:19, AMP).*

Reading this verse and looking back now, it all seems so simple. *I should have chosen life and my descendants (child or children) would have lived.* Remember, we would all do things differently if we could go back in time to the decision point and start over, knowing what we know now. Things were not as clear back then as they are today.

Hundreds of years before Jesus was born, a verse was written about Him and His childhood. It suggests that He would learn about resisting evil in His choices and learn how to choose for the good.

*Butter and curds and wild honey shall he eat when he knows (enough) to refuse the evil and choose the good (Isaiah 7:15, AMP).*

By reading Jesus' life story in the New Testament, we know that Jesus did go on to make only good choices in accordance to God's will for His life. For everyone else, we know it is not possible to *always* make good decisions. Things don't work out that way. We miss it. We blow it. In many cases we learn the hard way.

There is a common saying that "our choices define us." We are making choices each day of our lives. Some choices are small—like I choose to drink my coffee black instead of with cream. Other choices are much bigger and are considered life changing. Choosing which school to attend, choosing your friends, choosing to drink while driving, choosing whether to do drugs, choosing where you work. Right or wrong, easy or hard, healthy or unhealthy, our choices define us as individuals.

The choices, as well as their consequences, become part of the record of our lives. For some of us who are not happy with the choices we have made in life, this is a hard truth to take. You might think, *if my choices and their consequences have become the record of my life, where is the hope?* We cannot go back and undo them. They are a permanent part of our past. We can, however, learn from our past choices by not repeating them, and making better choices in the future. We can also take responsibility for our past choices and recognize how they affected us personally and also affected others around us.

This principle of choices defining us is also true regarding our abortion(s). The truth is that we had an abortion(s). We can't undo the fact. It was a choice we made—or that someone made for us and forced upon us. The procedure was done. We can't go back and undo it.

It is important we think back and acknowledge that the abortion did occur as part of our past. If we deny it, we make it difficult for God to help fix the situation for our benefit



and His glory. You may not understand why it is important now. That's okay—we will learn over the remaining weeks of the class that even though our past abortion(s) helps to define us, it is not something that can defeat us or keep us down unless we let it.

The Bible is full of stories about people and their choices. King David sinned when he killed a man and took his wife for his own. When confronted, David takes responsibility for his actions, repents to God, suffers the consequences of his choice, and eventually gets back on track. I encourage you to read more about this story in 2 Samuel 11–12, and read David's prayer of repentance (a change of mind, with sorrow) in Psalm 51:1–19.

### **Why do I have to deal with the choice? This is unfair!**

Abortion disrupts the reproductive process by cutting off the natural method of creating new life ordained by God since the beginning of time. Even though it takes two to make a baby, it is the woman who has to undergo all the natural changes to her human body. When the natural process of new life is cut off, it causes an unnatural reaction to the human body. Whether you had a surgical or a chemical pill abortion, a trauma (an unnatural act) has happened and a time of healing needs to take place. Time, rest, and proper nutrition are needed to repair a woman's body from the physical damage done by the surgical procedure or by the drugs causing the body to expel the baby from the womb. In both abortion methods, life is removed from the body quickly to terminate the pregnancy. However, the body doesn't adjust itself so quickly. From the moment of conception, a woman's hormones have been gearing up to support the pregnancy and give birth. Time is needed for these hormones to adjust back to normal after the abortion. Equally important, healing is needed to repair the damage done to the women's spirit as a result of the abortion experience and the circumstances around the abortion.

*You* are the one who actually went through the surgical or chemical pill procedure and *you* are the one who has to deal with the consequences of the sin even though it might not have been of *your* choosing. *Your* body, mind, and soul were affected. *You* are the one who has to embrace the healing process. No one else can do it for *you*.

### **Forced Scenarios**

The abortion(s) might have been of your choosing, or maybe you didn't feel you had a choice. Here are some of the many highly-pressured or forced scenarios women face:

- Boyfriends who don't want to stick around and take responsibility for their part. They are not committed to the relationship and pressure you to abort and to get on with your life.
- Controlling parents who have planned out their daughter's life. They don't want their daughter to mess up her life by not sticking to their plan. So they drive her to the abortion clinic and force her to get an abortion.
- Christian parents who are ashamed that their daughter got pregnant. What will people think about how they raised her? They drive their daughter to the abortion clinic to avoid looking bad.

- Husbands who don't want the burden of any more children. "It's too expensive. We can't afford it." He threatens to divorce his wife if she doesn't get an abortion. Or, he could threaten her security by vowing to put her out on the streets if she has the baby.

These are just a few of the circumstances *you* may have faced. If these scenarios don't seem fair to *you*, *you* are right—they aren't fair! Even if *you* made the decision together with another person, such as a spouse, to abort *your* child(en), *you* still have to go through the healing process. (In fact, they should too.)

### **What about Rape and Incest?**

Everyone would agree that rape and incest are forced scenarios. It is morally wrong and a crime against women. Naturally, you would think that it would be preferable to abort a child who was conceived out of rape and incest due to the constant memories of the crime. Statistics show that women who choose to keep their children born out of rape and incest are emotionally better able to deal with this situation compared to those women who choose to abort. Rape and incest are a trauma. Abortion is a trauma. Adding the trauma of abortion to rape or incest is like stacking one trauma on top of the other. It makes the situation worse, not better. From a recovery standpoint, healing time can be longer because you might have to deal with each trauma individually.

### **Men Hurt Too**

Just because this course is focused on helping women deal with the negative after-effects of their abortion(s), doesn't mean that men don't regret and hurt after the abortion experience. Many men are sorry that they forced the women in their lives to abort. Others agreed with the choice to abort without thinking through the consequences. Still others may not have known about the abortion until after it was over. Studies have revealed that men experience many of the same feelings such as guilt, shame, grief, depression, anger, and self-hatred following abortion that women do. They also may experience a feeling of helplessness and a loss of manhood. The following quote by Warren Williams (an early researcher) is powerful:

"While both women and men may hesitate to seek help in post-abortion recovery, it is my experience that this may be especially hard for men. Men may feel more obligated to mask or hide their pain or to "tough it out" alone."

### **Accountability and Responsibility**

*If You, Lord, should keep account of and treat [us according to our] sins, O Lord, who could stand? (Psalm 130:3, AMP).*

*But I tell you, on the day of judgment, men will have to give account for every idle (inoperative, nonworking) word they speak. For by your words you will be justified and acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned and sentenced (Matthew 12:36–37, AMP).*

*And so each of us shall give an account of himself [give an answer in reference to judgment] to God (Romans 14:12, AMP).*

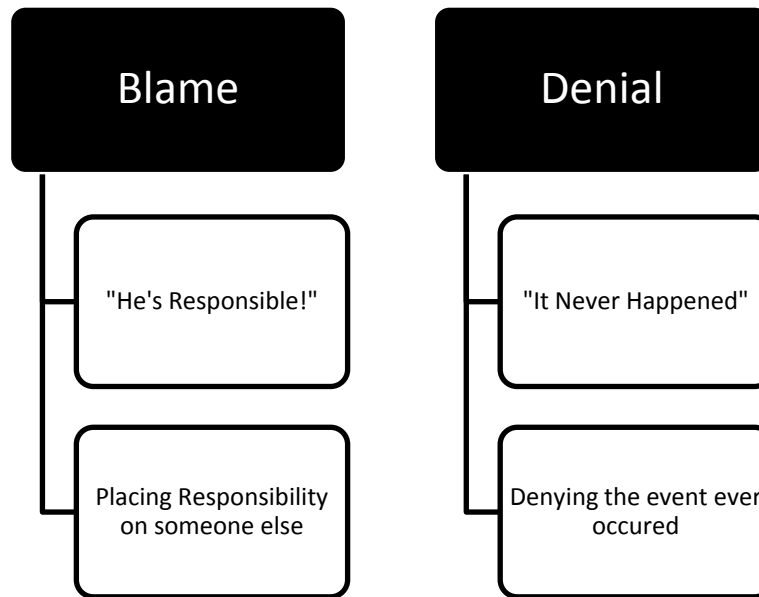
Webster's Dictionary defines "accountable" as subject to giving an account, to hold accountable for the damage. If we apply this to the abortion(s) we had, then we are held accountable for the damage done to our child(ren) in the choice of abortion.

Webster's Dictionary also defines "responsible" as able to answer for one's conduct and obligations: trustworthy: able to choose for oneself between right and wrong. If we apply this to the abortion(s) we had; we are responsible for choosing abortion for our child(ren).

Many things can get in the way of us being accountable and responsible for our choices. In Lesson 1, we learned that there are substitutes for healing that people use to mask the hurt left by abortion, such as alcohol or over-achievement (see Lesson 1). These substitutes produce physical effects in the person's life; they leave the person either too numb or too busy to be able to face the hurts and deal with them. Besides physical substitutes, there are also psychological "tricks" called defense mechanisms that we use either knowingly or unknowingly to keep us from facing the truth.

### **Defense Mechanisms<sup>1</sup>**

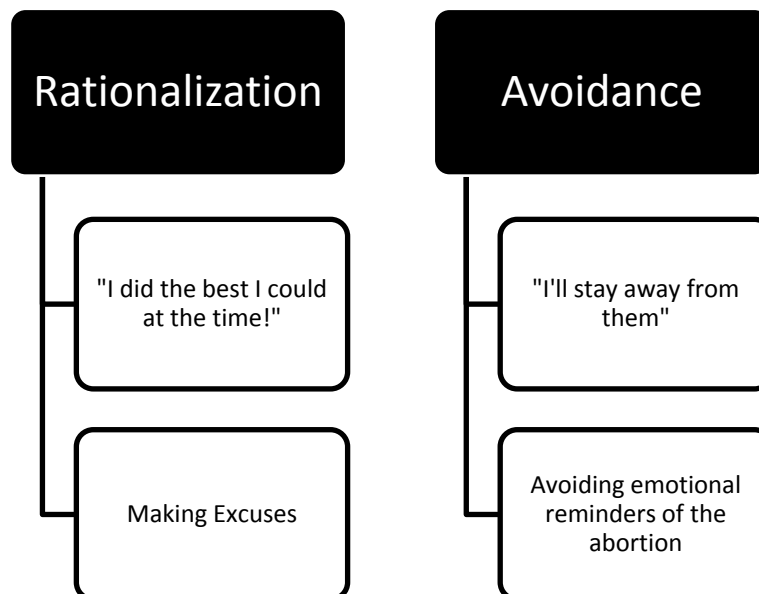
When we have been hurt, our natural tendency is to protect ourselves from further pain. I've included some psychological defense mechanisms based on Sigmund Freud's work and applied them to the topic of after-abortion healing. **As you study the different defense mechanisms that follow on the next three pages, try to see if you have ever (or may still be) using any of them to protect yourself.**



### What's going on psychologically

**Blame:** I'll just totally blame someone else who was involved (like parents, husband, etc.) so it doesn't hurt me so much.

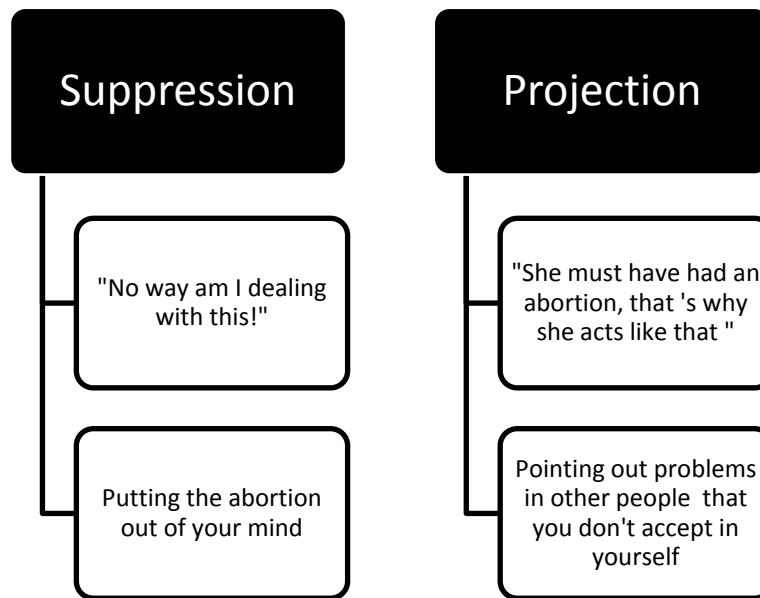
**Denial:** The fact that I had an abortion is too painful for me to even consider. I'm going to deny it happened and wipe it out of my experiences so I don't have to face it.



### What's going on psychologically

**Rationalization:** It's not my problem to face because I did the best that I could at the time. So, because I didn't have any other options, I don't have to take responsibility for my choice now.

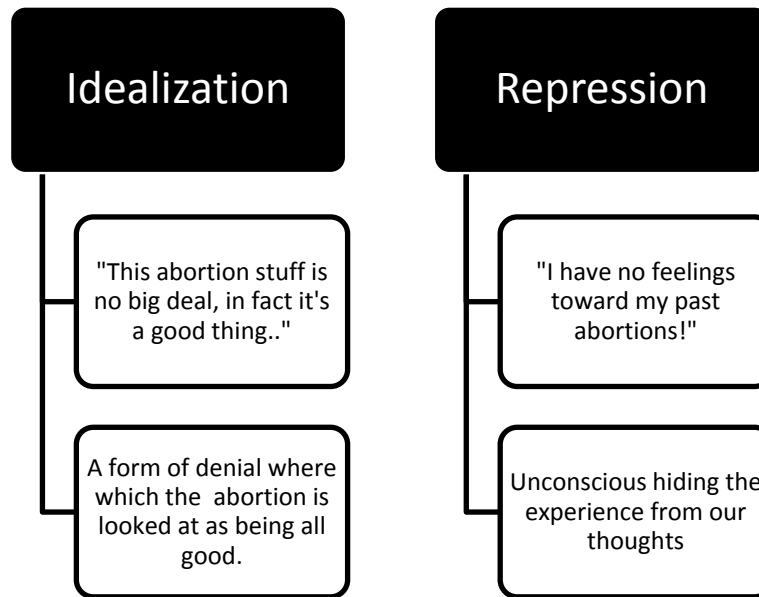
**Avoidance:** It is too painful to be reminded of the abortion so I will stay far away from any person and anything that makes me remember the experience and what I've done.



### What's going on psychologically

**Suppression:** This is not like denial, because your mind knows that you have had an abortion. However, to avoid the pain, you push the thoughts down over and over again every time they come up.

**Projection:** You are uncomfortable dealing with your own abortion experience so you assign those uncomfortable thoughts to someone else. This shifts the focus away from you and onto the other person, which is easier for you to handle psychologically.



### What's going on psychologically

**Idealization:** Twisting the abortion experience around in your mind in an overly positive way. You minimize the negative after affects of the abortion to the point you believe that the abortion experience was actually good for you.

**Repression:** Unconsciously your mind keeps the abortion experience hidden from your thoughts because it is too traumatic for you to face. Repressed thoughts often need counseling to uncover, because they are below the surface and not visible to the person.

This lesson has been about understanding the choice to abort and encouraging us to take responsibility and accountability for it. We've also learned that we often wrestle psychologically with the lingering pain of the choices we have made.

## Homework

There is something powerful in expressing your thoughts on paper. Writing letters is a powerful tool that God can use to bring clarity and release to your situation. These letters are for you to keep. They are between you and God. Writing all of these letters may be hard for you. Don't worry, do what you can. Remember, this is not about condemnation. We are just going back to the time that the choice was made.

**Write a letter or letters to anyone else you wanted to tell at the time about your pregnancy.** It might be a friend, parent, teacher, father of the child, or someone completely different—whoever God places on your mind. God may bring several people to your mind and want you to write letters to all of them. Tell them why you didn't let them know or perhaps why you felt you couldn't tell them. Also, tell them of your choice to abort. Remember, these letters are for you to keep.

[illegible]

**Next, write a letter to God telling Him about the same situation.** I encourage you to be open in the letter. He can handle it—in fact, He wants to hear what you have to say.

---

---

---

---

[illegible]

**Instructions for the week:** Stay focused on the choice you made to abort your child(ren) and take responsibility and be accountable for it this week in your conversations with God. Be sure to allow time to write your letters. After you have written them, think about how each person to whom you wrote would respond if they had received the letter.

**Prayer:** God, this is hard, but thank you for helping me acknowledge that I made a choice to abort my child(ren). Help me to be responsible and accountable for my choice(s). Create in me a willing and open attitude so that I can move forward and put this area of my life behind me. Speak to me; comfort me, so that I know you are with me during this week. I rebuke Satan in the name of Jesus from attempting to steal from me what I am learning through this course. *Amen.*



**Notes:**

**Notes:**

**Notes:**



### Lesson 3

#### *Realizing the Consequences*

In the first two lessons, you have thought through memories of being pregnant and also explored the circumstances surrounding your decision(s) to abort. The goal of this week's lesson is different because after we explore the actual abortion experience, we need to take some time to focus on your aborted child(ren) for the first time.

As mentioned in the ground rules section at the very beginning of the workbook, I encourage you to recall as much as you can about each abortion experience. Also, reflect back on any miscarriage(s) you may have experienced.

#### **Let's take some time to reflect on the actual abortion experience(s):**

Where was the clinic, doctor's office, or location where you had your abortion(s)?

How did the people treat you there?

Were there other people aborting their child(ren) at the same time as you?

What were you told before the procedure began?

What do you remember about the procedure?

What do you remember about the recovery?

Did you have any physical complications following the abortion(s)?

Do you remember the date of your abortion(s)?

If you had a chemical pill abortion, did you spend time at home as part of the procedure?  
What was that like?

Write down other important details that come to your mind, including sights, sounds, experiences:

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Next, describe your life right after the abortion(s):

Were you affected emotionally?

Did you take any time off from your work or from any activities?

Did you have second thoughts about having the abortion(s)?

Write down other important details that come to your mind:

---

---

---

---

---

## Teaching: The Aftermath

Right after the abortion, there may be feelings of relief that you are no longer pregnant. These feelings last only for a brief moment. Abortion affects all of us differently, yet all of us somewhat the same. Let's look at the moments immediately after my experience....

When I had my abortion, I was not prepared for the onslaught of feelings. All kinds of thoughts began to hit me at once. Let's call these thoughts and feelings **Mixed Emotions**. At the same time, my mind entered into a **State of Disbelief**. There was so much going on in my head that it is hard to determine what happened and what didn't happen. This was my experience—and I've found that it is difficult to describe the feelings completely to someone who has never experienced an abortion before.

Many women may mask their true feelings because they are told before they go in to have an abortion that they are going to feel great and be on their way with life in no time. After the abortion, when they are not feeling great and immediately moving on with their life, they may be afraid to say something because their reality doesn't match what they were told to expect. If they try to speak up and say something about their uneasy feelings, often they are told that "with time" those feelings will go away.

### Mixed Emotions:

You are momentarily relieved that you are not pregnant any more.

You are in physical pain due to the actual procedure.

You are grieving the loss of your child.

You feel betrayed by those involved with the decision to abort.

The extra hormones you needed to carry a baby to a full term pregnancy are now going haywire due to the sudden ending of your pregnancy.

**State of Disbelief:**

This isn't what you were told.

You are angry—this isn't fair, this isn't right.

You cannot believe that the doctors, nurses, and counselors have just lied to you.

You cannot believe that your boyfriend or husband just lied to you.

You cannot believe that your parents just lied to you.

You cannot believe that your friends just lied to you.

You cannot believe that "they" have just lied to you. You've always heard that abortion is okay. "They" say it is. "They" are the media, newscasters, actors, actresses, magazines, and our government.

**I Took a Life**

*There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death* (Proverbs 16:25, NIV).

The Bible doesn't say literally that you should not abort your child, and it doesn't use the term "abortion." However, it does say that you should not kill.

*You shall not murder* (Exodus 20:13, NIV).

The following two verses talk about the special spot for children in God's heart. We are warned not to hinder them or harm them:

*But Jesus said, "Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these"* (Matthew 19:14, NASB).

*"It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea, than that he would cause one of these little ones to stumble"* (Luke 17:2, NASB).

Even though the Bible doesn't come right out and say the words, "Do not abort your babies," it does give us some clues as to how God feels toward children. Based on scripture, I believe we can agree that abortion clearly hinders and harms children from coming to Jesus in the life He created them to have here on earth.

What does the Bible say about taking the life of an unborn child?

*If men who are fighting hit a pregnant woman and she gives birth prematurely, but there is no serious injury, the offender must be fined whatever the woman's husband demands and the court allows. But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life...* (Exodus 21:22–23, NIV).

