

LEADER'S GUIDE

Worthy of Love

A JOURNEY OF HOPE AND HEALING AFTER ABORTION

with Biblical Reflections



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Leader's Guide: Introduction

May the Lord richly bless you for your desire to lead a *Worthy of Love* study group. Because God is sovereign, nothing happens by chance. You are reading this right now by His own design. May the Lord bless you and guide as you prepare to come alongside women whom God has made ready to walk this tender journey.

Following this introduction are some practical guidelines to consider before you plan your first group. However, even before you ponder any instructions, the single most important preparation is to surrender your heart to the work the Holy Spirit has called you to. One of the best ways to do this is by endeavoring to understand, to the best of your ability, the specific heartbreak and trauma suffered by women who have lost children to abortion.

Even if you have not personally had an abortion, if you are going to be used as God's instrument of healing in such a tender ministry, it is imperative that you first prepare your mind, heart, and soul to come alongside the women whom you will serve by prayerfully going through this study on your own. While you may not be able to answer every question, each lesson centers on a key principle taken directly from God's Word. Chapters include:

1. *The Lie*: REPLACING THE LIES WITH GOD'S TRUTH
2. *The Secret*: EXPOSING OUR SECRETS TO GOD'S LIGHT
3. *The Crossroads*: STANDING AT THE CROSSROADS OF GOD'S LOVE
4. *The Mask*: EMBRACING OUR TRUE IDENTITY IN CHRIST
5. *The Stone*: SURRENDERING OUR BURDENS TO GOD

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6. *The Battle*: CONFRONTING OUR GIANTS WITH GOD'S WORD

7. *The Wish*: ENTRUSTING OUR HEARTS TO THE HEALER

8. *The Gift*: CHOOSING TO RECEIVE GOD'S PROMISES

The timeless truths of God's Word are the sole source of everlasting hope, healing, love, and forgiveness each of our hearts is longing for - and these are available to us only through the victory won by our glorious Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Please know you are in my prayers. Truly, the Lord has great things in store for you as you serve Him by ministering to His precious daughters. To Him alone be all the glory!

*"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."
(2 Corinthians 1:3-4 ESV)*

Shadia

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Leader's Guide: General Instructions

This Leader's Guide was created to offer a suggested framework and practical tips as you lead your group. To make it easy for you to guide participants through the study, except for the Leader's Guide and an updated "Acknowledgement" page, this book is identical to the participant's version of *Worthy of Love*.

While most groups are conducted using an 8-week format, some groups have used a modified 4.5-week format. Both versions are included in this Guide.

Depending on the size of your group, review of each chapter should take approximately one and one-half hours; nevertheless, it is recommended that you schedule two hours each week for flexibility. Group sizes vary and typically include three to eight participants.

It is not necessary that the group leader has experienced losing a child to abortion. However, if you desire to lead a group but have not personally lost a child to abortion, please be sure to invite a co-leader or helper who is post-abortive to serve alongside you. This will provide the women with a sense of comfort and connection. Each leader and co-leader (whether post-abortive or not) should personally work through the book prior to committing to serve a group.

If you are conducting the group in a host home, invite the host to serve as a helper. The greatest gift each of us brings to the women God entrusts to our care is our support, love, and encouragement - and for these, there is no prerequisite. Also, leaders and helpers who are not post-abortive should still work through the homework for each chapter. Not every question will be applicable, of course, but there are many Scripture assignments that are applicable to all of us. Encourage their participation in these areas. This will further help the group (including leaders and helpers) to bond.

For each session, key discussion questions are provided for each chapter's homework. If there is still time remaining, you may opt to

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review the questions that were skipped. In some instances, I've also included suggested sharing time allotments for certain questions. These should be adjusted depending on the size and make-up of your group and of course, the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Please remain mindful that some women in the group may have had more than one abortion. As you present each question, be sure to leave room for women to process each loss separately.

You may encounter a time when you feel a participant could benefit from professional counseling. I recommend that before beginning a study, you identify one or two local Christian counselors to whom you can refer. Most are willing to engage in an informal phone conversation where you can inquire about their experience in counseling post-abortive women. Some may even be willing to offer a discounted rate. Feel free to ask the counselor about her views on abortion and on a woman's need for healing after abortion.