John Piper (author, pastor) gives us a greater understanding on the interpretation of the above verse in his article, "Exodus 21:22-25 and Abortion." He states what the NIV Bible translation of the verse implies: "...that the child is born alive and that the penalty of life for life, eye for eye, etc. applies to the child as well as the mother. If injury comes

to the child or the mother there will not just be a fine but life for life, eye for eye, etc.” The interpretation gives the unborn child the same rights under the law as his or her mother. To summarize, if the unborn child dies as a result of the fight, the penalty is the life of the one causing the death. For further study of the context of this verse, read the entire article by John Piper on the website listed in the endnotes.<sup>1</sup>

### **Children are a Gift**

*Behold, children are a gift of the Lord,  
The fruit of the womb is a reward.  
Like arrows in the hand of a warrior,  
So are the children of one's youth.  
How blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them;  
they will not be ashamed (Psalm 127:3–5, NASB).*

### **The verse above highlights some serious consequences of abortion:**

First, by aborting, we destroy a gift that God gave us personally. The verse describes children as a reward. It is sad when you think that the Creator of the universe has given us the personal gift of a child, but we choose to destroy the gift through abortion. The verse also talks about how important children are to us when it says they are like arrows in the hand of a warrior. We all know that a warrior without his arrows is ineffective and incomplete. In addition, the verse talks about how it is a blessing to have many children. When we reduce the number of children we give birth to through abortion, we also reduce the blessing we could have received from those children. Finally, having many children blesses us and will keep us from being ashamed. In Bible days it was especially shameful for women who were not able to have children. Even today the same can be true. Women who are unable to have children often feel awkward, isolated, and left out—particularly among mothers whose conversations naturally turn toward their children.

You may feel that the way you conceived your children was a mistake. Wrong man, wrong time, wrong circumstances, just wrong. The circumstances may not have been right, but know this: *there is no such thing as a mistaken child*. Children are a gift from the Lord. He was prepared to give you the gift of the child regardless of the way you conceived. What was unplanned for you was not a surprise to the Lord. There really are no accidents or unplanned pregnancies from God’s perspective. Children come into this world in so many different ways, and while God does want us to conceive our children in the safety and security of a marriage relationship, the ideal is not always the norm.

### **Multiple Abortions**

*There are three things that are never satisfied, yea, four things say not, It is enough: the grave; and the barren womb; the earth that is not filled with water; and the fire that saith not, It is enough (Proverbs 30:15–16, KJV).*

Statistically, women who have had more than one abortion are quite common. In her book, *Forbidden Grief*, Dr. Therese Burke states that roughly 50% of women who have



had an abortion have also had previous abortions. In her book she documents women's stories of having seven, eight, and nine—even up to 14 abortions.

Remember, abortion is a traumatic experience that typically manifests in one or many self-destructive behaviors such as drugs, promiscuity, alcohol, and more. For some, the self-destructive behavior is getting pregnant again and re-aborting. You have lost something; there is a void, so you want to fill the emptiness. Some women naturally replace the aborted baby with another baby. Depending upon the new current circumstances, the new baby lives and is carried full-term. If the issues surrounding the first pregnancy haven't been addressed, it could be another crisis situation and the abortion process is repeated.

This repeat abortion can be for self-punishment or to somehow reconnect with the trauma. For others the reason for multiple abortions was an easy form of birth control. There are other possible reasons as well such as relationship stress or marital stress.

The key to focus on is that no matter if we are talking about one abortion or multiple abortions—or any other type of self-destructive behavior—Jesus has the same response: *I went to the cross for you and I can heal you.*

It is important to remember that you have lost something in your life when you abort. Not only have you taken the life of your child in the act of abortion, but you have also lost a child and a lifetime of experiences.

### **Miscarriage Compared to Abortion**

The results of abortion and miscarriage are the same: the termination of a pregnancy before the fetus could survive on its own. This explains why mothers who miscarry and those who abort share some of the same experience following their losses.

However, one major difference is that abortion is a deliberate choice and miscarriage is not. It is hard to heal physically and psychologically from the trauma of miscarriage and abortion. In the case of abortion, the burden can be heavier because the mother or parents have the added knowledge of knowing they are directly responsible for the termination of the pregnancy. In the event of miscarriage, the mother or parents are innocent of causing the pregnancy to end.

A second major difference is in how the grieving process is different. We will address this subject deeper in a future lesson.

### **The Bible Is Truth**

*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away (Matthew 24:34–36, KJV).*

*The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple (Psalm 19:6–8, NIV).*

*Blessed is that man who makes the Lord his trust, and does not respect the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies (Psalm 40:3–5, NKJ V).*

We can always look to God's Word as our true source. God's Word tells us that He is faithful and just, never to leave us or lie to us.

## **Anger**

Some of you may be angry at the way people have mistreated you or misled you over the years about your abortion. You may have some anger in you and feel that you were lied to in the abortion clinic, the doctor's office, or the location of your abortion(s). You may have anger that has built up over the years due to the unsettled issues of the effect of the abortion. Be assured that anger is a natural reaction to being lied to, tricked, or deceived. Our society has deceived us into thinking that abortion is the answer. I feel a righteous anger when abortion is described as a solution for women, because of the injustice and pain it causes.

Webster's Dictionary defines anger as is an intense emotional state induced by displeasure. Anger is not just one dimensional, it is multi-faceted. Like a diamond it has many faces to it. Anger is not simple; it is complex. There are many different levels of anger. Every person has experienced anger.

Anger comes when you feel the need to communicate that your personal boundaries have been violated. Anger is part of your defense system.

If a person has to live without their basic needs being met or noticed by others, they can remain in an angry state and grow weary. This is particularly important to the post-abortion woman due to the secrecy surrounding her abortion(s).

Often angry people have a history of angry parents. They have relationship trouble with spouses, relatives, or close friends because of their anger. After years of struggling in their relationships, futility sets in, causing a pessimistic "what's the use?" mindset to guide their emotions.

*But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our guilt and iniquities; the chastisement [needful to obtain] peace and well-being for us was upon Him, and with the stripes [that wounded] Him we are healed and made whole (Isaiah 53:5, AMP).*

## **Righteous Anger versus Rage**

Righteous anger has a purpose. It gets us to react to injustice in the way God intended we should. On the other hand, rage is anger out of control—the often-reported "road rage" is a perfect example. Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary defines rage as violent and uncontrolled anger, a fit of violent wrath, archaic insanity, violent action (as of the wind or sea), an intense feeling or passion.

*He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city (Proverbs 16:32, KJV).*

*An angry man stirreth up strife, and a furious man aboundeth in transgression (Proverbs 29:22, KJV).*

*Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: (Ephesians 4:26, KJV).*

### **Ways you might recognize rage in yourself:**

Rage can be caused by anything—loneliness or depression, even insignificant things when there has been a previous build-up of stress or anger. There could be a loss of rational thought or reasoning. The rage-filled person is usually violent and acts on his or her impulses to the point until either they have been incapacitated or the source of their rage has been destroyed.

### **Some Healthy Ways to Deal with Your Anger and Rage**

- Take a walk; give yourself time to cool down.
- Exercise to get rid of the stress.
- Write your anger in a letter and don't mail it.
- Read the book of Psalms and see how men of God dealt with their anger and frustration.
- Share it with God by explaining to Him why you are angry. Wrestle with Him in prayer; when He gives you direction, do it.
- Go to a private place and verbally "let it out."
- Give your anger or rage over to God by surrendering it to Him in prayer.
- Share your thoughts with someone whom you can trust if appropriate, being careful not to slip into gossip, and ask for them to pray with you about the issue.
- Discover the root of your anger. Is it healthy or unhealthy? Is it in your control or out of your control? Some things we just can't control; we have to come to grips with it, accept it, and let it go.

## Homework

1. Find out if you can, whether your child(ren) was a girl or a boy.
2. Spend time choosing a name for your aborted child(ren), as if you were going to carry her or him full-term.
3. Figure out how old the child(ren) would be now.
4. Spend time naming your miscarried child(ren).

**Note:** If you are struggling or you do not know the sex of the child, choose a name that you love or means something special to you, so that every time you hear that name, you will think fondly of the child you named.

### My Child

*I name you now  
Though I chose not to keep you then  
Your life cut short  
Moments after it began*

*What would you have looked like?  
What things would you have done?  
Looking back I can only wonder*

*As your mother  
Sadly, I cannot bring you back  
I can only honor you with your name*

The name I have chosen for you is: \_\_\_\_\_

I chose this name for you because:

---

---

---

---

Write a letter to the aborted child or children telling them about the circumstances surrounding his or her abortion and why you made that decision.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Write a letter to God expressing any anger and rage you feel about your abortion experience.

**Instructions for the week:** Reflect on both the fact that your choice took the life of your child(ren) and the fact that you also suffered the loss of a child(ren). Practice including the names of your aborted child(ren) in your prayers or thoughts of them. Write your letter expressing your anger and rage to God. Finish any letters that you didn't complete from the previous lesson.

45

working through this book individually, please go to a store and purchase an inexpensive baby blanket.

You can choose to get one blanket to represent all your aborted and miscarried child(ren), or you can get one for each child. When choosing a color, if you don't know the sex of your aborted or miscarried child(ren), choose colors like yellow, green, or multicolored blankets instead of the pinks and blues.

What do you do with these blankets? For the next several weeks, the baby blanket is yours to keep. I would like for you to hold these blankets as much as you can. Have the blanket with you when you are doing your homework and reflecting on the course. Cry your tears into these blankets. Don't worry about getting them dirty.

Also, begin thinking of a project that you can do for your aborted child(ren) to honor them. Please include any miscarriages too. These projects will be something that you will make for them and you will keep. As you name your children and pick out your baby blankets for them, ideas will start coming to you about what you want to make for them. For example, that is how the *Baby Innocence Picture Book* was created and used in the *Lady Liberty* testimony book. It was the project I made in my healing class to dedicate to my aborted child Innocence. We will be talking more about these projects in the upcoming lessons.

**Prayer:** Lord, I'm glad I can go back with you at my side and examine what really happened when I aborted my child(ren). I couldn't do it any other way. I'm counting on you to help me through the mix of emotions as I look back on the situation. Help me to receive the new information that I am learning. As hard as it is, please help me to name my child(ren). I'm committed to seeing this process through. Thank you, Lord. *Amen.*

**Notes:**

**Notes:**



**Notes:**



## Lesson 4

### *Dealing with Guilt and Shame*

The goal of this week's lesson is to gain a greater understanding of our emotions and behaviors related to guilt and shame, and their effect on us and our future.

Being honest with yourself is a first step toward healing and allows you to humbly say, "Yes, I identify with these emotions, and I have experienced guilt, shame, or anxiety." Once you recognize the characteristics of each emotion and how to spot them, you can see how that emotion affects you personally, giving you the hope of being able to overcome them. If you can see your struggle, then with God's help you can change it. Facing the truth about ourselves is never comfortable, but it is necessary before we can be set free by the power and truth of God's Word.

Throughout this lesson and the remainder of the lessons, you will be reminded that "**pride**" (a resistant spirit) will work against you and that "**humility**" (a yielded spirit) will work for you in your journey toward healing.

*To have respect for the Lord is to hate evil. I hate pride and bragging. I hate evil ways and twisted words (Prov. 8:13, NIRV).*

*When pride comes, then comes shame; but with the humble is wisdom (Prov. 11:2, NKJV).*

An important study done by the Elliott Institute<sup>1</sup> in 1998 is a good starting point in studying the emotions caused by abortion. In all, 260 women were surveyed. On average, the women had their abortions 10.6 years before the study. They came from three sources: 1) those seeking post-abortion counseling, 2) those who already had post-abortive counseling or 3) had a prior abortion and were seeking counseling for a crisis pregnancy in order to keep another pregnancy full term. This is a partial list of symptoms they reported:

- 92% reported permanent "emotional deadening," a deliberate attempt to stifle their emotions rather than allow themselves to feel the guilt of what they had done
- 86% reported an increased tendency toward anger or rage, with 48% confessing a tendency toward violence when provoked
- 86% reported a fear of others learning about their abortion
- 86% had a general sense of fear of the future or the unknown
- 82% had strong feelings of loneliness or isolation
- 75% had considerably diminished self-confidence
- 73% suffered from sexual dysfunction
- 58% suffered from post-abortion insomnia or nightmares involving a baby
- 57% reported significant difficulty in developing or maintaining relationships with both sexes
- 56% had considered suicide, with 28% actually attempting it

- 53% had begun or increased the use of drugs and/or alcohol post-abortion
- 39% experienced eating disorders post-abortion

While these statistics may at first seem discouraging, they point out an important fact: Most women who have suffered the effects of abortion struggle emotionally. *You are not alone.* There is hope and healing available for you!

## **Teaching: Understanding Our Emotions and Behaviors**

God gave us the ability to experience emotion. Guilt, shame, and anger are three of the most common emotions that post-abortive women face, but there are a host of feelings and behaviors that you might be experiencing as a result of the abortion(s). Below is a partial list of the things that I have experienced or have noticed in other women who have had abortions:

### Emotions:

Guilt	Depression
Shame	Sadness
Anger	Fear
Rage	Isolation
Anxiety	Loneliness

### Other Related Things (Psychological and Behavioral):

Self-Hatred	Eating Disorder
Self-Condernnation	Emotional Deadening
Judgment	Violence
Flashbacks	Diminished Self-Confidence
Unworthiness	Post Abortion Insomnia
Suicide	Nightmares
Sexual Issues	

Did you see yourself in one or more of the emotions and/or behaviors listed above? Let's discuss each of them in-depth and take a look at the Bible's response to those feelings:

## **Guilt**

When we feel responsibility for a wrongdoing, we are experiencing guilt. Guilt is a natural emotion that speaks to you about your actions or behavior. What you believe about the difference between right and wrong will trigger guilt in you. It is personal. For example, you may do something and feel guilty about it. Another person doing the same thing doesn't feel guilty about it because their beliefs are different from yours.

Guilt is the emotion that tells us to go back and fix the situation when we do something wrong. Guilt becomes a problem when we can't go back and fix the situation—like in the case of abortion.

**What the Bible says about guilt:**

*Judah said to his brothers, “What will we gain by killing our brother? His blood would just give us a guilty conscience” (Genesis 37:26, NLT).*

*All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has made to light upon Him the guilt and iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:6, AMP).*

In the first scripture, Judah and his brothers realized they would feel guilty if they took the life of their brother, Joseph. Guilt was triggered in them by their belief that killing was wrong. It is the same way with abortion. When a person believes that it is wrong to take the life of their child, guilt is triggered in them.

In the second scripture we read that Jesus took all of our guilt with Him when He went to the cross. This fact will be very important as we approach the lesson on forgiveness.

**Healthy Guilt**

Guilt can be healthy because it lets us know when we violate values (things society holds high), morals (rules of right conduct) or boundaries (a limit you can't go beyond). Remember, guilt is behaviorally-based—in other words, you can't feel guilty about something you've done unless you believe it is wrong. When guilt is handled in the healthy way, feelings of shame, unworthiness, or embarrassment should lead us to conviction, repentance, and then to forgiveness. The lessons and homework in this course may stir up guilt in you for your past abortion(s). This is okay. You need to get in touch with your feelings of guilt before you can move forward.

**Unhealthy Guilt**

There are times when people can feel guilty for things for which they are not responsible, or for things out of their control. This is a form of unhealthy guilt. When guilt is not being handled in a healthy way, it can be harmful to a person's life. An example of this is the child who feels guilty because of his parents' divorce. He may act on those feelings of guilt that tell him “I did something wrong.” Those strong feelings could cause him to drop out of school, or turn to drugs or worse.

Another unhealthy use of guilt is what is referred to as “guilt trip.” This is where someone else points out your actions in order to make you feel guilty, and to manipulate or control you. By reminding you of your actions, they hold something against you from your past and make you feel continually guilty and responsible for your mistake. It is possible that someone who knows that you have had an abortion(s) could “send you on a guilt trip” about it. If a person doesn't give us a guilt trip, we should also be on the lookout for the devil—who is a pro at making us feel guilty about our past so that he can keep us down.

## **How to recognize guilt:**

### In Speech

*When I lie about why I can't go to work today, I feel guilty because I believe it's wrong.*

### In Thoughts

*They're talking about abortion again, and every time I hear it, I feel guilty because I know what I did was wrong.*

### Through a Guilt Trip

*"You must struggle during this season. I remember you aborted your second child two years ago at this time. I can't believe that you went through with it. I could never do it."*

## **Shame <sup>2</sup>**

Shame is focused on how we view our inner selves. It is defined as "a negative emotion that combines feelings of dishonor, unworthiness, and embarrassment."<sup>3</sup> Guilt is focused on our actions and our beliefs that they are right or wrong. Guilt should not be confused with the emotion of shame. Even though they are closely related, it is important that we understand the difference between the two. Guilt says our behavior is bad. Shame says that *we* are bad.<sup>4</sup>

## **How shame entered the human race:**

We were created for intimacy with God and others. We achieve intimacy by being open, honest, and transparent. In the beginning there was no shame. Adam and Eve were free from shame in their emotions, in their sexual relationship, and most importantly in their relationship with God. *The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame* (Gen. 2:25, NIV).

Satan entered the garden, convinced Adam and Eve to pursue their own happiness and ultimately to take their eyes off of God, and shame entered the scene. After their sin, Adam and Eve hid from God, knowing the bond of intimacy was broken. The same is still true today: Satan uses shame to get us totally self-focused, our eyes off of God and onto ourselves.

*Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden* (Gen. 3:8, NIV).

Not only is shame mentioned at the beginning of the Bible, but it is talked about throughout history. In fact, the New International Reader's Version of the Bible has 252 verses that contain the word shame. Here are three sample verses.

*People hate it when evil comes. And they refuse to honor those who bring shame* (Proverbs 18:3, NIRV).

*They told Isaiah, "Hezekiah says, 'Today we're in great trouble. The Lord is warning us. He's bringing shame on us. Sometimes babies come to the moment when they should be born. But their mothers aren't strong enough to allow them to be born. Today we are like those mothers. We aren't strong enough to save ourselves'" (2 Kings 19:3, NIRV).*

*Those who put their hope in you will never be put to shame. But those who can't be trusted will be put to shame. They have no excuse (Psalm 25:3, NIRV).*

### **Healthy Shame**

Healthy shame speaks to us about our limits as human beings. Healthy shame shows up when we sin and allows us to see ourselves as imperfect and capable of making mistakes. It calls us to humility and our need for God. Healthy shame leads us to repentance.

For example: Susie was at a social gathering and without thinking she blurted out a inappropriate statement. She didn't plan to say it, it just came out. First she experienced the guilt, realizing that the statement is wrong. *Oops, that was a mistake. I wish I could take the statement back.* Then came the shame, *I hate my mouth and I hate it that I always say something wrong about people. I can never control my mouth. I just hate it.* Then came the prayer of repentance, "God, please forgive me that I said an unkind statement about someone. Please forgive me when I say things without thinking. God, I surrender my mouth to you, please help me to learn to have self-control with my tongue. Thank you that I have a mouth and I can speak. Help me to use it wisely by thinking good things about people and saying good things to people. The damage has been done, please God forgive me and help me not to make this mistake again. Please bless that person I hurt at the social gathering and help me to ask them for forgiveness and make it right with them. Bless all those who were listening. Help them to forget what I said."

Healthy shame is temporary in our lives. Once we realize our mistake, repent of the sin and let it go, it is gone. Then the shame does not reattach itself to us and affect our identity. Because of the depth of the trauma, the experience of abortion more often than not turns into unhealthy shame.

### **Unhealthy Shame**

Unhealthy shame is a very persuasive feeling that one is inadequate, flawed, and defective. Unhealthy shame tells a person, *it's your fault, you deserved it, there is something wrong with you.* It is a deep sense of embarrassment, producing a feeling of wanting to hide, to pull away, or to not exist. It makes us feel like we don't measure up as a person, and that we are not worthy to do most anything.

Unhealthy shame attacks the core of our identity. It is more than just a feeling—it begins to take over your life. For many post-abortive women, they live in a world filled only with shame and reminders of their shame.

The shame in Susie's example would be the thoughts. *I hate my mouth. I hate it that I always put myself in these situations and I just don't ever get it right in social gatherings.*

*I hate the way I am when I go to these social gatherings so I am never going to go to another one again.*

Let's say Susie didn't surrender the above statements in a prayer of repentance...those statements will become unhealthy shame as they attach themselves to her core identity. This is when Satan can come in and intensify those inner statements, allowing her to grow more disgusted toward herself. Now imagine Susie with those same statements going through her mind two years later, seven years later and 20 years later. These statements will be so well ingrained into her that they have become part of her daily thoughts—how she sees herself and how she relates to those around her.

So, unhealthy shame does not *temporarily* affect our lives the way healthy shame does. Instead of going away, unhealthy shame seeks to attach itself to our core identity. Unhealthy shame, when not dealt with, goes deeper and deeper into a person so it is no longer on the surface anymore.

Another example: A woman has had an abortion. Afterward, she blames herself and accepts the feelings of shame that tell her, *I am a murderer, I don't measure up, I am beyond repair*. Each time she sees an expectant mother—or another trigger that reminds her of the abortion—those feelings of inadequacy get driven deeper into her like a spike being hit by a hammer. After years, that feeling of shame has been reinforced so often and driven so deep that the woman carries those feelings everywhere with her, into every situation.

Need help identifying shame in your life? Start by listening to your thoughts and words. Remember, shame takes the focus off of God and keeps it on self. So when you are thinking thoughts like the following, there is a good chance that shame is at work:

*"Hey, that sounds good, but you really wouldn't want me to do that..."*

*"You don't really mean that, I know how you really think of me..."*

*"If they ever got to know me they would see how messed up I really am..."*

*"Me? You want me to do that? If you only knew me, you'd stay away from me."*

Sometimes a person has a hard time realizing when they are thinking and speaking about their inadequacies. For me, this was true at times. Others had to point out my shame-based thoughts and speech until I could recognize it on my own. So if this is you, I would encourage you to ask someone you trust to help you identify possible shame at work in your situation.