You may like the idea of beginning each session by playing a worship song. I've included some suggestions at the beginning of each session.

At the end of this guide, I have included a variety of forms, poems, and other documents to enrich your group experience and to help prepare you and the participants for the journey ahead. These are provided for your convenience and may be utilized at your sole discretion. Not every group uses all of the forms so feel free to pick and choose what works best for you.

Above all, may the Holy Spirit lead you as you serve Him. Truly, I am honored to partner with you in this ministry. I am excited for all God has in mind to do in you and through you!

To Him alone be all the glory. Amen!

Before You Begin

A few items to consider as you plan your group

PARTNERING WITH YOUR CHURCH

Take some time to meet and talk with your pastor or women's ministry leader to share your passion and vision for the ministry. Provide him or her with a copy of the book to review.

LOCATION

Prayfully choose a location. Although it is not necessary, many groups are hosted in private homes where the atmosphere can be relaxed. If the group will be taking place at a church, choose a location away from other activities. Whatever location you choose, keep the details confidential and only share it with the group members (and other key supporters, such as church leadership).

PROMOTION

To assist in spreading awareness of the study at your church, in your community, and on social media, the following free resources are available at www.shadiahrichi.com:

- Church bulletin inserts (PDF download)
- Flyers/Posters (PDF download)
- Promo video (video link)

SCHOLARSHIPS

Consider having a scholarship available to help cover the cost of books.

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PRAYER SUPPORT

Enlist a network of prayer supporter to bathe you, your co-leaders/ helpers/hosts, and the women God will entrust to your care, in prayer.

What to Bring

Suggestions on what to bring for ALL sessions

- Your copy of *Worthy of Love* (plus extra copy in case someone needs one)
- Music
- Pens
- Bible (consider bringing an extra Bible in case someone needs one)
- Name Badges
- Tissues
- Snacks (suggestion: always have chocolate on hand :)
- Water
- Blank Prayer Cards

Additional items you will need (session numbers based on 8-week format)

Session 1

- Books for each participant
- Copies of the following forms:
 - Group Etiquette
 - Commitment form
 - Confidentiality Waiver
 - Sign up/Contact Information

Session 4

- Copies of "Before Me, You" poem

Session 7

- Attractive Blank Note Cards for each participant to take home for exercise on page 158

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Session 8

- Copies of poem “A Pre-born Child’s Conversation With His Heavenly Father” by Delia Baker Hutto March
- Candles (one candle for each child lost, including children of leaders/co-leaders/helpers, plus extra candle to light all the others)
- Suggested: small gift for each participant

Note: All forms, documents, and poems referenced in this Leader's Guide are included at the end of this Guide and are available for free download at www.shadiahrichi.com

(Session One) Welcome

BEFORE THE SESSION

- Read “A Note from the Author.” Underline key phrases to discuss
- Read “Foreword by Brian Fisher” and the poem “A Mother’s Lament.” Note anything that you wish to share with the group
- Be prepared to introduce yourself and what you hope to gain from your time together
- Schedule time prior to the start of the session for leader, co-leader, and host to pray together
- Review “What to Bring” on pages 173-174

WELCOME

- Welcome the group. Commend them for participating and for making the time to care for themselves when so many other things compete for their time
- Opening prayer

INTRODUCTIONS (2-3 minutes each)

- Introduce yourself and share what led you to serve as leader/co-leader
- Ask each person (including co-leaders) to introduce herself, including her name and what she hopes to gain from the study
- Optional: Distribute and review “Objectives of the **Worthy of Love** study group”

REVIEW FORMS

- Distribute and review “Group Etiquette” form
- Review and ask participants to read and sign “Commitment form”
- Distribute and review “Confidentiality waiver”
- Ask participants provide their name and contact information on the sign up form

DISTRIBUTE BOOKS

- Distribute books
- Read aloud (or invite participants to read silently) “A Note from the Author” and to share their thoughts

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- Optional: Read aloud (or invite participants to read silently) “Foreword by Brian Fisher” and to share their thoughts
- Optional: Invite participants to read “A Mother’s Lament.” Ask participants what stood out to them in the poem