When dealing with shame, it is important to get to the root of the problem and not just deal with the symptoms. The Bible tells us that Jesus defeated shame when He went to the cross. When we as post-abortive women can recognize and reject the shame that "tells us we are inadequate," we find ourselves on our way to healing. Because the shame-based feelings have been driven so deep into us, we need to work the spike out by rejecting those feelings of shame when they try and confront us. We need to address those shame-based feelings directly...something like, "yes, I made a mistake when I



chose to abort, but Jesus handled my mistake on the cross and I will no longer accept feelings of inadequacy.” Each time we handle situations in this way, we reinforce our true core identity (in Christ) free from the grips of shame.

**Jesus won the battle over shame so we don’t have to suffer from it!**

*Therefore then, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses (who have borne testimony to the truth) let us strip off and throw off any encumbrance (unnecessary weight) and the sin that so readily (deftly and cleverly) clings to us and entangles us, and let us run with patient endurance and steady and active persistence the appointed course of the race that is set before us. Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith: who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God (Hebrews 12:1–2, KJV).*

## **Anxiety**

Anxiety is defined as a feeling of worry: nervousness or agitation, often about something that is going to happen.<sup>5</sup>

**Ways you might recognize it in yourself:**

- Ongoing, disturbing memories, and/or dreams of the abortion. Some women feel like the abortion is happening again (flashbacks or a sense of reliving it).
- Other women have feelings of panic, intense physical and/or emotional distress when exposed to things that remind them of the event.

**What the Bible has to say about anxiety:**

*When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought joy to my soul (Psalm 94:19, NIV).*

*Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you (1 Peter 5:7, NIV).*

## **Depression**

Depression is defined as a psychotic disorder marked especially by:

- Sadness, inactivity, difficulty in thinking and concentration, a significant increase or decrease in appetite and time spent sleeping; feelings of dejection and hopelessness, and sometimes suicidal tendencies.<sup>6</sup>

**Ways you might recognize it in yourself:**

Depression is a debilitating disorder that requires professional help. If you have experienced five or more of the symptoms below for several weeks (or longer), you should seek help immediately.

Feelings of overwhelming sadness and/or fear or the seeming inability to feel emotion emptiness. A decrease in the amount of interest or pleasure in all, or almost all, daily activities. Changing appetite and marked weight gain or loss. Disturbed sleep patterns, such as insomnia loss of REM (deep sleep) or too much sleep. Unintentional and

purposeless motions stemming from mental tension or retardation nearly every day. Fatigue, mental or physical loss of energy. Intense feelings of guilt, nervousness, helplessness, hopelessness, worthlessness, isolation/loneliness and or anxiety. Trouble concentrating, keeping focus or making decisions or a generalized slowing of thinking including memory. Recurrent thoughts of death, desire to just lie down and die, recurrent idealization of suicide, feelings of being abandoned by those close to you.<sup>7</sup>

**If you are concerned that you may be suffering from depression, you need to seek professional help. Contact your pastor, your medical doctor, or a licensed counselor for help in diagnosing and treating depression.**

**What the Bible has to say about depression:**

*Come quickly, Lord, and answer me, for my depression deepens. Don't turn away from me, or I will die (Psalm 143:7, NLT).*

*But God, who comforts the depressed, comforted us by the coming of Titus (2 Corinthians 7:6, NASB).*

## **Sadness**

Sadness is a general feeling of unhappiness, grief, or sorrow.<sup>8</sup>

**Ways you might recognize it in yourself:**

- Feeling “blue” when doing things that ordinarily brought you enjoyment.
- Inability to enjoy good things that happen to you.
- Difficulty celebrating events with others, especially with your other children.

**What the Bible has to say about sadness:**

*A voice is heard in Ramah. It's the sound of crying and deep sadness. Rachel is crying over her children. She refuses to be comforted, because they are gone (Mathew 2:18, NIRV).*

*The greatest sacrifice you want is a broken spirit. God, you will gladly accept a heart that is broken because of sadness over sin (Psalm 51:17, NIRV).*

## **Fear**

Fear is a distressing emotion caused by impending danger, evil, pain, etc, especially dread to meet or experience the danger.<sup>9</sup>

**Ways you might recognize it in yourself:**

- Fear of losing your other children: *I took the life of my aborted child, so something bad is going to happen to my other children.*
- Fear of discovery: *I can't work too closely with Jill, I may let it slip and she'd find out what I've done.*
- Fear of rejection: *I can't tell others about my abortion, they wouldn't understand.*

**What the Bible has to say about fear:**

*Fear and trembling grabbed hold of me. That made every bone in my body shake* (Job 4:14, NIRV).

*The Lord gives me light and saves me. Why should I fear anyone? The Lord is my place of safety. Why should I be afraid?* (Psalm 27:1, NIRV).

**Isolation/Loneliness**

Loneliness and Isolation are related terms. They both have to do with being or feeling alone and separated from others. There can be feelings of sadness from being left or abandoned by someone.

**Ways you might recognize it in yourself:**<sup>10</sup>

- Isolation occurs when we are set apart from others (quarantined).
- Loneliness is more than just a measure of your social skills: You can be lonely in a crowd or by yourself. It is an emotion of isolation.
- Loneliness is the empty feeling brought about when we cannot or will not share with others for fear of not being understood.

When Christ said: “I was hungry and you fed me,” he didn't mean only the hunger for bread and for food; he also meant the hunger to be loved. Jesus himself experienced this loneliness. He came amongst his own and his own received him not, and it hurt him then and it has kept on hurting him. The same hunger, the same loneliness, the same having no one to be accepted by and to be loved and wanted by. Every human being in that case resembles Christ in his loneliness; and that is the hardest part, that's real hunger. —Mother Teresa.<sup>11</sup>

**What the Bible has to say about isolation and loneliness:**

*Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted* (Psalm 25:16, NIV).

*But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed* (Luke 5:16, NIV).

**Self-Hatred**

Self-hatred is an extreme dislike toward the body, emotions, thoughts, and sensations that makeup the identity of a person. Psychologists prefer the term “low self-esteem” instead of the term self-hatred.<sup>12</sup>

**Ways you might recognize it in yourself:**

- Negative and unreasonable thoughts toward yourself: *People hate me and stay far away from me.*
- Negative thoughts about what's happening in your life: *Nothing good is going to come of it, I know it.*
- Negative thoughts about your future: *I've messed things up so bad; God will never be able to use me again.*

**What the Bible has to say about self-hatred:**

*And here I am, a nothing—an earthworm, something to step on, to squash. Everyone pokes fun at me; they make faces at me, they shake their heads: "Let's see how God handles this one; since God likes him so much, let him help him!" (Psalm 22:6–8 MSG).*

*I will be glad and rejoice in your love, for you saw my affliction and knew the anguish of my soul (Psalm 31:7, NIV).*

**Self-Condensation**

A post-abortive woman will not typically build herself up but rather disapprove of herself strongly.

**Ways you might recognize it in yourself:**<sup>13</sup>

- Feelings of being condemned: *Like those who know me can weigh the evidence against me and make me feel inferior.*
- Feeling like you can't contribute: *There is nothing of value I bring to anyone or anything.*
- You feel lower than low when you compare yourself to others.

**What the Bible has to say about self-condemnation:**

*Your own mouth condemns you, not mine; your own lips testify against you. (Job 15:6, NIV).*

*Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:1–3, NIV).*

**Judgment**

Judgment simply means to form an opinion. A post-abortive woman feels judged by those who have never gone through an abortion or faced an abortion decision. She feels judged by people who falsely believe that this could never happen to them or those who believe that no matter what the circumstances, they would never abort. They don't understand how she (a post-abortive woman) could have made the terrible choice to abort.

**Ways you might recognize it in yourself:**

- You may feel you are being judged: *If you tend to back away from involvement with people or positions because you feel they just wouldn't understand your past abortion(s).*
- Judgment is visible: Opinions formed for or against you can be seen on some people's faces, and it can also show up in their speech. *If you look closely, judgment is also visible in you, when you form opinions of others.*

- Judgment is intimidating: As a result, often women find it difficult to come forward for healing.

### **What the Bible has to say about judging:**

*Do not judge, or you too will be judged* (Matthew 7:1, NIV).

*Teach me knowledge and good judgment, for I believe in your commands.* (Psalm 119:66, NIV).

## **Flashbacks**

Flashbacks are a past incident recurring vividly in the mind.<sup>14</sup>

### **Ways you might recognize it in yourself:**<sup>15</sup>

- Flashbacks are one of the symptoms of Post-Abortion Stress Syndrome (PASS). Abortion is a trauma and the flashback of it can occur many times. For post-abortive women, the flashback of the abortion can be triggered by something else that happened during the abortion—a certain image, sound, smell, or anything of this sort. This can be compared to what soldiers have suffered when they come back from the front, known as Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome, and similarly triggered by certain sensory experiences.

### **What the Bible has to say about flashbacks:**

*He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases* (Psalm 103:3, NLT).

*But let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy. Spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may rejoice in you* (Psalm 5:11, NIV).

## **Unworthiness**

Unworthiness is close in meaning to the word unrighteous. In fact, Webster's Dictionary uses the words "unmerited" or "unworthy" to describe the word unrighteous—but if we are a child of God, we have been declared righteous. We are worthy and valuable in His sight.

### **Ways you might recognize it in yourself:**

- The post-abortive woman feels unworthy because she has aborted her child.
- She may feel that she is of no value to anyone.
- Most of all she feels she can never be of value to God again.

### **What the Bible has to say about unworthiness:**

*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness* (1 John 1:9, NASB).

*If you return to the Almighty, you will be restored; If you remove unrighteousness far from your tent (Job 22:23, NASB).*

## **Suicide**

According to a 13-year study of the entire population of women in Finland conducted by the Elliot Institute, deaths from suicide, accidents, and homicide are 248% higher in the year following an abortion, compared with women who have not been pregnant in the previous year.<sup>16</sup>

Suicide is a tragic solution for pain, and it is devastating that women having abortions take their own lives at a much higher rate than those who have not had an abortion. The after-effects of abortion are serious.

### **Ways you might recognize it in yourself:**

- If you should ever find yourself thinking that life is not worth living.
- You feel that there is no reason for you to continue.
- You've lost hope.

Please contact your suicide hotline, local crisis pregnancy center, or call 911. Please, know that God loves you and He has wonderful plans for you. Don't give up.

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a 24-hour, toll free service: 1-800-273-TALK (8255). Option Line is a 24-hour, toll-free call at 1-800-395-HELP (4357), or call 911.**

### **What the Bible has to say about suicide:**

*We put our hope in the Lord. He is our help and our shield (Psalm 33:20, NLT).*

*Why am I discouraged? Why is my heart so sad? I will put my hope in God! I will praise him again-my Savior and my God! (Psalm 42:11, NLT).*

## **Sexual Issues<sup>17</sup>**

This category covers a lot of different issues. The key is that after the abortion the person's sexual behavior becomes different than they conducted it before. The behavior is at extreme opposite ends of the scale no sex to promiscuity.

### **Ways you might recognize it in yourself:**

- Fear of sex, terror of getting pregnant again, no desire for sex
- No ability to enjoy sex
- Careless, casual sex with anyone, not caring about birth control or if another pregnancy occurs.

### **What the Bible has to say about sex issues:**

*Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. (Romans 12:2, NLT).*

*"...do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit... and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20, NKJV).*

## **Eating Disorders**

For many, food can be a comfort to ease the emptiness or hurt inside of us. I suffered from bulimia, but there are many others who are either anorexic or have over-eating issues. You may need to repent of this practice if you are eating to keep the pain, shame, and guilt down.

### **Ways you might recognize it in yourself:**

- Ask yourself: *How have your weight and eating habits changed since your abortion?*
- *Do you find yourself living to eat rather than eating to live?*
- Other signs of an eating disorder: Weight loss, fear of being overweight, eating little, taking up smoking, taking up caffeine usage, binge eating, hyperactivity, loss of menstrual period, and many others.<sup>18</sup>

Don't brush off your unhealthy eating habits. If you can't face them on your own, there are many good, biblically-based programs that address these issues.

**National Association of Anorexia Nervosa & Associated Disorders (ANAD) 1-847-831-3438 (long distance); National Mental Health Association 1-800-969-6642; or for a list of Christian resources for eating disorders, go to [www.christiananswers.net/q-ed/en/eatingdisorders](http://www.christiananswers.net/q-ed/en/eatingdisorders).**

### **What the Bible has to say about eating disorders:**

*He heals the brokenhearted And binds up their wounds (Psalm 147:3, NKJV).*

*Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty" (John 6:35, NIV).*

## **Emotional Deadening**

If you have been through a lot of traumatic events in your life, you might find that you have become emotionally "flat". Repressing our emotions leads to deadening, so that by completely blocking painful thoughts and memories, we eventually lose the capacity to feel anything, whether pleasure or pain.

### **Ways you might recognize this in yourself:**

- This could affect you if you have experienced more than a few of the following items in your life: Multiple abortions, miscarriages, drugs alcohol addition, divorce, prison, bankruptcy, death of loved ones, prostitution, and many more.
- You feel numb and need to avoid feelings and thoughts related to traumas.
- You have lost normal emotional responses to everyday occurrences: *Things feel unreal to you.*

#### **What the Bible has to say about emotional deadening:**

*My child, pay attention to what I say. Listen carefully to my words. Don't lose sight of them. Let them penetrate deep into your heart, for they bring life to those who find them, and healing to their whole body (Proverbs 4:20–23, NLT).*

*The thief comes to steal and destroy. I have come so they can have life. I want them to have it in the fullest possible way. (John 10:10, NIRV).*

### **Violence**

Violence is an act of aggression.<sup>19</sup> Relationships are usually tense leading up to an abortion, and they remain tense after the abortion. Oftentimes the relationship the woman hoped to save by having an abortion ends because of the abortion. Unless the situation calms down, she is able to become violent herself or allow others around her to become violent.

#### **Ways you might recognize it in yourself:**

- Are you unable to talk respectfully anymore with those in life? Are things escalating to the point where physical contact is the only way you feel you can get your point across?
- Do others fear being around you because you might become violent? Are you fearful that someone involved in the abortion situation may take it out on you? If you find yourself in a violent situation where you are not safe, then make plans and ask God to help you get to a safe place.

**National Domestic Violence/Child Abuse/ Sexual Abuse is 24 hour, 1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799-7233); or for immediate emergency help, call 911.**

#### **What the Bible has to say about violence:**

*He will rescue them from oppression and violence, for precious is their blood in his sight (Psalm 72:14, NIV).*

*Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone. (Romans 12:18, NLT)*

### **Diminished Self-Confidence**

When something is diminished, it is smaller or made to seem less. Post-abortive women generally have *smaller* or *less* confidence.



**Ways you might recognize it in yourself:**

- When you have little confidence in your ability to do something, how do you feel? Do you feel hesitant to try things because you already believe that you can't do them? Women who have abortions suffer from this lack of self-confidence.
- If you agree to try something new, do you end up talking yourself out of doing it because you lack the confidence? If the lack of confidence is strong enough and it goes on long enough, it can even keep you from fulfilling your God-ordained destiny.

Later in the course we will learn that the best way to increase our confidence in facing new situations is to understand our "Identity in Christ".

**What the Bible has to say about self-confidence:**

*But you are a shield around me, O LORD; you bestow glory on me and lift up my head (Psalm 3:3, NIV).*

**The Bible also warns us about misplacing our confidence:**

*Don't be so naive and self-confident. You're not exempt. You could fall flat on your face as easily as anyone else. Forget about self-confidence; it's useless. Cultivate God-confidence (1 Corinthians 10:12, MSG).*

**Post-Abortion Insomnia**

Insomnia simply means the inability to sleep. After abortion, your mind can be busy like the scripture below describes, especially at night.

**Ways you might recognize it in yourself:**

- Tossing and turning and not being able to sleep can affect your work and relationships as well as your health. If you find yourself up all night, ask yourself what you are thinking about? Is it abortion related? Dealing with the after-effects of abortion by participating in a course like this can dramatically help many areas of your life.

**What the Bible has to say about post-abortion insomnia:**

*I found myself in trouble and went looking for my Lord; my life was an open wound that wouldn't heal. When friends said, "Everything will turn out all right," I didn't believe a word they said. I remember God—and shake my head. I bow my head—then wring my hands. I'm awake all night—not a wink of sleep; I can't even say what's bothering me. I go over the days one by one, I ponder the years gone by. I strum my lute all through the night, wondering how to get my life together (Psalm 77:2-6, MSG).*

*I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety (Psalm 4:8, NIV).*

## Nightmares<sup>20</sup>

Nightmares and upsetting dreams are part of Post-Abortion Stress Syndrome (PASS).

### Ways you might recognize it in yourself:

- They can occur more frequently closely after the abortion. You may have the nightmares every night or just some of the time.
- Your nightmares may involve things that happened when you aborted your child(ren) or involve babies or something else that reminds you of the experience.
- Women who have had an abortion(s): *They may not want to fall asleep for fear of nightmares.*

For me, I found it helpful to go through a healing course like this, and thankfully I no longer have them.

### What the Bible has to say about nightmares:

*For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning (Psalm 30:5, NIV).*

*"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. (Matthew 11:28, NIV).*

## Blind Spots<sup>21</sup>

I'd like to end this long lesson with a brief note about blind spots. We have covered a lot of ground on emotions and behaviors. Some of these things you may think don't apply to you and others you are convinced that they do. We all have "blind spots"—an area of our life we are unable or unwilling to see. As a post-abortive woman, your blind spot could be hurting you, and it may be hurting others around you. You may still be traumatized to the point that you can't see it but others can. When you get alone with the Lord, ask Him to reveal your blind spots. Do an inner search of your heart, your emotions, your behavior and your thoughts. He will reveal those areas you are out of balance on that you cannot see. When He does, then ask Him to help you change them.

### What the Bible has to say about blind spots:

*Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. (Proverbs 3:5-6, KJV)*

## Homework

How would your life be different if you didn't have guilty thoughts about the abortion going through your mind?

---

---

---

How would your life be different if you didn't have shameful thoughts about the abortion going through your mind?

---

---

---

Which emotion or behavior covered in the lesson is the strongest in your life now?

---

---

---

Out of all of the emotions or other behaviors covered in the lesson, list the top five that you feel you need to work on.

---

---

---

Which of the things that you wrote down troubles your thoughts the most?

---

---

---

Which of the things you wrote down comes out in your speech the most?

---

---

---

When you are in a "bad mood," others around you know it and they are affected by your bad mood behavior as well. Which emotions and behaviors that you can see are affecting other people around you? How is it affecting your relationships?

---

---

---

Just between you and God, do you believe that He has the power to help you with your emotions? Do you believe that He will help you?

---

---

---

Which of things that you wrote down is keeping you from experiencing liberty in your relationship with God?

---

---

---

How do the emotions and behaviors you are experiencing today compare to those that you experienced at the time of the abortion? Are they stronger? Are they weaker? Are they different? If so how?

---

---

---

How do you think your current emotions or behaviors will look in five years?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Which emotions and behaviors do you need to repent of? (This list will be dealt with in Lesson 6)

---

---

---

**What are you supposed to do with these emotions and behaviors?**

There was an ancient group of people called “stoics” who believed that it was wrong to express any emotion. If any of you have tried suppressing all of your emotions, you know it is difficult to do even for a short while.

God is not looking for us to go through life in a zombie-like state. In fact, the Bible says, *Nevertheless, I will bring health and healing to it; I will heal my people and will let them enjoy abundant peace and security* (Jeremiah 33:6, NIV).

This course is designed to help you learn that your emotions can work for you and not against you. Yes, you experienced an abortion(s), but you shouldn't be put into a box emotionally and have to live in misery for the rest of your life.

**Instructions for the week:** Do your homework. Avoid distractions. Be aware of your thoughts, words, and actions this week and what it might reveal about your emotions and behaviors. Don't get discouraged. You are doing well by coming this far. Keep going. Continue to hold your baby blankets and cry your tears into them.

**Prayer:** "O my God, I trust, lean on, rely on, and am confident in You. Let me not be put to shame or [my hope in You] be disappointed; let not my enemies triumph over me. Show me Your ways, O Lord; teach me Your paths. Guide me in Your truth and faithfulness and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; for You [You only and altogether] do I wait [expectantly] all the day long" (Psalm 25:2, 4, 5, AMP).

**Notes:**

**Notes:**





## Lesson 5

### *Grieving Properly*

In this week's lesson we will explore the emotion of grief in depth. The goal of this week's lesson is to understand what to expect while grieving and why grief is not optional. *Grief is a necessary step in your healing process.*

#### **Teaching: Grief**

We have all experienced the death of family members and friends. We also share the common experience of having aborted a child. Each loss we experience brings disturbance and emotional pain into our lives. Yet grief is a normal, common experience. You can't pray it away—it is an emotional process. As people, we need to go *through* grief, not *around* it.

In today's culture, when we lose a loved one or friend, we are allowed time to outwardly grieve. People understand that there has been a death. It is acceptable for people to take funeral leave, vacation, and sometimes even an extended leave of absence following the death of someone close to them.

The same is not true after you have had an abortion. Most often, people are not given time to outwardly grieve. Women and men choosing abortion are caught between pro-abortionists who believe that abortion is nothing more than a blob of tissue, and pro-lifers who believe that abortion is the death of a child. The moral debate continues in our society. As a result, women and men are not encouraged or allowed to outwardly express their grief.

Everything is kept hidden after an abortion, including the parent's feelings of loss and grief.

The Help Guide article on Coping with Grief and Loss: sums up the situation, "The single most important factor in healing from loss is having the support of other people."<sup>1</sup> The article goes on to list the people from whom we need support: friends, family, our faith community, support groups, and therapists. With the exception of pro-life therapists and some pro-life faith communities, most of the support system just isn't there for the women and men who choose abortion. So if you have experienced an abortion, what do you do with your grief?

Let's take a look at grief and the many ways it materializes in people's lives.

#### **What is Grief?**

The Encarta Dictionary defines grief as intense sorrow, great sadness, especially as a result of a death. Grief is a normal emotion of suffering from the loss of someone or something in our life. Each of us will deal with the emotion of grief differently.

Jesus knew grief.

*He was despised and rejected, a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care* (Isaiah 53:3, NLT).

### **What you will experience during grief:<sup>2</sup>**

The following emotions are common in the grief process: *bitterness, emptiness, apathy, love, anger, guilt, sadness, fear, self-pity, and helplessness*. These emotions will seem to be unpredictable, not helpful, and you may feel that the situation is out of control.

Adding to this chaos, grief can also bring into our lives short-term memory loss, difficulty making decisions, altered sense of time, self-focus, and a short attention span. These symptoms are a normal part of grief. How will we know that we are grieving? It is common to feel that your world has changed. Your senses pick up things differently, you will cry a lot, your upper body may feel constricted, your heart might beat at a faster rate, you might need to catch your breath often, and your daytime and sleeping rhythm will change.

### **Emotional Pain comes with grief:<sup>3</sup>**

One of the ways we deal with emotional pain is denial. We try and live our lives as if nothing happened. A clue that we may be in denial is that we tell people we are okay when we are asked the question, “*How are you doing?*” We may respond with, “*I’m doing fine*” instead of saying that we are hurting from the abortion experience. It takes a lot of energy to deny what is really going on inside. Denial may help us keep grief at a distance a little bit longer. However, eventually we have to deal with the emotional pain so we can move on with our life. Trying to deny or suppress grief doesn’t work; it is like putting a bandage over the chasm of abortion before any healing takes place. This can lead to a spiritual infection. Post-abortive women often “*get on*” with their lives before fully grieving.

## **Trauma and Grief**

I have often wondered why it takes so long for people who have endured abortion to come forward and seek help and healing for the after-effects of abortion. Some wait five, 10, or even 20 years—which was my case. I believe the link between trauma and grief can explain some of the reasons for the long delay before people seek help.

The article, “Coping with Grief and Loss” from The Help Guide, tells us that grief tends to be mixed with trauma when the loss is sudden and unexpected or if the loss is outside the normal cycle of life, like the death of a child. Grief is a normal reaction to loss where its symptoms lessen over time. Trauma is a disabling reaction that can block the grieving process, disrupt your life and leave you psychologically vulnerable.<sup>4</sup>

Let’s take a hypothetical example: Lizzie goes in for her abortion. During the procedure, she is not at all prepared for what happens. The pain, the sounds, and the words spoken by the abortionist are not what she was expecting. At the end of the procedure she

happens to be looking in the right spot and catches a glimpse of a bloody object that the abortionist is extracting by hand because the vacuum missed it. The sight of the bloody object being tossed into the garbage is etched forever into her memory. The abortion process has traumatized her. As a result, Lizzie is immediately caught up with trying to deal with the horror of the experience she has just endured. She is self-focused, trying to come to grips with her actions. Her emotional pain becomes the prime focus. Lizzie is unable to focus on the loss of the baby because she is doing so poorly from all the guilt and shame brought on by the trauma of the abortion. She has been through a lot—it may take her years just to deal with the trauma of abortion. The whole time, the grieving process sits and waits in the background until the time Lizzie can handle dealing with her loss.

### **Grief versus Trauma** (from the National Institute for Trauma and Loss in Children)<sup>5</sup>

#### **The Effects of Grief**

Sadness is the dominant emotion

Grief feels real

Talking about grief helps

Pain is related to the loss

Anger is non-violent

Guilt involves unfinished emotional business with the deceased

Your self-image and confidence generally remain intact

You dream about the person you lost

Symptoms lessen naturally over time

#### **The Effects of Trauma**

Terror is the dominant emotion

Trauma feels unreal

Talking about trauma is difficult

Pain involves not just the loss but terror, helplessness and fear of danger

Anger often involves violence towards yourselves or others

Guilt involves self-blame for what happened or thoughts that it should have been you that was harmed

Your self-image and confidence are distorted and undermined

You dream about yourself in danger

Untreated, symptoms may get worse

Grief takes focus and time. When a person is traumatized, they have neither the focus nor the time to grieve properly.

## **Tips on How to Grieve<sup>6</sup>**

Mourning is the way that grief is outwardly expressed (wailing, screaming, ripping of clothes, wearing armbands, etc.). Fighting grief brings exhaustion. I'm reminded of a swimmer caught in a riptide in the ocean. They start out a few feet from shore but the more they struggle, the more tired they become and eventually they end up weak and farther away from shore. Instead of resisting the grief, invite it to work in your life and outwardly mourn. Mourning is a choice. *During this course you have the liberty to mourn.*

Grief is slow process, nights are difficult. Don't try to rush grief.

Don't compare your loss with others. When you lose a child this is one of the greatest losses a person can experience, because you are not supposed to outlive your child.

Spend time meditating alone with your thoughts. This may feel uncomfortable at first but be patient. Sorrow may pour over you constantly or you may have intense moments followed by periods of relief. There is no right or wrong way to follow. Trust God to lead you through the process.

Often the death of a loved one brings up not just the grief of what you lost, but also what you never had or what you never will have. In the case of an aborted child it is the case of an entire missing life. Grief and loss create gaps in our lives, places where a child is now missing from our life.

Sometimes a major loss will highlight other open issues we have from prior losses in our life. It is important to take the time to properly grieve over these past events. Otherwise the sorrow will start to run together and be harder to separate and identify.

You may experience a feeling of numbness or insensitivity. In a trauma, shock protects us from the intensity of our loss due to the abortion until we can safely handle dealing with it.

You may feel that you are not yourself. Your mind wanders; you can't focus; and it is hard to concentrate on what is going on around you. It is easy to be discouraged by this inability to think clearly. *Don't lose hope*—your mind and emotions are working together to make sense of the situation, even when it seems like everything in your life is on hold.

## **Miscarriage, Stillbirth, Infant Death and Abortion**

When a woman experiences miscarriage, stillbirth, infant death, or abortion she suffers a loss. If the woman takes the necessary time and focus required, each experience should lead to the natural expression of sorrow and grief. These losses are tough to take and there is no easier experience to go through. Society may offer more support and understanding for miscarriage, stillbirth, and infant death. Yet there is still a lot of misunderstanding about each of these types of death.

A Norwegian study<sup>7</sup> that compared the impact on women who miscarry versus having an abortion found that, “The short term emotional reactions to miscarriage appear to be larger and more powerful than those of abortion. In the long term, however, women who had induced abortion reported more avoidance thoughts and feelings related to the event than women who miscarried.” The study also said that women who miscarried were more likely to experience loss and grief. The women who experienced abortion were more likely to experience feelings of guilt and shame.

Some obvious differences are that the woman who aborts, chooses to terminate her pregnancy. The mother experiencing miscarriage, still birth or infant death, did not choose for their child’s life to end. As a result, mothers who experience miscarriage, still birth, or infant death are more focused on the question of “why?”

**The questions of grief: “Why?”**<sup>8</sup> Even Jesus asked the question “why?” *About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?” which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”* (Matthew 27:46, NIV).

Having no answer to the question “why?” can make us angry, but at some point your question of “why?” will turn to “what can I gain from this experience going forward?”

Knowing “why” doesn’t remove the painful circumstances. In the Bible, Paul came to accept why he was suffering in prison. *That’s why I’m suffering the way I am. But I’m not ashamed. I know the One I have believed in. I am sure he is able to take care of what I have given him. I can trust him with it until the day he returns as judge* (2 Timothy 1:12, NIRV).

This is also the case for us as post-abortive women, knowing why we are suffering doesn’t ease the hurt. It still hurts. However, knowing ‘why’ may move us closer to acceptance of what we have to go through as a result of having the abortion(s).

## **Mourning**

The Bible is full of words about mourning. It even says that there is a blessing to those who mourn, and they shall be comforted.

*Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted* (Matthew 5:4, NIV).

*He has sent me to tell those who mourn that the time of the LORD’s favor has come, and with it, the day of God’s anger against their enemies. To all who mourn in Israel, he will give a crown of beauty for ashes, a joyous blessing instead of mourning, festive praise instead of despair. In their righteousness, they will be like great oaks that the LORD has planted for his own glory* (Isaiah 61:2-3, NLT).

The Jews handle grief in a healthy way.<sup>9</sup> Their customs are designed around expressing, not repressing, grief. They wail. They tear their clothes. For the first few days in a Jewish home, they eat a certain way, dress a certain way. They light a seven-day candle.

They cover up the mirrors and decorative objects in their home to concentrate on their loss and less on looks and vanity. After seven days, the synagogue brings a meal of recovery. Grieving time is not a time to replace that which is lost. After a period of no less than 30 days and no more than one year the mourning period ends. From that point on they do not mourn anymore. It is a healthy process. The Jewish community thanks the Lord after the mourning period and ends in celebration by lighting a candle and thanking God.

The Jewish style of mourning shows how a deliberate process of mourning can be healthy. I'm not suggesting that you to mourn exactly as the Jews do, but I do want you to mourn. You have five more weeks until the end of this course. Choose to start mourning now and then choose to stop when you are instructed near the end of the course. This way, as in the Jewish-style mourning, you will mourn for a season and then afterward mourn no more. You owe it to yourself to take this time now.

## **Tears**

God designed us to cry when we feel pain—it's a natural expression when we feel sorrow. God says that he will fill a bottle with our tears.

*Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: are they not in thy book?* (Psalm 56:8, KJV).

We know that Jesus wept when He experienced the death of Lazarus, His friend. *When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. "Where have you laid him?" he asked. "Come and see, Lord," they replied. Jesus wept. Then the Jews said, "See how he loved him"* (John 11:33-35, NIV).

When we can't express something with words, sometimes tears can. There is healing in tears. *Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy. He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him* (Psalm 126:5-6, NIV).

One day all of the tears we cry on earth will pass. *He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away* (Revelation 21:4, NIV).

## **Recovering From Grief**

We can feel that God has left us when we are going through grief, but it is not true. We can feel that life is not worth it anymore, but it really is. We need to cling to God despite the circumstances. Lay it all out before God, because HE can handle it. Even though grief is experienced by all, it is important that we learn to grieve our own way. There is no formula for what is right for you.

**It is okay to feel relief:**

Feeling relief is not the same as saying you're glad your loved one is dead. It merely reflects that a burden has lifted. Quick, unexpected deaths rob us of being able to say goodbye.

Recovery is when you create a new level of life for yourself as time passes. Your new life will be better than being stuck in the grieving process. At some point you will need to let go. Letting go is not the same as ignoring your loved one. It doesn't mean that you are forgetting them either. Letting go means you are moving to a new level emotionally and physically and choosing to move on to new things.

**Saying Goodbye<sup>10</sup>**

Saying goodbye shifts the relationship of your loved one from a presence in your life to a memory.

Getting to the other side of grief awakens strengths, talents, abilities, and a new sense of compassion for others and new deeper relationship with God. When you say goodbye you will feel lighter. Heaviness is gone. Your health returns. It is important to focus on diet, exercise and rest. Hope will replace despair.

*Your sun will never set again, and your moon will wane no more;  
the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your days of sorrow will end* (Isaiah 60:20, NIV).

## Homework

### Reflecting on God's Word:

Listed below are many wonderful scriptures that will bring insight into grief and God's response toward grief. Read them several times, meditate on them, and let them sink into your spirit. Then journal your thoughts and impressions—if this is difficult for you, begin by putting the verses in your own words, personalizing them. Allow God to speak to you through His Word. At the end, there are a few questions for you to answer to help you address grief issues.

*He will not let your foot slip he who watches over you will not slumber; indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep (Psalm 121:3–4, NIV).*

*On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night (Psalm 63:6, NIV).*

*Oh, my anguish, my anguish! I writhe in pain. Oh, the agony of my heart! My heart pounds within me, I cannot keep silent. For I have heard the sound of the trumpet; I have heard the battle cry (Jeremiah 4:19, NIV).*

*This poor man called, and the LORD heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles (Psalm 34:6, NIV).*

*When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought joy to my soul (Psalm 94:19, NIV).*

*My wound is severe, and my grief is great. My sickness is incurable, but I must bear it (Jeremiah 10:19, NLT).*

*Be merciful to me, LORD, for I am faint; O LORD, heal me, for my bones are in agony. My soul is in anguish. How long, O LORD, how long? Turn, O LORD, and deliver me; save me because of your unfailing love. No one remembers you when he is dead. Who praises you from the grave? I am worn out from groaning; all night long I flood my bed with weeping and drench my couch with tears. My eyes grow weak with sorrow; they fail because of all my foes (Psalm 6:2–7, NIV).*

*Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior (Psalm 42:5, NIV).*

*I sought the LORD, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears (Psalm 34:4, NIV).*

*He reached down from on high and took hold of me; he drew me out of deep waters. He rescued me from my powerful enemy, from my foes, who were too strong for me. They confronted me in the day of my disaster, but the LORD was my support. He brought me*



*out into a spacious place; he rescued me because he delighted in me (Psalm 18:16–19, NIV).*

*For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning (Psalm 30:5, NIV).*

*When my spirit grows faint within me, it is you who know my way. In the path where I walk men have hidden a snare for me (Psalm 142:3, NIV).*

*I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy (John 16:20, NIV).*

**Scripture Journal:**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Questions to get at grief issues:**

Have you experienced losses (abortion, miscarriage, divorce, death of loved one etc.) in your life? List them.

---

---

---

---

Did you grieve and mourn the same way for each of these losses? Or did you grieve differently for some?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Do you still have strong emotions related to some of these losses?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

What are the specific strong emotions you feel related to your abortions?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

What are the specific strong emotions you feel related to your miscarriages?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Instructions for the week:** Take time to grieve by mourning. We just learned that mourning is the way that grief is outwardly expressed. Now you have the liberty to mourn, while you are going through these classes, not later after you finish the course. You should do this until the memorial service. At the memorial service, you will be asked to turn in your baby blankets as a sign to end the grieving and mourning. Continue to pour all your tears into the baby blankets. By now it may be wet with tears, and

that's okay. Also, do the homework above and take time to reflect on your losses of your aborted children and miscarriages.

How can you grieve while you are continuing to work and live around other people? I would like to encourage you to build a private altar somewhere in your home. As you go there daily to spend time with the Lord that is also where you can shed all your tears without prying eyes wondering what is going on. To further help protect your privacy in your home as you walk through this course, try keeping all your post-abortive healing materials together. Try putting them in a shoebox or some other box with a lid. This will help keep others from reading things that you may not be ready to share.

If you are thinking about when is the right time to share; there is a section in Lesson 10 that explains to you how to tell others about your story. The section is called "Telling Others".

**In preparation for the upcoming memorial service:** Write a poem, draw, paint, write a song, dance or do some other creative tribute to your child(ren). The memorial service will be a time of honoring your child and presenting your projects that you have made for them. This is coming up in a future lesson, and we will address how to handle this as a group or if you are working your way through individually.

The goal is to create a positive memory of your child by doing a memorial service. You might think why?

When you think back on your abortions what comes to your mind is a remembrance of yourself aborting your child and all of the circumstances of the time. That is the only remembrance you have of yourself with your child who was alive for a brief time on this earth in your womb. After you aborted your child shame likely came upon you. It became a hidden thing that you did. Every time you think about the abortion you might feel that shame all over again. This could be the only memory you have of that child.

I want to help create a new memory for you. How so? By doing all the things that I am asking you do while going through this course: baby blankets, naming your child, making special projects for them, and going through the memorial service. It all works together.

After you do all the above things, you will be able to think back on your abortions with a new memory. You will still see yourself aborting your

child, but then, you will see the new memory of you making things right with God. By coming forth, speaking out, taking responsibility in claiming your child and naming them, the new memory created is open and honoring. It is exactly the opposite of shame.

**Prayer:** Lord, help me to grieve and mourn properly until the end of this course. Help the tears to flow. Inspire me with a creative project(s) to memorialize and honor my child(ren). Holy Spirit, help me as I pour out my grief. I desire to be healthy and free from grief going forward. Please reveal any areas you need to touch to make me well and whole. *Amen.*

**Notes:**

**Notes:**

**Notes:**





## Lesson 6

### *Understanding and Asking for Forgiveness*

This week's lesson will explore the topic of forgiveness. The goal of this week's lesson is to understand forgiveness and to learn how to ask for it. There are people we need to forgive who were involved in our past abortion(s). At the same time, we also need to receive forgiveness.

Why did we wait so long to deal with forgiveness in this course? The topic seems pretty important—why not deal with it first? You are correct that forgiveness is one of the keys to healing. Forgiveness comes in week six because the prior lessons prepare you to be ready to forgive. You may not have been ready without reawakening both your mind and spirit to the issues, circumstances, and people active in your life at the time you aborted. Now is the time to trust God and forgive.

*“When a deep injury is done us, we never recover until we forgive.”* Alan Paton, South African Writer and Educator 1903-1988.

*“To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you.”* Lewis B. Smedes, a renowned Christian author.

*“Forgiveness does not change the past, but it does enlarge the future.”* Paul Boese was a Dutch botanist.

*“Without forgiveness there's no future.”* Desmond Tutu is a South African pastor and activist.

### **Teaching: Forgiveness**

Forgiveness is a quality whereby one ceases to feel resentment against another for a wrong he or she has committed against oneself, or gives up any claim for a debt owed by another (i.e., one *forgives* another, or *forgives* a debt). It may be granted with or without the other asking for forgiveness.<sup>1</sup>

It is recognized in Christianity as a spiritual gift. Spiritual forgiveness does not necessarily have any connection with material or financial forgiveness. One may spiritually forgive another, yet expect that the other should still make material or financial amends for any wrongs that have been done. God is understood to be infinitely forgiving (at the cost of His Son), and, indeed, the source of all forgiveness.

Forgiveness is a necessary component of civilization, since without it; all wrongs would demand revenge, which may themselves be taken as wrongs requiring revenge, resulting in a spiraling escalation of retaliation, leading ultimately to utter destruction.

## **What Does the Bible Say About Forgiveness?**

Jesus gave His life for us. Jesus was blameless and He paid the price by dying on the cross for our sins. The only reason that all of mankind can be made right through the forgiveness of sins is because of what Jesus did on the cross. His blood was shed for us.

### **God is always ready and willing to forgive us—and quickly:**

*For You, O Lord, are good, and ready to forgive [our trespasses, sending them away, letting them go completely and forever]; and You are abundant in mercy and loving-kindness to all those who call upon You (Psalm 86:5, AMP).*

### **We are not supposed to hold grudges:**

*Don't seek revenge or carry a grudge against any of your people. Love your neighbor as yourself. I am God (Leviticus 19:18, MSG).*

In other words, loving others even when they are cruel to us is the same as forgiving others even when they are cruel to us.

### **The parable of the unmerciful servant:**

The way we forgive others is the way your Heavenly Father will forgive you. Let's read the following parable of the unmerciful servant.

*21Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" 22Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times. 23"Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. 24As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents<sup>1</sup> was brought to him. 25Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. 26"The servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' 27The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go. 28"But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denari. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded. 29"His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.' 30"But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. 31When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened. 32"Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. 33Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' 34In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. 35"This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart" (Matthew 18:21–35, NIV).*

## **Can a Post-Abortive Woman Forgive and Forget?**

Forgive, sure...but forget?

God's response? *Their sins and lawless acts, I will remember no more* (Hebrews 10:17, NIV).

In the above verse we see that only God is able to fully forgive AND forget. Forgiveness is not easy, but as people, we can choose to forgive. As you know, forgetting even the smallest offense can be difficult. We will never forget our abortion experiences. That is okay—we don't need to forget. We are learning how to be fully forgiven for the events surrounding our abortion experience. People can think that we have forgotten something when we are silent and don't bring up the topic. This isn't always the case. Strong feelings can remain below the surface of our silence.

**The post-abortive woman needs to forgive:**

- Abortionist (doctors, nurses, counselors)
- Abortion clinics, doctor's offices, any location where you had your abortions
- Media, the government, our culture
- Friends who encouraged you
- Parents who failed you
- Father of the child
- Others who have hurt you by force, or silence, or neglect.

**The post-abortive woman needs to ask for and receive forgiveness from God:**

- For taking the life of her child
- For sinful thoughts, emotions, and behaviors that stemmed from her abortion experience
- For herself (see later section of this lesson)
- From the child she aborted (see homework section of this lesson)
- From others she might have hurt during her years before any post-abortion recovery (see homework section of this lesson)

**A post-abortive woman will need to forgive people in her future:**

- People who judge her or condemn her
- Individuals who attack her for speaking out about her past and her desire to see healing for others who made the same choice
- Individuals who insist that what happened to her would never happen to them

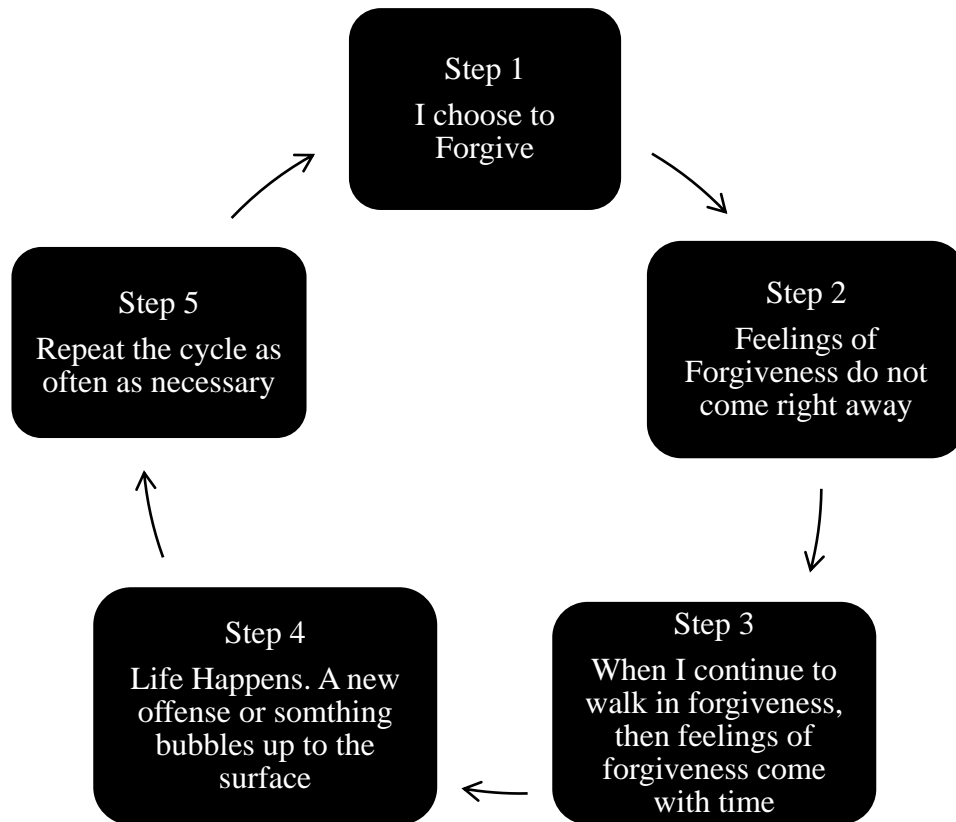
**Asking for Forgiveness**

How does a post-abortive woman receive forgiveness? Like everyone else, by asking. *You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it* (John 14:14, NIV).

The post-abortive woman will not want to ask for forgiveness, nor feel like it. Feelings of unworthiness make it a struggle to ask for forgiveness.

**Forgiveness is a choice, an act of your will:**

The diagram below shows something I call the “Forgiveness Choice” cycle.



You will notice in Step 1 that when you choose to forgive you are not trying to forget the situation. You are making a choice of your will by choosing to forgive.

Following the arrows to the right at Step 2, the feelings of forgiveness may not be there right away. By choosing to forgive, your behavior begins to line up with what the Bible says about forgiveness. Our natural tendency is to forgive the person or the situation when we feel like it, or some people just want the feelings to be there first in order to extend any kind of forgiveness. So, by choosing to forgive, you become obedient to God’s Word, whether you feel like it or not.

How do you do this? By continuing to choose to forgive them when they enter your thoughts, saying “I choose to forgive \_\_\_\_\_.” You can pray it or speak it out. Now, because you are doing the first two steps, that brings you to Step 3. With time, walking in forgiveness creates the feelings that follow. Because you have been extending grace to them, your heart will no longer be hardened and you will have good feelings in your heart about the person or situation. Next is Step 4—as life goes on a new offense comes or something bubbles up to the surface that causes you to have unforgiveness in your heart again. That takes us to Step 5 where you need to repeat the cycle of forgiveness as often as necessary to keep your heart free of unforgiveness.

### **Those who forgive much will receive much joy:**

Jesus said of the woman who anointed His feet with oil: *Therefore I tell you, her sins, many [as they are], are forgiven her—because she has loved much. But he who is forgiven little loves little* (Luke 7:47, AMP).

### **Forgiving Yourself (Receiving God’s Forgiveness)**

I want to be clear: Jesus is the only one who has the power to forgive people of their sins through his sinless life and sacrifice on the cross. We as people do not have the ability to forgive our own sins. That is not the point of this section.

It isn’t always an easy journey, but I’ve see that through this course, post-abortive women are able to get to the point where they can forgive others and ask others to forgive them. Their lives improve when they let go of the hurt others have caused them and also when they realize they have hurt others and need forgiveness. However, I see the same women having a difficult time believing that God has forgiven them for their abortion(s).

It is a sin if you don’t forgive yourself. Why is it a sin if you don’t forgive yourself? Where does it say that in the Bible?

*The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God* (Galatians 5:19–21, NIV).

The scripture above has the word “hatred” in it. We have learned from an earlier lesson that self-hatred is extreme dislike toward yourself. The scripture also says that people who live like that will not inherit the kingdom of God. So hating ourselves means that we are sinning by not accepting and embracing the value God has placed upon us. Direct your hate to your true enemy, Satan. The evil one.

*Love must be sincere. **Hate** what is evil; cling to what is good* (Romans 12:9, NIV).

*To fear the LORD is to **hate evil**; I **hate** pride and arrogance, **evil** behavior and perverse speech* (Proverbs 8:13, NIV).

Many post-abortive women can believe that God has forgiven them in their mind. The hardest step for them is being able to believe this truth that Jesus really does forgive them in their heart. *After all, they say, I took the life of my child. God says He forgives me, but how can this be true?*” It is when a post-abortive woman **accepts** the word of God and **believes** in her heart that God has forgiven her that the self-hatred falls away.

### **The post-abortive woman believes that God can forgive everyone but her:**

We are sinning if we condemn ourselves. The following two verses show God's love for us and reinforce that He is not interested in condemning us.

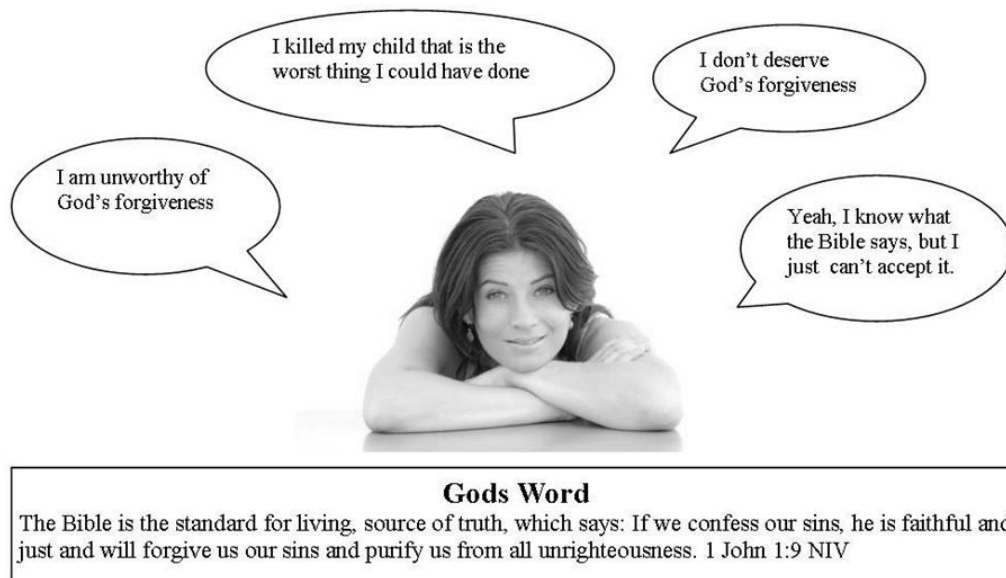
*So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1, NLT).*

*When Jesus raised Himself up, He said to her, Woman, where are your accusers? Has no man condemned you? She answered, No one, Lord! And Jesus said, I do not condemn you either. Go on your way and from now on sin no more (John 8:10–11, AMP).*

### **Pride**

Did you ever stop to think that if God has forgiven us and yet we don't receive His forgiveness...we are walking in pride?

**Unknowingly, we often put our thoughts above God's thoughts which is a form of pride.**



### **How do you accept and believe God's forgiveness?**

By taking steps of faith. When you're sick, you go to the doctor and he prescribes medicine for you to get well. You go to a doctor because he is a trained, licensed person with the authority to prescribe the right medicine for your recovery. You listen to him, you get the medicine and you begin to take it. It is a *step of faith to trust* the doctor and

take the medicine. *It takes belief* that the medicine is going to work. As the medicine begins to work, you get stronger in your health and healing.

Another example would be the same way you received salvation. You heard what God had to offer. You took a *step of faith* in choosing to invite Him to come into your heart. You repented, asked Jesus in to your heart, and He came. *You trusted and believed* that He forgave you, came into your heart, and saved you. Later came the feelings of being cleansed, renewed, saved.

When it comes to healing, miracles, salvation, forgiveness, or any other subject mentioned in the Bible, we need to accept God's Word as truth on the subject. That way we can read and receive what God has to say on forgiveness.

*"When it comes to the Word of God, believe what you read, rather than reading what you believe."* —John Bevere<sup>2</sup>

We are supposed to love our neighbor like ourselves. How can we love our neighbors if we don't love ourselves? We must forgive ourselves, and let ourselves off the hook, just as God has done for us. This course and this lesson are all about helping you get to a place where you can receive God's forgiveness deep in your heart, so you will never doubt again that God has forgiven you unconditionally.

## **Forgive Yourself, Forgive Others**

We can forgive, and we do. A study conducted by the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research found that nearly 60 percent of a nationally representative sample of 1423 Americans report that they have forgiven themselves for past mistakes or wrongdoing and 52 percent say they have forgiven others.<sup>3</sup>

Middle-aged and older adults were more likely to forgive than were younger adults. In those aged 45 and older, forgiving others was linked with better self-reported mental and physical health. "The benefits of forgiveness seem to increase with age."<sup>4</sup> Forgiving those who have harmed you has a favorable impact on physical and mental health.

To summarize the research in this area, Harvard Women's Health Watch<sup>5</sup> concludes that forgiving those who have done you wrong helps you more than it does the other person. Nursing a grudge creates stress, raising blood pressure. But forgiving someone lowers your blood pressure and heart rate, and also reduces the workload of the heart. A study also shows that those with chronic back pain felt less pain and anxiety if they did meditation that concentrated on forgiveness.

Relationships become closer—with physical and mental health benefits—when women forgive their spouses, according to research. And studies have shown that those who deal with forgiveness issues in psychotherapy find greater resolution than those who do not. So if you are holding a resentment, why not consider letting go of it?

## Homework

Make sure that all anger and rage are gone. If you still have some anger and rage in you and you haven't written your letter from the previous lesson, take some time now to write your letter to God expressing your anger. If you have written your letter, but you still have something gnawing at you, then please write another letter. Maybe you didn't get it all out and there's more that needs to be released.

Instant forgiveness is hard for anyone who has suffered a trauma or crisis. It may take some time to sort through your feelings. By attending the weekly classes or working through this workbook individually, you should be walking through the crisis again with the Lord's help, experiencing the thoughts and feelings left in you that require His touch. This is especially true in the area of forgiveness.

### **The bible makes a powerful promise:**

*For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.*(Matthew 6:14-15, NIV).

First, we are going to forgive. Make a list of all the names of people whom you need to forgive. Put yourself on the list. Even if there is slight twinge or feeling of resentment toward a person, put them down on your list. Ask the Holy Spirit if there is anyone else that you need to put on the list. It may take a couple of days to make the list—or it may come pouring out all at once.

When you have your list completed, take a red pen/marker and your list of people that you need to forgive and get alone with the Lord. Place the list before Him and start with the first person on the list, repeating:

**Dear God, I am choosing to forgive this person for the unfair way that they treated me and...(list any other hurts). I am surrendering them to you.**

Then put that person under the **Blood of Jesus** by drawing a red line through their name. The red pen/marker symbolizes the **Blood of Jesus** that was spilled for us on the cross. Do this over your entire list<sup>6</sup>.

You may get through this all at once, or it may take you a couple of days to get through. That's okay.

### **Now, that we have forgiven others...it is time that we ask for forgiveness:**

Make another list of all the names of those you need to ask for forgiveness from. Put God on the list. Put the names of your aborted children on the list. Also, list others you might have hurt during your years before any post-abortion recovery (This may be hard for you because these people are no longer in your life). Ask the Holy Spirit if there is anyone else that you need to put on the list. Again, this may take a day or two to make the list—or it may come pouring out all at once. Either way is fine.



I really want to keep this next part simple by sharing what was helpful to me. *I imagined that all of the people I needed to ask forgiveness from were in the same room with me...almost like I called a big meeting. Some of the people on your list are no longer living on earth, like your aborted children and any others who may have passed away. Still others you may have lost track of over the years and have no idea where they are today. Then I prayed a simple prayer asking for their forgiveness as if they could hear me.*

***Father God, I have forgiven others and now I ask for forgiveness from you for my sins. I can't go to all of these people that I need forgiveness from it is not physically possible so I'm going to speak it out to you.***

***Father God, Please forgive me for all my sins related to the abortion and it's after-effects. All my sinful thoughts, emotions, and behaviors that stemmed from my abortion experiences. I am truly sorry and ask you to forgive me.***

***(Insert names of your aborted children), please forgive me for aborting you. I wouldn't do it again if I knew now what I didn't know then. I am truly sorry.***

***Others (one by one read their names from your list), I ask your forgiveness for the things I have done and the way that I have treated you after the abortion. I am truly sorry.***

***Lord, help me to receive your forgiveness.....Amen***

Great, you got it out....now re-read the scripture above from Matthew 6:14-15 and believe it!!!!!!

**Instructions for the week:** Try to start doing your homework early in the week. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you make two thorough Forgiveness Lists. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you get through both the lists completely. Continue to grieve and shed your tears in your baby blanket. Continue to work on your special project(s).

**Prayer:** Holy Spirit, please help me to make both Forgiveness Lists. Help me to really mean it when I say I'm choosing to forgive and walk a different way. I release this unforgiveness toward people, and especially myself, to you. Father God, please help me to receive your forgiveness. Father, set me free from this bondage of sin Satan has had on me since the time of my abortion(s). Holy Spirit, please restore all the things in my life that were lost and stolen from me by Satan. *Amen.*

**Notes:**

**Notes:**



## **Lesson 7**

### ***Confidence in Him***

**I**n this week's lesson we will talk about self-esteem. The goal of this week's lesson is to understand how we can have confidence in Him by replacing our old self doubt-filled thoughts with new, healthy self-esteem thoughts. *Renewing and strengthening your thoughts is the key for walking in victory.*

#### **Teaching: Self Esteem**

In psychology, self-esteem (also called self-worth, self-confidence, and self-respect) reflects a person's overall self-appraisal of their own worth.<sup>1</sup>

Self-esteem can be positive or negative. It reflects how you view yourself. For example, *you may feel that you are competent or incompetent, victorious or in despair, extremely prideful or full of shame.*

An Elliot Institute study<sup>2</sup> has shown a strong statistical link between women who have had an abortion and later alcohol and drug abuse. Substance abuse and other self-destructive behaviors are indicators of low self-esteem, and this strengthens the evidence that abortion has a negative effect upon women's psychological health.

#### **The Difference Between Healthy, High, and Low Self-Esteem<sup>3</sup>**

##### **Healthy Self-Esteem**

This is based upon our ability to assess ourselves accurately (know ourselves) and still be able to accept and to value ourselves unconditionally. This means being able to realistically acknowledge our strengths and limitations (which is part of being human) and at the same time accept ourselves as worthy and worthwhile, without conditions or reservations.

##### **High Self Esteem<sup>4</sup>**

People with too much self-esteem can be out of balance too. There is now a wealth of evidence linking high self-esteem to criminality.

##### **Some characteristics of people with high self-esteem are:**

- Prone to self-satisfied boasting.
- Smug and superior.
- Abusive in relationships, assuming their needs come first in any situation. If this doesn't happen, they will become angry and bullying.
- Tend to adopt an air of superiority, simply because they have skill or luck in a particular area of life.
- Blind to their own faults; unlikely to change or improve themselves.

- Impulse control problems.

### **Low Self-Esteem**

People often rely on how they are doing in the present to determine how they feel about themselves. They need positive external experiences to counteract the negative feelings and thoughts that constantly plague them. Even then, the good feeling (from a good grade etc.), can be temporary.

### **Low self-esteem can have devastating consequences:**

- It can create anxiety, stress, loneliness, and increased likelihood for depression.
- It can cause problems with friendships and relationships.
- It can seriously impair academic and job performance.
- It can lead to underachievement and increased vulnerability to drug and alcohol abuse.
- Worst of all, these negative consequences themselves reinforce the negative self-image.
- They can take a person into a downward spiral of lower and lower self-esteem and increasingly non-productive or even actively self-destructive behavior.

For example: See how easy it is for low self-esteem to spiral downward if we are not careful. Jennie has built up a reputation as being a solid student over her first two years in college. She gets good grades and works very hard. She wants to be a nurse. Jennie is sleeping with her boyfriend and gets pregnant. She has an abortion four days before her big chemistry test. After the abortion she is an emotional mess and gets an “F” on her exam. She does so badly that she drops the class. Jennie is devastated by the experience of withdrawing from the class. She now has to wait six months for the class to be offered again. She can’t seem to concentrate, so she fails another test in another class. She starts to believe that nothing will ever be the same again. Her teachers point out that she is slipping. She doesn’t want to try. She breaks up with her friends and her boyfriend. She gets her report card and she has failed or barely made it through her classes. Her parents tell her she has problems. She starts to believe that she does have problems and that she is not a good student. Even though she has proved herself for two years as being a solid student, in a few short months, now she doubts that she will ever pass a test again.

### **Old Self Thinking vs. New Self Thinking**

God’s principles for transformed thinking can be applied to many situations and obstacles. For the purpose of your post-abortive healing, we are going to focus on clothing yourself based on your new “Identity in Christ,” found in God’s Word. The Bible is full of scripture about clothing yourself (see three examples below). We are instructed to take something off or to put something new on. For example, you can clothe yourself in righteousness, faithfulness, or humility.

*He will put godliness on as if it were his belt. He'll wear faithfulness around his waist (Isaiah 11:5, NIRV).*

*He wore cursing as his garment; it entered into his body like water, into his bones like oil (Psalm 109:18, NIV [talking about the wicked]).*

*Don't lie to one another. You're done with that old life. It's like a filthy set of ill-fitting clothes you've stripped off and put in the fire. Now you're dressed in a new wardrobe. Every item of your new way of life is custom-made by the Creator, with his label on it. All the old fashions are now obsolete. Words like Jewish and non-Jewish, religious and irreligious, insider and outsider, uncivilized and uncouth, slave and free, mean nothing. From now on everyone is defined by Christ, everyone is included in Christ (Colossians 3:9-11, MSG).*

In Ephesians, we read that there is an old way of thinking and a renewed way of thinking.

*...that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth (Eph. 4:22–24, NASB).*

If we do clothe ourselves based on God's Word, like we just read in Ephesians, God will renew the attitudes of our mind.

### **Three Robes<sup>5</sup>**

#### **Natural linen robe**

*When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they divided his clothes among the four of them. They also took his robe, but it was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom (John 19:23, NLT).*

It was the custom at that time for Jewish mothers to give their sons a robe when they left home. We don't know for certain that Mary did this for Jesus, but we do know that the robes were special because they were one piece, with no seams, perfectly integrated from the top down. Just like Jesus, who was perfect in this life and was perfectly integrated with His Father God. This robe could have been the one that the soldiers took from Jesus and divided among them when he was crucified.

#### **Red robe**

Let's look at a red robe as a representation of what Jesus did for us at the cross. His seamless robe was divided and taken away by the soldiers; He then put on this red robe of sin that had all our names pinned to it. He wore this red robe of sin on the cross. He was crucified as a common criminal. He died for us. He died instead of us. His blood was shed for us.

#### **Brilliant, shiny, white robe**

This brilliant shiny white robe is a representation of the robe Jesus wore when He was resurrected three days after He was buried in the tomb. The blood and sin of the red robe are gone. He is now clothed in righteousness (brilliant, shiny, white robe). This is the robe that Jesus will wear when He returns. His sacrificial death for us allows us to also

wear His righteousness. This is the garment of salvation referred to in Isaiah 61:10. Putting on the brilliant shiny white robe is what allows us to be a new being in Christ.

*I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels (Isaiah 61:10, NIV).*

The robes analogy is especially important for post-abortive women. Until healing has taken place, they tend to stand in the red robe forever before God. The weight of sin, shame, and unforgiveness keep them there—even though God is waiting to help them put on the brilliant, shiny, white robe of His righteousness.

## **Identity in Christ**

As believers' in Christ, we have an amazing identity. If you do not yet believe in Christ, please read this section and strongly consider the benefits of knowing Him. God has provided for us something greater than we could create for ourselves or even imagine. When you read the scriptures below, you will quickly notice that most of us live below the identities God has given us. "Living below our identities" means that we are not looking at ourselves the way God is looking at us.

Because of all of the issues we have been discussing, post-abortive women often live way below their identities. *It is critical for you to realize that you are not a second-class Christian because of your abortion(s).* Your identity is not affected by the abortion, unless you let it be affected.

What is "Identity in Christ"? Where does it come from? Let's take a look at three words: **Acceptance, Security and Significance:**

**Acceptance** is defined as "favorable reception;" approval; favor.<sup>6</sup> So **Un-acceptance** is the opposite—not receiving favorable reception; approval; favor. Most people are looking for acceptance in one form or another.

We also need **Security** in our being. The opposite of security is insecurity. **Insecurity** is a lack of confidence or assurance; self-doubt.<sup>7</sup>

**Significance** is a feeling that you are important; of consequence; knowing that we matter as individuals. The opposite is **Insignificance**—having no importance as individuals.

Neil Anderson, in his book *Victory Over the Darkness*,<sup>8</sup> says these are the "being" needs. They are important. We all desire to be accepted. We all desire to be secure. We all desire to be significant. The question is, where are we going to look to have these needs met in our lives: to Satan, the world, or ourselves?



Relying on others to determine your self-worth is never a healthy approach. When no one is around to say “good job,” where will you find your validation? We need to learn to look to God for praise, acceptance, and value. His words are constant and true, and His love for us will never change.

**Scripture tells us that God promises to meet all our needs:**

*And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus* (Phil. 4:19, NIV).

The following lists are for you to memorize and get inside you. By doing so, when your inner thoughts or Satan the enemy comes to convince you that you aren’t worth anything, you can say, “*No Way!*” Immediately aim these truths from God’s Word back at him. These verses are your tool to help fight low self-esteem.

**Note:** As you read through each of the groupings below, practice saying it with the leading sentence of each grouping for example: “**I am accepted in Christ because...**”.

Why do we need to read it with the leading sentence? Because using the leading sentence trains your mind. It puts the focus on Christ so that you remember it is only through Christ’s death and resurrection that you can read and claim these statements. For instance take the third identity statement below. “I have been justified”, reads a lot different than “I am accepted in Christ because I have been justified”. Train your mind; always use the leading sentence when you read the statements.

**Who Am I in Christ?**

**I am accepted in Christ because...**

John 1:12	I am God’s child.
John 15:15	I am Christ’s friend.
Romans 5:1	I have been justified.
1 Cor. 6:17	I am united with the Lord, and I am one spirit with Him.
1 Cor. 6:20	I have been bought with a price. I belong to God.
1 Cor. 12:27	I am a member of Christ’s Body.
Eph. 1:1	I am a saint.
Eph. 1:5	I have been adopted as God’s Child.
Eph. 2:18	I have direct access to God through the Holy Spirit.
Col. 1:14	I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins.
Col. 2:10	I am complete in Christ.

**I am secure in Christ because...**

Romans 8:1,2	I am free from condemnation.
Romans 8:28	I am assured that all things work together for good.
Romans 8:31-34	I am free from any condemning charges against me.
Romans 8:35-39	I cannot be separated from the love of God.
2 Cor. 1:21,22	I have been established, anointed and sealed by God.

Phil. 1:6	I am confident that the good work God has begun in me will be perfected.
Phil. 3:20	I am a citizen of heaven.
Col. 3:3	I am hidden with Christ in God.
2 Tim. 1:7	I have not been given a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and sound mind.
Hebrews 4:16	I can find grace and mercy in time of need.
1 John 5:18	I am born of God and the evil one cannot touch me.

### **I am significant in Christ because...**

Matthew 5:13,14	I am the salt and light of the earth.
John 15:1,5	I am a branch of the true vine, a channel of His life.
John 15:16	I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit.
Acts 1:8	I am a personal witness of Christ.
1 Cor. 3:16	I am God's temple.
2 Cor. 5:17-21	I am a minister of reconciliation for God.
2 Cor. 6:1	I am God's coworker (see 1 Cor. 3:9).
Eph. 2:6	I am seated with Christ in the heavenly realm.
Eph. 2:10	I am God's workmanship.
Eph. 3:12	I may approach God with freedom and confidence.
Phil. 4:13	I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

The next list is slightly different. When you asked Christ into your heart, the following verses became true for you. You can't earn them. It is one long list. It repeats some of the scriptures above but also has some new ones. That is okay.

**Note:** Remember, same as above, as you read through each grouping practice saying it with the leading sentence of that grouping.

### **Who Am I in Christ?<sup>9</sup>**

I am the salt of the earth (Matt. 5:13).  
 I am the light of the world (Matt. 5:14).  
 I am a child of God (John 1:12).  
 I am a part of the true vine, a channel of Christ's life (John 15:1,5).  
 I am Christ's friend (John 15:15).  
 I am chosen and appointed by Christ to bear His fruit (John 15:16).  
 I am a slave of righteousness (Rom. 6:18).  
 I am enslaved to God (Rom. 6:22).  
 I am a son of God; God is spiritually my Father (Rom. 8:14, 15; Gal. 3:26; 4:6).  
 I am a joint heir with Christ, sharing His inheritance with Him (Rom. 8:17).  
 I am a temple—a dwelling place—of God. His Spirit and His life dwell in me (1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19).  
 I am united to the Lord and am one spirit with Him (1 Cor. 6:17).  
 I am a member of Christ's Body (1 Cor. 12:27; Eph. 5:30).

I am a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17).  
 I am reconciled to God and am a minister of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18, 19).  
 I am a son of God and one in Christ (Gal. 3:26, 28).  
 I am an heir of God since I am a son of God (Gal. 4:6, 7).  
 I am a saint (1 Cor. 1:2; Eph. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:2).  
 I am God's workmanship—His handiwork—born anew in Christ to do His work (Eph. 2:10).  
 I am a fellow citizen with the rest of God's family (Eph. 2:19).  
 I am a prisoner of Christ (Eph. 3:1; 4:1).  
 I am righteous and holy (Eph. 4:24).  
 I am a citizen of heaven, seated in heaven right now (Eph. 2:6; Phil. 3:20).  
 I am hidden with Christ in God (Col. 3:3).  
 I am an expression of the life of Christ because He is my life. (Col. 3:4).  
 I am chosen of God, holy and dearly loved (Col. 3:12; 1 Thess. 1:4).  
 I am a son of light and not of darkness (1 Thess. 5:5).  
 I am a holy partaker of a heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1).  
 I am a partaker of Christ; I share in His life (Heb. 3:14).  
 I am one of God's living stones, being built up in Christ as a spiritual house (1 Pet. 2:5).  
 I am a member of a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession (1 Pet. 2:9, 10).  
 I am an alien and stranger to this world in which I temporarily live (1 Pet. 2:11).  
 I am an enemy of the devil (1 Pet. 5:8).  
 I am a child of God and I will resemble Christ when He returns (1 John 3:1, 2).  
 I am born of God, and the evil one—the devil—cannot touch me (1 John 5:18).  
 I am not the great "I am" (Exod. 3:14; John 8:24, 28, 58), but by the grace of God, I am what I am (1 Cor. 15:10).

## **Spiritual Warfare**

Why is this lesson critical to a post-abortive woman? It will help her in the area of spiritual warfare. In the past, the devil could use the abortion(s) to pull her down and feel defeated in her thoughts and actions while she was attempting to live her daily life. By seeing herself as she is in Christ, she is learning how to look at herself the way God sees her, rather than the way she views herself. After our abortions, our image of ourselves begins to change. The image becomes unhealthy rather than healthy. Our emotions ride up and down like a roller coaster. Our thoughts are not healthy and consistent until we begin to get some healing in our lives. So by knowing who she is in Christ, the devil can no longer keep her down. Her own thinking and image of herself is not strong enough to combat the constant, weighed-down thoughts that plague her mind after her abortion(s). *God's Word is where the power is to defeat this.* The "Identity in Christ" scriptures are what we are to use to combat the devil when we feel the harassing thoughts that he aims at us.

### **The following scriptures tell us all to put on the armor of God:**

*Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. <sup>11</sup>Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. <sup>12</sup>For our struggle is not against*

*flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.* <sup>13</sup>*Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.* <sup>14</sup>*Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place,* <sup>15</sup>*and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.* <sup>16</sup>*In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.* <sup>17</sup>*Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God* (Ephesians 6:10–17, NIV).

In Ephesians 6:17 we learn that the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God. This is what the “Identity in Christ” scriptures are to us. They are scriptures that come from the Word of God for us to use as our sword in fighting the enemy. The armor and sword are for everyone, but especially useful to the post-abortive woman because of the trauma, issues and battles she faces. Her new identity will also help her in rebuilding her life in the relationship area with God and with people. How so?

If she has done something to “miss it” in her spiritual walk with the Lord, knowing who she is in Christ should give her more *confidence* to go to the Lord quickly to repent and make things right when it is needed. Her perception of God should change so she has a healthier view of her heavenly Father. She is able to *trust* Him more. Once we repent of the sin in our lives, there is always a time of restoration and we are able to pick up and get back on our feet to continue living.

Being quick to forgive herself, she gets going again in life by being obedient to God’s Word. This way she avoids being led by her feelings and emotions when she doesn’t feel worthy, or if she is having a bad day.

This same principle should be applied in rebuilding relationships. If we make a mistake in a relationship with people in our everyday life, knowing who you are in Christ should give you the *courage* to face those people and make things right.

### **Learning How to See Yourself the Way God Sees You**

In summary, renewing our mind is the key to seeing ourselves the way God sees us. We need to accept and believe the “Identity in Christ” list that God provides us through His Word. We need to actively live the identity in our everyday life. Why? It is one thing to accept it with your mind. It is one thing to believe it in your heart, but it is another thing to live it. By applying it to your speech, actions, and relationships, we are able to get the victory.

### **Practical Tips on Applying This Lesson**

I have found that a personal quiet time is this best place to put this lesson into practice. This is the time for you to get the “Identity in Christ” scriptures in you. Practice the process of taking off your “old self” way of thinking and putting on your “new self” way of thinking, which is your “Identity in Christ” scriptures.

Here is what it might look like when I sit down to have the quiet time: I am wearing the red robe. The robe is red because it represents my sins of yesterday. *I repent for those sins* (repent means, I am sorry for my sins and I want to turn from them and live differently).

I continue with my daily devotional book reading, then, I read some more scriptures from the Bible. If directed by the Lord through His word to repent for anymore things, *I do it now*.

Then I put on the new brilliant, shiny, white robe by reading the “Identity in Christ” scriptures. In a sense I have taken off the “old self” thinking (red robe) and put on a “new self” way of thinking (white robe). *Now I am ready to face the day*.

## Homework

Read through the above two lists of “Who I Am in Christ” every day between now and the end of the 10-week course. You will already notice a difference.

It takes 21 days to learn a new habit. When you have completed this course, then continue to read your “Who I Am in Christ” lists daily for however many days it takes you to memorize it and make them part of your mind and heart.

### **Ask for input from someone close to you:**

Have your friend, spouse, or significant other sit down and make a list of five things they find special about you. Tell them these are to be things they see in you that distinguish you from others. Often we as individuals are blind to seeing what others see in us. As they make their list, it is important that you receive the list without being critical. You may not see these things in yourself, but for now believe that this person is being truthful and sees these things in you.

Now you sit down and make a list of five things that you think make you special and that distinguish you from others. Post-abortive women have a tendency to tear themselves down in their minds. You need to start finding ways to build yourself up. Once you get started, you will realize that you have more things that make you special and unique than just this original list of ten. *We want you to begin to focus on the good that is in you.*

Input from Another Person:

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_

Your List:

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) \_\_\_\_\_

### **Be kind to yourself—do something for you:**

Take a class, go to a movie, give yourself a manicure or get a manicure, a pedicure, buy a plant or plant a garden, go on a hike, get a new outfit, anything out of your ordinary routine as a reward for something you did this week. I’m not saying abandon the family and go to Florida on an extended vacation! *Just find something you don’t normally do and treat yourself.*

List here what you plan to do or did do for yourself:

---

---

---

---

---

**Instructions for the week:** Keep grieving and using your baby blanket. Print out the list of “Who I Am in Christ” scriptures and tack it to your bathroom mirror or refrigerator—a place where you will see it daily. Also, put your “Who I Am in Christ” list in your Bible—a place where you will read it daily. Start reading through the list out loud daily. Memorizing the scriptures is even better. Continue working on your special project for the memorial service.

**Prayer:** Holy Spirit, please help me to memorize the “Who I Am in Christ” scriptures. Help renew my mind. Satan, I rebuke you in the Name of Jesus Christ from hindering my mind all these years from healthy thinking and crippling my walk in life. Help me to now walk victoriously in my new, fresh revelation of “Who I Am in Christ” scriptures. *Amen.*

**Notes:**



**Notes:**



## Lesson 8

### *Finding Life and Purpose*

**L**ast week we learned how God sees us through our amazing “Identity in Christ”. This week we learn how to live out our identity so we can find fresh life and purpose. The goal of this week’s lesson is to help you answer the question, “Where do I go from here after being healed from my abortion(s) experience?”

#### **Teaching: On Being Blessed and Broken<sup>1</sup>**

**Being Blessed:** If a person only knows blessings in their life and hasn’t experienced natural human hardships, they will have a hard time feeling compassion for someone who is hurting. It will make it difficult for them to empathize with what the hurting person is going through. They will get impatient with people when they have to listen, humble themselves, and try to feel what the other person is going through.

For example: Think back—have you ever struggled with a problem in your life and tried to share it with someone who has never had to deal with a difficult situation in their own life? It didn’t go so well, did it? Why is that? I’ve known people who just seem to sail through life. *They appear to have all the resources, relationships, and life circumstances so that everything works out great for them all of the time.* In the good times, these people are fun to hang around. However, when trying to share your struggles with them, it is hard for them to relate. Why? It’s because they haven’t experienced it, nor had to overcome anything similar in their own life.

**Being Broken:** The opposite is also true. If they have only known brokenness, then they will have a hard time sharing about the faithfulness, hope, and the joy of the Lord. It will make it difficult for them to impart life to people, because they can’t get past the constant pull of the weighed-down feelings that come with suffering. Encouraging others to have faith and hang on for any kind of a healing, or walking through a lengthy, difficult trial when they will want to quit, will be tough.

For example: It is hard to share your problem with a person who has only known brokenness (struggle) and hasn’t overcome anything in their life. They will not be able to relate to your desire to resolve the problem and move on in your life. *They can only share out of their struggle and will not be able to speak of the faithfulness, hope, and the joy of the Lord.* You may share a common problem with the person, but you both are no closer to a solution. Often, these people aren’t so fun to be around because of the constant, troubled feelings that come with suffering. For these deeply-broken people, it is difficult for them to encourage others to press through for a solution to their problem until they experience a similar breakthrough of the Lord’s power.

**Similar Struggle:** Now, think back to a time when you have shared a problem with someone who has gone through a similar struggle successfully. The conversation went much better, right? Maybe both of you had to deal with a relationship break up or a

common health issue. *In these situations, there is an immediate connection and a sense that, “Hey, this person understands because they have been there too.”*

### **How does this relate to me?**

When you have been blessed (experienced some success in areas of your life) and been broken (had to overcome some difficulty in your life) you become a valuable tool to God. People can relate to you because they know that you have “been there.” They want to hear how you made it through your struggles. Also, you can relate to people because you remember what it felt like to struggle. As a result, you can encourage, empathize, and comfort others. You will be more patient, able to listen, and equipped to empathize with them. This is the type of person who we should try to be like.

You may be saying that because of the past, you do not have much to offer to society and the people around you. This type of defeated attitude is not true and can stop you short of your full potential in life. *God uses our past and our struggles to shape us into people who can help others.* Have you ever heard that saying, “If it doesn’t kill you, it will make you stronger”? This statement may seem harsh, but it is most often true. Going through a tough situation does make us stronger and better able to deal with adversity in our lives. Others all around you are experiencing the same struggles that you have been through.

*When you have known both blessings and brokenness in life, then you will be content with helping all kinds of people because you have experienced both the high times and the low times with Jesus.*

This is especially true in the area of abortion. Millions of people are going through life wounded, looking for help. They can’t find someone to relate to because of the secrecy and shortage of people who have received healing for the trauma of abortion. That is why you may find that the Lord wants you to be healed of the after-effects of abortion both for your sake and for others you will come in contact with in the future. You never know when you will be needed to share your healing experience with them.

### **Dare to Dream Again**

Have you stopped dreaming? Have you cut back on your dreams? Settled for less? Sometimes when we have been hurt or wounded, like in the case of an abortion(s), we want to play it safe in life. *No way do I want to be hurt again. Last time I did that I got burned. I’ll settle for what I know I can do easily but not stretch to do things that are hard.* Part of the reason we are spending time on the topic of purpose is to encourage you to “go for it” again in life. Take a look at this quote from Bible:

*He said, “That’s what I mean: Risk your life and get more than you ever dreamed of. Play it safe and end up holding the bag (Luke 19:26, MSG).*

The Bible principle here is to not let our abortion(s) hold us back from our purpose in life. The negative effects of our abortion(s) might have held us back at one time, but not anymore. It’s time to dream again.

## **Driven by Fear**

Author Rick Warren says that fear can also keep us from our purpose: “Many people are driven by fear. These fears may be a result of a traumatic experience, an unrealistic expectation, growing up in a high control home, or even genetic predisposition. Regardless of the cause, fear-driven people often miss great opportunities because they’re afraid to venture out. Instead, they play it safe, avoiding risks and trying to maintain the status quo. Fear is a self-imposed prison that will keep you from becoming what God intends for you to be. The only way to defeat fear is to move against it with the spiritual weapons of faith and love.”<sup>2</sup>

The Bible says, *Well-formed love banishes fear. Since fear is crippling, a fearful life—fear of death, fear of judgment—is one not yet fully formed in love* (1 John 4:18, MSG).

## **I’m Too Old**

Many people are driven by the belief that they are too old. They say, *I wish I would have done that when I was younger. I’ve missed it. I could never do that at my age.* Sound familiar? Do you know what you want to do, but aren’t doing it because you feel you are too old? Going back to school, changing jobs, *trying something new is rarely out of the question.* It is important that we remember that developing ourselves by going after our purpose is a journey, not a destination. We never really arrive, but find there is more to be discovered every step we take. Once we think we have arrived, *God gives us more to do.* So don’t let your age stop you from pursuing your purpose. Remember Abraham in the Bible? He became the father of the nation of Israel at the age of 100 years old (Genesis 17:17). If he can father a nation at that age, you can certainly go after your purpose.

## **Formula for Finding Life and Purpose**

Purpose is defined as the object toward which one strives or for which something exists; an aim or a goal.<sup>3</sup> There is no magic formula that you can follow and then 15 minutes later you are walking fully in your purpose. Finding your purpose is a process. We’ve already talked about how being both blessed and broken makes us valuable to God. For the rest of the lesson, let’s explore a few more ingredients that we will need to discover life and purpose:

Being Blessed and Broken + Natural Abilities + Spiritual Gifts + Maturity/Time +  
Leading of God = Finding Life and Purpose

## **Finding Life—Natural vs. Spiritual**

### **Natural Life (Ability)**

Ability is defined as competence in an activity or occupation because of one's skill, training, or other qualification—for example, the ability to sing well.<sup>4</sup> What do you like to do? I encourage you to take an inventory of your likes and dislikes. What you can do naturally and enjoy doing can be a clue to walking in your purpose. For example, one of my art instructors gave me some wise advice when I was seeking what classes I should be taking at the art school where I had recently studied. She asked me, “What kind of art do

you *like* to do?” I began to try to narrow down what art I liked and what medium I wanted to work in. I didn’t know. So we decided the best direction for me was to start taking classes and see what I didn’t like. She said the more different kinds of art classes that I took, the more it would help me eliminate those things I didn’t like and eventually discover things that I did like.

As I did this, I kept a journal of what mediums and subjects of art I liked and disliked. I also wrote down why I didn’t like something or why I did. This would be a good exercise for you to do. Keep a journal or make a list of subjects that you like. Write down things that you like about it and things that you don’t. You are not wasting your time. What you are looking for are activities, experiences, and accomplishments that will help you discover more about your natural talents and abilities.

### **Spiritual Life (Talent)**

Talent is defined as a power of mind or body given to a person for use and improvement: like in the parable in Matthew 25:14–30.<sup>5</sup> Spiritual Gifts are defined as a special divine empowerment bestowed on each believer by the Holy Spirit to accomplish a given ministry God’s way: according to His grace and discernment to be used within the context of the Body of Christ.<sup>6</sup>

Knowing your spiritual gifts will help in all areas of life. Taking a spiritual inventory gives you insight into the strengths God has placed in you. There are many tests that you can take that will help. Choose a test that you are comfortable with. One website you might try is <http://www.churchgrowth.org/analysis/index.html>. Answering the 108 questions will produce a spiritual inventory report that you can print out free of charge.

### **What are you doing with your gifts and talents?**

God expects us to use our talents. According to the parable of the three servants, the one who buried his talents and didn’t use them was called “a wicked and lazy and idle servant.”

*He who had received one talent also came forward, saying, “Master, I knew you to be a harsh and hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you had not winnowed [the grain]. So I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is your own.” But his master answered him, “You wicked and lazy and idle servant! Did you indeed know that I reap where I have not sowed and gather [grain] where I have not winnowed? Then you should have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent away from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will be<sup>l</sup>furnished richly so that he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have will be taken away. And throw the good-for-nothing servant into the outer darkness; there will be weeping and grinding of teeth” (Matt. 25:24–30, AMP).*

## **Purpose: What the Bible Says**

The following scripture shows that our purpose was defined by God since the beginning of time. We all have had a destiny with appointed days and times that was planned out before we were born. In this case Jeremiah was appointed to be a prophet.

*Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations (Jeremiah 1:5, NIV).*

## **It is our responsibility to find out what our purpose is in life:**

*The purposes of a man's heart are deep waters, but a man of understanding draws them out (Proverbs 20:5, NIV).*

God put us here to fulfill His purposes. We can choose to go after things of this world or go after the things of God that have eternal value.

## **Blending natural talents and spiritual gifts by the leading of God:**

When we include God in discovering and developing our natural talents and spiritual gifts, powerful things happen. The natural and the spiritual come together. With God as our partner, our lives can come together in such a way that we could never imagine possible. Let's take the art example I shared earlier in this lesson. There was a period of a couple years I spent time discovering and developing my natural art abilities that God gave me. While at the same time, I was prompted spiritually by God to write and publish my testimony. On the surface, these two events seemed disconnected. However, when it came time for publishing the book: *Lady Liberty: A Post-Abortive Story of Healing*, it was a miracle that I had just finished the two cast drawings that I ended up using on the cover. Furthermore, when the book was published, the first place that it was marketed and accepted was in the art community where I was developing my natural artistic talent. This is just one example of God's amazing ability to blend the spiritual and the natural together. I have experienced many more similar happenings since I have turned my natural talents and spiritual gifts over to God. My advice to you is to surrender both areas over to the leading of God so He can combine them in powerful ways for you.

I should say that it is possible to keep our spiritual and natural talents separate. For example: you can be a naturally-gifted speaker but refuse to open your mouth when talking of spiritual things. Or, you could be known as a great organizer of spiritual things in your community but refuse to organize anything within your circle of friends or workplace. While this is okay, it may not be the best or most powerful use of our natural talents and spiritual gifts. The combination of the two is best. Combining talents, abilities, and spiritual gifting has helped me to be more effective with what I do in Liberate Ministries, and as an artist.

*I cry out to God Most High, to God, who fulfills [his purpose] for me (Psalm 57:2, NIV).*

Rick Warren quotes from his book *The Purpose Driven Life*, that “without God, life has no purpose, and without purpose, life has no meaning. Without meaning, life has no significance or hope.”<sup>7</sup>

The Bible says in the Great Commission that we are to go out into the world and preach the Gospel. *This scripture that Jesus left us with is written to everyone, confirming that we all have a ministry to fulfill here on earth.*

### **Maturity and Time**

God wants us to grow and mature like His Son Jesus did. We all grow up, but we don't always mature. As we grow, we should be letting go of our selfish way of thinking and begin to think the way Jesus did. When you read the Bible, you see that Jesus was thinking of others and doing the will of His Father in heaven—displaying selfless thinking and generosity toward others.

### **Being healed makes all the difference:**

When you are hurting emotionally, it is hard to focus in life. When you can't focus, it is hard to work. If you can't work, it is hard to set goals. If you don't have goals, it is hard to get up and go to work with a purpose.

For example, in my earlier years of doing art, I did it, but not to the extent that I am doing it today. After I went through my post-abortive healing class, I was able to focus on art better because I had gotten rid of the negative emotions and received healing for the wounded emotions. When I am emotionally upset, it is hard to do art. I had no self-confidence or self-esteem to believe that I could even learn something, much less be strong enough to receive the criticism as you put yourself on display as an artist.

### **Lack of Purpose Is Costly**

There is a high cost we pay as individuals and as a society when people are kept from their God-given purpose. It is easy to think that our lives have no effect on the others around us. This is not true. *We do have an impact on the world around us, either positively or negatively, but never neutral.* This is what Christian speaker and author Dr. Myles Munroe has to say:

‘The wealthiest spot on this planet is not the oil fields of Kuwait, Iraq or Saudi Arabia. Neither is it the gold or diamond mines of South Africa, the uranium mines of the Soviet Union or the silver mines of Africa. The richest deposits on our planet lie in your local **graveyard**. Buried beneath the soil within the walls of those sacred grounds are dreams that never came to pass, songs that were never sung, books that were never written, paintings that never filled a canvas, ideas that were never shared, visions that never became reality, inventions that were never designed, plans that never went beyond the drawing board of the mind, and purposes that were never fulfilled.’<sup>8</sup>



## Homework

List some areas in your life where you have been blessed:

---

---

---

---

---

List some areas in your life where you have been broken:

---

---

---

---

---

List some things that you have considered doing in your life but have not done yet:

---

---

---

---

---

Think Hard. List some things that are not on the list, but perhaps should be. List any items that you have thought you couldn't do because you were keeping your abortion(s) a secret:

---

---

---

---

---

Write down any thoughts that you have after completing the above questions:

---

---

---

---

---

Are there things on your list that you did before you had your abortion(s)?

---

---

---

---

Write down your thoughts after you do this:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### **Natural Life Experiences**

Make a list of experiences in your life, like jobs that you have held, schools attended, special traveling, family events, hobbies, and volunteer work.

---

---

---

---

---

Go through the list and circle the things that you enjoyed. Then write down why you liked that subject or event. What you are looking for are activities, experiences, and accomplishments that will help you discover more about your natural talents and abilities.

When you are done with that exercise, go back through the list and underline the subjects or events that you didn't like. Same thing here—go back through the list and write down why you didn't like it.

### **Spiritual Experiences**

Make a list of any spiritual experiences in your life so far, such as training, mission trips, participation in events, and/or volunteer work. Don't worry if you are not able to identify specific things to write down. You may not have had a chance to develop this area yet.

---

---

---

---

---

Go through the list and circle the things that you enjoyed out of the list. Then write down why you liked that subject or event. What you are looking for are activities, experiences, and accomplishments that will help you discover more about your natural talents and abilities.

When you are done with that exercise, go back through the list and underline the subjects or events you didn't like. Same thing here—go back through the list and write down why you didn't like it.

### **Spiritual Gifts Test**

As I mentioned above in the lesson, knowing your spiritual gifts helps in all areas of life. What I would like for you to do is take a spiritual gifts/inventory test. If you don't have one available to you, you can use the one from this website:

[www.churchgrowth.org/analysis/index.html](http://www.churchgrowth.org/analysis/index.html) and answer the 108 questions. This will produce a spiritual inventory report that you can print out free of charge.

Study your results. They can reveal important insight on what experiences you want to try next in your journey of discovery.

If you have taken a test like this before, how do the results compare to the last time you took it? Were they the same or different? Do you see the results in you?

If you have never taken one of these, how does it line up? Have you seen any of these personality traits operating in your life? If you haven't, then there might be an area that isn't developed yet in you. Several reasons could be that you have battled a drug and/or alcohol addiction and haven't seen these in operation in your life yet, or the personality trait God put in you was polluted by other stuff in your life. A parent, spouse, or someone else could have polluted that God-given personality trait, and it just hasn't had time to develop yet.

### **Journal your thoughts here:**

---

---

---

---

---

### **Suggestions for further study:**

For further study, check out books or purchase books on this topic. There are many books on personality gifts, but make sure that you get good books from a reputable source such as a Christian bookstore or one that comes with good recommendation.

If you are comfortable, you might share the results of the test with someone you trust: a pastor, priest, rabbi, a counselor, or a credible resource in your area. Ideally, the person would have some experience and a passion for helping others develop their spiritual gifts. *The main thing to do is to go to someone you trust.* Some things to look for are solid biblical advice, and low or no charge for services.

If possible, read a book on finding purpose. There are many choices on the subject. One possibility would be to read the very popular book, *The Purpose Driven Life* by Rick Warren. If you can't get a hold of the entire book, Rick Warren has made available seven

chapters of the book free online and called it “What On Earth Am I Here For?” You can access it online, or if you do not have access to the internet, have someone print it out for you at: [www.purposedrivenlife.com](http://www.purposedrivenlife.com).

**Instructions for the week:** Complete your homework and take a spiritual gift inventory. Do not tune out this week. Listen to what God may be saying to you. Look for clues from what you were doing in life before you had your abortion(s). Look for clues from what you are doing now today after your abortion(s). Keep writing down all thoughts as you continue to seek Him for direction. If He gives you something, be sure to do it as soon as you can.

**Prayer:** [Paul's charge to Timothy]: You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance (2 Timothy 3:10, NIV).

The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me; your love, O LORD, endures forever— do not abandon the works of your hands (Psalm 138:8, NIV).

### **Instructions for Preparing for a Group Memorial Service**

The past several weeks you have been preparing for this event during class or in your homework. As a reminder, here is a checklist of items you will need to do in preparing for the memorial service. **Please be reminded that this is just preparation; the actual service won't take place until the next week (Lesson 9).**

- Let your leader know the names you decided on for your aborted and miscarried children.
- Complete your projects or poems to honor your aborted and miscarried children. Be sure to bring them with you to the memorial service.
- Prepare and practice reading your three-minute testimony (see below) to share at the service.
- Invite a witness (trusted friend, spouse) to attend the memorial service with you and drive you home if needed.
- Have a camera in case you want to take pictures of your projects that you made etc.
- Bring your blanket(s) to the memorial service (dirty and all, not necessary to wash).

Your group leader will handle the rest. Be sure to arrive on time or even a few minutes early.

## Instructions for Preparing an Individual Memorial Service

The past several weeks you have been preparing for this event during class or in your homework. Here is a checklist of items you will need in preparation for holding your memorial service. **Please be reminded that this is just preparation; the actual service won't take place until the next week (Lesson 9).**

- Names for your aborted and miscarried children.
- Complete your projects or poems to honor your aborted and miscarried children. Be sure to bring them with you to the memorial service.
- Prepare and practice reading your three-minute testimony (see below) to share at the service.
- Decide if you want to invite a witness (trusted friend, spouse) to attend the memorial service with you. I really encourage it because sharing this experience with another person you trust can be big step if you have not shared your abortion story with anyone before. Witnesses can offer support and ongoing accountability for you to continue to walk in your healing.
- Set a date and time to have the service. Make an appointment with yourself and with your witness if you decided to have one. Choose a location that you can spread your candle, projects etc. out (counter top, card table).
- Pick out one or two songs that are meaningful to you. Suggestions: choose songs of God's love, healing power, mercy, kindness, grace
- Locate or purchase a candle that you are okay with lighting.
- Bring a box of tissues.
- Line up babysitting if needed. This is not an event for young children.
- Have a camera in case you want to take pictures of your projects that you made.
- Bring your blanket(s) to the memorial service (dirty and all, not necessary to wash).
- Download Life Certificates for your aborted or miscarried children from the Liberate Ministries website <http://www.liberateministries.org>. Prepare them prior to the memorial service.
- Plan to purchase helium balloons on strings (day of the memorial service) for each of your aborted or miscarried children. As far as colors, this is a personal choice for you—whatever is special to you. You might go with blue for boys and pink for girls. You can choose to go with beautiful greens, yellows, oranges, especially if you do not know the sex of the child. You will also want to bring a black marker pen (such as a Sharpie™) to the memorial service.

### **Putting Together a Three-Minute Testimony**

Testimonies should be tailored to meet the different types of audiences that you are trying to reach. This audience is a memorial service. It will be a time of honoring your child, sharing your gifts that you have made for them, and dedicating your children to the Lord. Here are some questions to help you get started in putting together your testimony:

What was your life like before your abortion(s)?

When did you have your abortions? Why did you have the abortions?  
What was your life like after the abortion(s)? Did you have any miscarriages?  
What were some of the emotional, spiritual, and physical symptoms that made you think that you needed some help?  
What is your life like today while you are going through this abortion recovery class?

**Write out your testimony.** Then rework it over so that what you are sharing is clear. Put your testimony together so that you don't ramble on about things that have nothing to do with your testimony.

**It should be three minutes long.** Read your testimony out loud several times and time it to see how long it takes. Three minutes is what we are looking for.

**Be sure to choose the right level of detail.** "I was born in 1958..." is going back too far in your past. Try to simplify complicated stories so your listeners can understand the point you are trying to make. You don't want to lose them in the detail.

**Your testimony should be about your abortions and miscarriages.** Ask the Lord and search your heart as to what you should share.

**When you share your testimony at the memorial service, please read it.** It will help you to stay focused.

Write your testimony here:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Notes:**

**Notes:**



**Notes:**



## Lesson 9

### *Committing My Child to Jesus*

**T**his week we will focus on committing and dedicating our children to Jesus. The goal of this week's lesson is to gain a greater understanding of why and how we do this.

**Commit** means to entrust, especially for safekeeping.<sup>1</sup> **Dedicate** means to give entirely to a specific person, activity, or cause.<sup>2</sup> When we commit our aborted babies to Jesus, we entrust them to Him for safekeeping. When we dedicate our aborted babies to Jesus, we give them over entirely to Him. We can be assured that when we commit/dedicate our babies to Him, He watches over them.

*But Jesus called them [the parents] to Him, saying, Allow the little children to come to Me, and do not hinder them, for to such [as these] belongs the kingdom of God (Luke 18:16, AMP).*

### **The Memorial Service**

Congratulations—you have been working hard over these past eight weeks. You have revisited the past and examined what happened at the time of your abortion(s). You have dealt with any remaining sin, grief, guilt, and shame issues. You have considered abortion's affect on you and your relationships, as well as the deathly affect it had on your child(ren). You have spent time exploring your new "Identity in Christ". As you are reading this paragraph, all the work you have done is fresh in your memory. In some cases, you can still feel the emotion or the pain you walked through. It is very real to you right now. That is why we are going to devote this week's lesson to memorializing what has been accomplished. In the Old Testament, whenever a significant event occurred between God and the Israelites, they would create a memorial so that the event would not diminish in their lives. The goal is to make this week special and memorable so that in one year, five years, even twenty years later, it is as fresh in your mind as it is today.

### **Why hold a memorial service?**

I've already mentioned that the memorial service is a chance to commit/dedicate your child to Jesus. It is also a chance to *celebrate the healing* that has taken place during this course. Finally, it is also a special way for you to give honor and recognition to your aborted child(ren) who lived for such a short time, in the womb, here on earth. Your aborted children are honored by the words spoken at the service and by the projects that you completed for each child.

### **The impact of the memorial service:**

Many of my former students who have gone through the course have told me that they didn't fully see the whole picture of the course until they went through the memorial service. God is able to impact each student personally and powerfully as they work with Him on their testimonies and projects. There is something special about having to share

your story with God or witnesses that helps to strengthen the healing work that is done. I hope that you are as blessed as I was by going through this event.

**Follow the separate instructions below for either a group memorial service or an individual memorial service.**

### **Instructions for Participating in a Group Memorial Service:**

The past several weeks you have been preparing for this event during class or in your homework. **As a reminder, here is a checklist of items you need to do prior to the memorial service:**

- Let your leader know the names you decided on for your aborted and miscarried children.
- Complete your projects or poems to honor your aborted and miscarried children. Be sure to bring them with you to the memorial service.
- Prepare and practice reading your three-minute testimony to share at the service.
- Invite a witness (trusted friend, spouse) to attend the memorial service with you and drive you home if needed.
- Have a camera in case you want to take pictures of your projects that you made.
- Bring your blanket(s) to the memorial service (dirty and all, not necessary to wash).

Your group leader will handle the rest. Be sure to arrive on time, or even a few minutes early.

### **Instructions for Holding an Individual Memorial Service:**

The past several weeks you have been preparing for this event during class or in your homework. **As a reminder, here is a checklist of items you need to do prior to the memorial service:**

- Decide on the names for your aborted and miscarried children.
- Complete your projects or poems to honor your aborted and miscarried children. Be sure to bring them with you to the memorial service.
- Prepare and practice reading your three-minute testimony to share at the service.
- Decide if you want to invite a witness (trusted friend, spouse) to attend the memorial service with you. I really encourage it because sharing this experience with another person you trust can be a big step if you have not shared your abortion story with anyone before. Witnesses can offer support and ongoing accountability for you to continue to walk in your healing.
- Set a date and time to have the service. Make an appointment with yourself and with your witness if you decided to have one. Choose a location where you can spread out your candle, projects etc. (countertop, card table).
- Pick out one or two songs that are meaningful to you. Suggestions: choose songs of God's love, healing power, mercy, kindness, and grace.
- Locate or purchase a candle that you are okay with lighting.

- Bring a box of tissue.
- Line up babysitting, if needed. This is not an event to bring your young children to.
- Have a camera in case you want to take pictures of your projects that you made.
- Bring your blanket(s) to the memorial service (dirty and all, not necessary to wash).
- Download Life Certificates for your aborted or miscarried children from the Liberate Ministries website <http://www.liberateministries.org>. Prepare them prior to the memorial service.
- Plan to purchase helium balloons on strings (day of the memorial service) for each of your aborted or miscarried children. As far as colors, this is a personal choice for you—whatever is special to you. You might go with blue for boys and pink for girls. You can choose to go with beautiful greens, yellows, oranges, especially if you do not know the sex of the child. You will also want to bring a black marker pen (such as a Sharpie™) to the memorial service.

## Individual Memorial Service—Read and Do the Following Actions:

### Welcome (Read the following out loud)

This special event is set aside to honor God, the true healer and the one who forgives us of our sins. It is His amazing love for us that allows us to confidently say:

*Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool* (Isaiah 1:18, KJV).

This day (date of memorial service)\_\_\_\_\_ we honor the truth and memorialize:

\_\_\_\_\_ (number) of child(ren) whose lives were altered by abortion and  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (number) of child(ren) whose lives were altered by miscarriage.

Please let God, the author of peace by his Spirit, comfort us with the knowledge that these children are in the care of Jesus in His home in heaven.

We honor the following children today: (Please list all names of aborted and miscarried children:

Name #1 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name #2 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name #3 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name #4 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name #5 \_\_\_\_\_

### **Opening Prayer** (Read the following out loud)

God, please be present at this time. We look to you to help us do justice to this occasion where we honor my aborted and miscarried children. Guide us and direct us as we give this time to you. Give us strength to see this memorial service through. *Amen.*

### **Light a Candle**

#### **Significance of the Event** (Read the following out loud)

It is an important milestone for me to come forward and acknowledge the children that I aborted. Why? Because there is no accountability today. As individuals and as a nation, we are not taking responsibility for our babies. However, this is not true for me as I go through this service.

Why a memorial service? Whenever a significant event occurred between God and the Israelites, they would create a memorial so that the event would not be diminished in their lives. Without the memorial, it would be possible for me to forget all of the hard work and progress I have made.

A memorial accomplishes three things for me:

1. It allows me to formally dedicate my children to God. I know from God's Word that He watches over everything dedicated to Him.
2. It marks, solidifies, and memorializes the healing process that I have made. Today, (note day of the week, month, day, year) marks the day I received my healing. God knows it, I acknowledge it, and Satan knows it.
3. It provides a new beginning for me to walk free from guilt and shame, based upon my new "Identity in Christ". No longer will I be bound by the patterns of behavior and attitudes I formerly held.

### **Let's Read About King David**

The following story can be found in 2 Samuel 12:16–23.

#### **(Please read out loud)**

King David actually arranged for the death of a man so he could fulfill his sexual desire with the man's wife. The prophet Nathan comes to see David to try and get him to confess. It works, and David realizes that he has sinned against no one but God. He repents to God and God forgives him, but the child is struck with a sickness.

I'm going to read the rest of the story found in (2 Samuel 12:16–23). Invite your witnesses to follow along as you read.

*<sup>16</sup>David therefore inquired of God for the child; and David fasted and went and lay all night on the ground.*

*<sup>17</sup>The elders of his household stood beside him in order to raise him up from the ground, but he was unwilling and would not eat food with them.*

<sup>18</sup>*Then it happened on the seventh day that the child died. And the servants of David were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they said, "Behold, while the child was still alive, we spoke to him and he did not listen to our voice. How then can we tell him that the child is dead, since he might do himself harm!"*

<sup>19</sup>*But when David saw that his servants were whispering together, David perceived that the child was dead; so David said to his servants, "Is the child dead?" And they said, "He is dead."*

<sup>20</sup>*So David arose from the ground, washed, anointed himself, and changed his clothes; and he came into the house of the LORD and worshiped. Then he came to his own house, and when he requested, they set food before him and he ate.*

<sup>21</sup>*Then his servants said to him, "What is this thing that you have done? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept; but when the child died, you arose and ate food."*

<sup>22</sup>*He said, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, 'Who knows, the LORD may be gracious to me, that the child may live.'*

<sup>23</sup>*"But now he has died; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me" (2 Samuel 12:16–23, NASB).*

Did you catch that? King David says that he will go to the child. **This verse gives me hope that I will be united with my children in heaven.** King David is often referred to as a man after God's own heart. Well, I am a woman after God's own heart. I am here because I want to make things right with you God.

### **Play a Song That Is Special to You**

While the song is being played, hold your baby blanket for the last time. When the music stops, put the blanket(s) down next to your projects you made for your children. Putting the blanket(s) down signifies that you are ending the grieving process.

### **Share Your Three-Minute Testimony**

Please read your testimony. Tears are okay. If it takes a while to get through this part that is perfectly fine.

### **Share Your Projects or Poems to Give Honor to Your Child(ren)**

Explain how and why you made these projects for your children. Tears are okay. If it takes a while to get through this part that is perfectly fine. You may want to take pictures of what you made or wrote and keep them with your class materials.

### **Dedication** (Read the following out loud)

One day children were brought to Jesus in the hope that He would lay hands on them and pray over them. The disciples shooed them off. But Jesus intervened: *"Let the children alone, don't prevent them from coming to me. God's kingdom is made up of people like these."* After laying hands on them, he left (Matthew 19:13–15, MSG).

Jesus was able to physically lay His hands on the children when He lived on earth. I can't do this physically, but I can reach out to them in prayer and pray like He did.

Jesus, I reach out to my child(ren) today. I dedicate them to you. (Read names of child(ren).) I pray that you would watch over them and keep them safe until I am reunited with them. Thank you, Jesus.

**Word to Witnesses** (if applicable)

Thank you for coming. You have an important part in this. You witnessed the events of this memorial service. In the future, I ask that you would offer your support and remind me that I am healed. Pray for me. Direct me to my course materials and the tools I've learned during class. Thank you for your participation in the memorial service and in my life beyond.

**Closing Prayer** (Read the following out loud)

God, we glorify you for the healing that has been memorialized today. Bless all who are present. Help us to realize the deepness of your love and mercy for us. Renew us as we go forward in your purpose. *Amen.*

**Final Activity** (You might want to take a picture)

Take the black marker and write the names of your child(ren) on the helium balloons. Walk outside and hold the balloons. Pray a short last prayer in your own words. Release the balloons. Let this symbolize placing them in God's care and watching them soar. Rejoice in your healing and the fact that you honored them.

***Congratulations, you have accomplished much. I'm proud of you. Remember God loves you.***

This is an emotional time for you. I suggest you may want to eat something after the memorial service. Also, you might want to refrain from doing a lot of activity that requires focused attention. It is a very special time, let it soak in do not rush the experience.

**Follow up**

Wash your baby blanket(s) and fold them. Pack them with your class materials and projects that you made for your child(ren). This represents the end of the grieving process and you have released your child(ren) to Jesus. No longer will you need the blanket(s) to hold. Find a place—maybe the shoebox I described earlier—where they will be kept safe and private.

**Remember to do your homework later this week and get ready for Lesson 10.**



## Homework

How were you personally impacted by the memorial service? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

**Prayer:** Thank you Lord. It is an opportunity to commit and dedicate my precious children unto you. Thank you also for the progress that I have made. I pray that I would remember the details of the memorial service. Watch over me from this point forward and continue to strengthen me in your Word. Help me to have hope and confidence about the joy that is waiting for me in heaven when I am reunited with my child(ren). *Amen.*

**Notes:**

**Notes:**



## **Lesson 10**

### ***Release and Moving Forward***

**I**n last week's lesson we committed our children to Jesus. The goal of this week's lesson is to understand what it means to be released and to move forward at the end of this course.

Let's start by looking at the meaning of the two key words in this week's lesson title:

**Release**—to free from confinement, bondage, obligation, pain, etc.; let go: to release a prisoner; to release someone from a debt.<sup>1</sup>

**Forward**—moving on; advancing.<sup>2</sup>

Through God's grace you have experienced a release from the things that you have faced while going through this course. The good news is that the release you received is not meant for just a few moments, but for the rest of your life. It is critical now as this course ends to learn how to move forward in your healing so that it is reinforced and grows strong over the years to come.

### **Teaching: Principles to Protect and Strengthen Your Healing**

We will cover six key principles to help you protect and strengthen the healing that you have received. The principles are: 1) Continue on Your Healing Journey, 2) Overcome Doubt, 3) Don't Go Back, 4) Keep Moving, 5) Celebrate Recovery and 6) Stay Connected.

#### **Continue on Your Healing Journey**

*And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear (Matt. 13:3–9, NIV).*

In the parable of the sower above, much of the seed sown was devoured, dried up, or choked out. The good soil that Jesus talked about was the only soil where the seed was able to grow and multiply. Your heart is like the good soil in the story. You have been tending to your heart for the last nine weeks. Gone from your heart are the stones of guilt and shame. Your heart, the good soil, is moist, watered with forgiveness. Also, your heart is richly nourished from the Word of God.

The purpose for going through the course and the memorial service is to grow the effects of healing in your life to produce a great harvest.

That is why it is important to continue on your healing journey. Just like the farmer who quits working the soil can expect the soil to produce fewer crops over time, we also can expect our healing to produce less of a harvest in our lives if we stop cultivating the good soil of our heart. Throughout the years I have been extremely encouraged when I hear a post-abortive women tell me that they are continuing on their healing journey.

### **So how do you continue in your healing journey?**

God has been speaking to you over the last nine weeks. He will be your best guide as to how to continue. You will want to continue reading your Bible and He may direct you to read additional books on topics surrounding emotional healing. You will also want to keep the discipline of prayer in your life that you strengthened during the course.

### **Overcome Doubt**

When we make a decision, it is natural to wonder if we made the right choice. Doubt is unpredictable, because it might come one week after the decision or many years later. At some point in the future, you might question if you were really healed of the trauma of abortion. You might think that nothing has really changed in your life. Satan is also quick to reinforce those thoughts and plant new thoughts of his own to tell you that the release you experienced was not real.

When doubts come, that is the time to look at the evidence of your healing. Your class notes, Bible verses, projects, life certificates, candles, memorial service programs, and testimonies are all evidence of the healing that you received. Also, you can contact any witnesses who came to the memorial service to support you and remind you of your healing. If you feel that Satan is the one who is causing you to doubt your healing, be reminded of the following verse:

*Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you (James 4:7, NIV).*

By submitting those doubts to God and resisting the devil, we are assured that he will flee from us.

### **Don't Go Back**

Have you heard the concept of burning bridges? In war, as armies would advance they would often burn the bridges behind them, so that they couldn't go back. Once they gained territory, the commander made sure the soldiers went forward and didn't retreat. Spiritually, it is the same way. *We need to advance beyond the memorial service and burn the bridges behind us*, so that we do not go back to the old way of thinking and living and lose the effect of the memorial in our life.

How do you want to look at life? Through prison bars, or without prison bars? Our family once took a trip to the Disney World Epcot Center in Florida. We visited the nation of France and saw a mime in a ball. He was walking in this human-sized, clear

plastic ball very slowly. He kept looking for a way out with his hands but as he advanced he had no way out and had to stay captive in this ball. This ball was his prison. He was looking for freedom, a way out. I was struck by the fact that the mime wasn't born in the plastic ball prison. He must have entered the ball on his own at some point—maybe even entering it on a daily basis. I also noted that the plastic walls of the ball were not overly thick and that the mime could have torn his way out of the ball anytime he chose. The mime was in prison, and he didn't have to be. Be conscious that you have been released from the bondage of the negative after-effects of your abortion(s) and that you need not enter your prison cell again.

At the time of the memorial service, the spiritual work was done, but going forward, each person has to walk it out in their lives. The key to this principle is to leave the bridges burned behind you and never go back.

*Whatever I command you, be watchful to do it; you shall not add to it or diminish it* (Deut. 12:32, NIV).

### **Keep Moving**

John Maxwell, author of *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, says that “Momentum is easier to steer than to start.”<sup>3</sup> For example, it is harder to get up out of the water and moving on a pair of water skis than it is to steer the water skis once you are moving.

To apply this to your life after your abortion healing, keep moving—it is easier for God to steer you than if you remain at a standstill. By moving forward and trying new things, God can steer your course. Can you remember a time when you tried many different ideas, but they just didn't turn out? I sure have. After each attempt I may not have always succeeded but I definitely knew what I didn't want to do. So it is for you, the path God leads you on may not be a straight line. Don't worry, don't despair, as long as you don't stop, have confidence that He is still steering you. He will correct your course to make sure you are headed forward correctly.

*Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths* (Proverbs 3:5–6, KJV).

### **Telling Others**

When I teach this class, I almost always get the questions: When should I tell my kids? and, When should I tell my family and friends? My answer is... it depends.

#### **First, my advice for telling kids:**

They should be old enough to understand both what you are saying and also the context of what you are saying. My kids were in their young teens when they heard me reveal that I had had an abortion. It doesn't do any good to share your story when they don't understand it. How old should they be? You will know in your heart, if you have doubts wait a little longer.

I do recommend that you tell them when they are old enough to understand. I believe that *we have a responsibility to educate our children*. I wouldn't want my children to make the same mistakes that I did. So, *it is better that they know*. In the case of my children, it has made them wise and more aware of the dark side of abortion and its consequences. I have heard them speak to their friends about life by sharing my story with them. When this happens, it is exciting because *I can see that they "get it"* and don't want themselves or any of their friends to make a poor choice. You never know who the next generations Jim Dobson will be or other great pro-life leaders to fight for the unborn. It could be one of your children. A lot of the pro-life leaders today are getting older, so we need people from the next generation to rise up and continue the fight.

Pray for the right timing that you should reveal it to them. Pray that God would *prepare their hearts* to receive the information that you need to share with them about your abortion(s).

So when you do decide to tell them, how do you tell them? Pick a time when you have their attention. Tell them your story. You may feel an immediate release right away like a burden has been lifted, but keep in mind that they are receiving heavy important information for the first time. Their reaction may be mixed when you first tell them. They have lost a sibling(s) and they may need some time to process this about your abortions. They may feel momentary shame or embarrassment. They might be angry for awhile. Pray for them while they take time to process this information over the next week or so. Make yourself available to answer any of their questions that they may have.

### **Second, my advice for telling family and friends:**

Like you did for your children, pray for all the people that you want to share your story with. Pray that God would *soften their hearts* to receive the information that you want to share with them about your abortion(s). Pray for the right timing that you should reveal it to them.

You may not want to tell them while you are going through this course; this also depends upon you. These ten weeks are designed "for you" to focus on "your" healing. You, yourself need to come to grips with your past abortions. All of the pain and emotions have been re-awakened and are close to the surface. As a result the situation may be too raw for you to effectively share your story with a lot of others. Maybe you will be ready towards the end of the class, or a month from now or a couple of months. Some women do share their story with children, family and friends during the course. Pray for the right timing for you, to tell the ones you love about your abortion. You have come this far with the Lord and he will continue to guide you through that next step when it is time. Lastly, you shouldn't feel that you need to tell everyone. I don't share my testimony with everyone I meet. I have learned to be sensitive to the leading of God as to *when to share... and equally important...when to wait*.

The benefit of sharing your story is freedom. Relationships can grow to the next level, when you don't have to be so careful to hide a poor choice in your past. Over time, your



story can become less of a breaking news item and more of an accepted part of a normal conversation for those that you have shared your story with. *This is freedom!*

Bonding is another benefit that can come from sharing your story with your children, other family members and friends. Those I've confided in have heard me humbly share a painful part of my life with them. In the end this has allowed me to grow closer with them. Some of my students have told me that they too have experienced an added degree of closeness with those after they have shared. In fact, some of the people I shared my story with, felt relieved when I told them, because they sensed that something was going on. So, be led of the Lord because He will continue to guide you in this area.

### **Be Sure to Celebrate Recovery!**

You took a big step in personal growth by completing this course. Reward yourself for having the courage to take some personal time to grow with the Lord. *Think of the past ten weeks as an investment in your future.*

### **Staying Connected**

Most post-abortive women develop some interest in pro-life issues as a result of their own healing. Here are some ways of staying connected to the abortion recovery field in our cities, states, and nations.

Get on the mailing lists of local pro-life organizations whose beliefs you support. Attend their fundraisers and events. Most of these organizations are non-profit. Consider making a donation.

Get on the mailing lists of abortion recovery organizations where you are in agreement with their beliefs. See if they have a need where you could volunteer.

Volunteer at a local crisis pregnancy center. They are often in need of volunteers. Many times they will provide training.

Stay involved in politics to make the nation's laws better for women in the future by voting for politicians who are pro-life.

When necessary, write letters or call your local congressmen when asked to support life issues.

Volunteer to do abstinence speaking at a school through a local crisis pregnancy center. It is a great way to work with youth.

You will likely cross paths with others who have had an abortion. Always be ready to share your testimony with them. A good place to start is the three-minute testimony that you developed in this course. Giving out to someone the way you have been given to in the abortion recovery healing area helps those who are not healed yet. So consider being a resource for them.

## Homework

Write down what has God done for you through this course:

---

---

---

---

What territory have you gained from the enemy that you want to be sure to never lose again?

---

---

---

---

What are some ways that you can stay involved and reinforce your post-abortive healing?

---

---

---

---

**Instructions for the week and beyond:** Go in peace and serve the Lord with new energy and purpose. Let no one tell you that you are not healed. Dare to live and love those you encounter without the chains of guilt, shame, grief, and doubt of the past.

**Prayer:** Dear God, thank you for helping me walk through this course. I appreciate that you listened to me when I cried out to you. You were faithful to me. I trust you. Thank you for helping me to finish the course strong. Help me to go forward and not lose what I have gained. Thank you for my new “Identity in Christ”. Help me to never lose my dependence upon you. Help me to hear any new instructions that you have for me. I desire to walk in the fullness of the purpose and destiny that you have planned for me. *Amen*

**Notes:**

**Notes:**

## Conclusion

Thank you for completing this workbook. I pray that you were able to benefit from the teachings and scriptures contained in the lessons. As I said in the introduction, the workbook itself won't heal you. However, the workbook points to Jesus Christ who has the power to heal you.

God has brought healing into your life. I wish that I could tell you that everyone you encounter from now on or share your story with will understand you and be excited about what God has done in your life. But I can't—in fact, there will be many who don't understand or don't even want to understand. My advice is this: *Don't take your eyes off God.* Listen to Him instead of those who may seek to discourage you. You have experienced healing from God. They may be hurting too badly or haven't yet experienced what you have. Don't abandon your healing and move down to their level. *Instead, reach down and encourage them to step up to where you are living by seeking God for their own healing.*

### Closing Prayer

God, these women have come a long way and have wrestled with you to receive the healing that you have for them following their abortions. Thank you for the good work that you have done and will continue to do in their lives. Receive them, guide them, and encourage them in the life that you have chosen for them. Help them to walk it out. May they be on fire for you all the days of their lives. Let others be helped as they testify that you are their healer. *Amen.*



## Endnotes

### Chapter One:

1. LaFountain, Richard W. "Jehovah's Name Exalting the Name of Jesus Christ." Prayer Today Online. 26 Feb. 2008 <<http://www.prayertoday.org/namesofgod/jehovah-names.htm>>.
2. LaFountain, Richard W. "Names of Jesus Christ Exalting the Name of Jesus Christ." Prayer Today Online. 01 Mar. 2008 <<http://www.grovecityalliance.org/chrismons/names63.htm>>.

### Chapter Two:

1. Article, "Defense Mechanisms" by Kendra Cherry, About.com: Psychology, <http://psychology.about.com/od/theoriesofpersonality/ss/defensemech.htm>

### Chapter Three:

1. John Piper © 2007, "Exodus 21:22-25 and Abortion", available online at: <http://www.thevine.co.nz/article/read/17018/1085/>

### Chapter Four:

1. Elliot Institute, Statistical Study, [www.afterabortion.com](http://www.afterabortion.com)
2. Mary Alice Isleib, *Healing Toxic Emotions* (Insight Publishing Group, 2000)
3. *American Heritage New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy, Volume 3*, Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005
4. Marie Powers, *Shame: Thief of Intimacy* (Gospel Light Publications, 1998)
5. *Encarta World English Dictionary [North American Edition]*, 2007
6. Philip M. Parker, ed. *Webster's Online Dictionary* ([www.websters-online-dictionary.org](http://www.websters-online-dictionary.org))
7. "Clinical Depression," [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)
8. *Encarta World English Dictionary [North American Edition]*, 2007
9. "Fear," [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)
10. Philip M. Parker, ed., *Webster's Online Dictionary* ([www.websters-online-dictionary.org](http://www.websters-online-dictionary.org))
11. "Loneliness quote from Mother Teresa," [www.answers.com](http://www.answers.com)
12. Philip M. Parker, ed., *Webster's Online Dictionary* ([www.websters-online-dictionary.org](http://www.websters-online-dictionary.org))
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Website <http://www.afterabortion.com/FAQ.html> "What is PASS?"
16. David Reardon, "Women's Suicide Rates Highest After Abortion, New Study" (Elliot Institute, [www.afterabortion.org](http://www.afterabortion.org))
17. Website <http://www.afterabortion.com/FAQ.html> "What is PASS?"
18. "Signs of an Eating Disorder," Remuda Ranch, [www.remudaranch.com](http://www.remudaranch.com)
19. Philip M. Parker, ed., *Webster's Online Dictionary* ([www.websters-online-dictionary.org](http://www.websters-online-dictionary.org))
20. Website <http://www.afterabortion.com/FAQ.html> "What is PASS?"
21. Concept "Blind Spots", 2=1 Ministries

#### Chapter Five:

1. "Coping with Loss and Grief," [http://www.helpguide.org/mental/grief\\_loss.htm](http://www.helpguide.org/mental/grief_loss.htm)
2. H. Norman Wright, *Experiencing Grief* (Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2004)
3. Ibid.
4. "Coping with Loss and Grief," [http://www.helpguide.org/mental/grief\\_loss.htm](http://www.helpguide.org/mental/grief_loss.htm)
5. "Grief vs. Trauma," The National Institute for Trauma and Loss in Children, 1 Mar. 2008
6. H. Norman Wright, *Experiencing Grief* (Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2004)
7. Anne N. Broen, Moum Torbjörn, Anne S. Bödtker, and Öivind Ekeberg, "Psychological Impact on Women of Miscarriage Vs. Induced Abortion: A 2-Year Follow-Up Study," *American Psychosomatic Society*, 2004
8. H. Norman Wright, *Experiencing Grief* (Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2004)
9. Zalman Goldstein, *The Jewish Mourners Companion*, [http://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/362514/jewish/The-Jewish-Mourners-Companion.htm](http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/362514/jewish/The-Jewish-Mourners-Companion.htm)
10. H. Norman Wright, *Experiencing Grief* (Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2004)

#### Chapter Six:

1. [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org), forgiveness
2. John Bevere, Quote, [www.australianchristian.com/forums/showthread.php?t=131](http://www.australianchristian.com/forums/showthread.php?t=131)
3. Diane Swanbrow, "Forgiveness may lead to better health," 17 Dec. 2001. Institute for Social Research. 1 Mar. 2008
4. Ibid.
5. "The Power of Forgiveness, Forgive Others; Five Reasons to Learn to Forgive," Harvard Women's Health Watch. 2005. Harvard Medical School. 1 Mar. 2008
6. Concept "Red Pen/Blood of Jesus", 2=1 Ministries

#### Chapter Seven:

1. *American Heritage New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy, Volume 3*, Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005
2. Statistical Study, Elliot Institute, [www.afterabortion.com](http://www.afterabortion.com)
3. Adapted from "Better Self-Esteem," University of Texas at Austin, The Counseling and Mental Health Center. 1999.
4. Elliot, Roger, "Why High Self Esteem Is a Bad Thing," *Uncommon Knowledge*, 29 Apr. 2009
5. Bob Gass, *The Word for You Today, His Seamless Robe Devotional* (Bob Gass Evangelistic Association, Inc. 2007)
6. *American Heritage New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy, Volume 3*, Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005
7. Ibid.
8. Neil T. Anderson, *Victory Over Darkness* (Regal Books, 2000)
9. Ibid

#### Chapter Eight:

1. Pastor Roger Davis, Blessed and Broken concept, Church of the Jubilee



2. Rick Warren, *What on Earth Am I Here for?* (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2002)
3. *American Heritage New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy, Volume 3*. 2005. Houghton Mifflin Company
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. "What Is a Spiritual Gift," [www.MinTools.com](http://www.MinTools.com), 29 Apr. 2009
7. Rick Warren, *What on Earth Am I Here for?* (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2002)
8. Dr. Myles Munroe quote, [www.bfmmm.com/](http://www.bfmmm.com/)

Chapter Nine:

1. *American Heritage New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy, Volume 3*, Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005
2. Ibid.

Chapter Ten:

1. *American Heritage New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy, Volume 3*, Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005
2. *Kernerman English Multilingual Dictionary*, 1 Mar. 2008, [www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com)
3. John C. Maxwell, *21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* (Thomas Nelson, 1998)