REMINDERS & CLOSING

- Present blank Prayer Cards and encourage participants to share their prayer requests (prayer cards to be collected at end of each sessions for leader/co-leader to pray over)
- Advise participants of the importance of carving out time to do the homework each week in order to listen for God’s leading. Be mindful that the enemy does not want them to be healed; they are likely to encounter spiritual warfare and distractions along the way
- Closing prayer (pray for participants’ prayer requests and for them to sense God’s Peace and Presence and as they work through the study)
- Remind participants to complete the homework in Chapter One for the next session

NOTES

(Session Two)
Chapter One: "The Lie"
Replacing the Lies with God's Truth

BEFORE THE SESSION

- Read chapter One "The Lie"
- Review discussion questions
- Email a note of encouragement to the participants
- Select a worship song to share (suggestion: In His Time by Maranatha Music)
- Select a Scripture to share (suggestion: "The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you." (Deuteronomy 31:8 NIV))
- Review "What to Bring" on pages 173-174

WELCOME

- Welcome the group
- Ask if anyone brought a worship song to share (optional)
- Play worship song (optional)
- Set the tone with Scripture
- Opening prayer

OVERVIEW

(Consider reading or re-stating in your own words)

Every choice we make effects how we view our self, the world, and even God. While abortion may provide a temporary relief from stress and fear, in the long run, instead of bringing freedom, abortion often leaves us in captivity. In this session, we will explore the lies we believed and examine them in light of God's Truth.

SHARING OUR STORIES (2-3 min. ea.)

Take turns answering the following questions (*Note: leaders/co-leaders who are post-abortive should share first*)

- How many abortions have you had and do you recall how old were you each time?

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- If you remember how far along you were in each pregnancy, what did you believe about your pregnancy in terms of fetal development?

HOMWORK

What Abortion Did to Me

- Introduce question 1 on page 6; share a personal example (or review author's examples)
- Discuss responses/fill-ins on pages 6-7

Lies about Pregnancy

- Depending on the group's comfort level, invite participants to take turns reading each lie and the Scripture verses on page 11 or the leader and co-leader can read them
- Discuss question 6 on page 12
- Discuss question 9 on page 14

Lies about God

- Invite participants to take turns reading each lie and the Scripture verses on page 15
- Ask participants which Scripture captured their attention the most? Why?
- Discuss responses to question 15

Lies about Myself

- Invite participants to take turns reading each lie and the Scripture verses on page 18
- Discuss question 17 on page 19
- (Optional) Re-read the first paragraph at the bottom of page 20
- Discuss questions 19 through 21

IF TIME REMAINS

- Ask participants if they wish to discuss any questions that were skipped
- Review "Lesson Summary" at the end of the chapter
- Invite participants to discuss any other highlights from the homework they'd like to share

REMINDERS

- Next week's homework: Chapter Two
- Attendance: Importance of attending all sessions
- Time: Everyone's time is valuable; importance of arriving on time
- Songs: Invite participants to bring a song to share next time
- Prayer: Remind participants to turn in prayer cards, if desired

CLOSING

- Play closing song (optional)
- Closing Prayer

NOTES

(Session Three)
Chapter Two: "The Secret"
Exposing Our Secrets To God's Light

BEFORE THE SESSION

- Read chapter Two "The Secret"
- Review discussion questions
- Email a note of encouragement to the participants
- Select a worship song to share (suggestion: East to West by Casting Crowns)
- Select a Scripture to share (suggestion: "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8)
- Review "What to Bring" on pages 173-174

WELCOME

- Welcome the group
- Ask if anyone brought a worship song to share (optional)
- Play worship song (optional)
- Set the tone with Scripture
- Opening prayer

OVERVIEW

(Consider reading or re-stating in your own words)

Keeping secrets invariably leads us to hide from one another and from God. Because God is holy, these internalized secrets create a barrier between God and us. Over time, we may come to believe (either consciously or subconsciously) that God cannot forgive us, or use us, or love us.

SHARING OUR STORIES (2-3 min. ea.)

Take turns answering the following questions (*Suggestion: Leaders/co-leaders who are post-abortive should share first*)

- Who went with you when you underwent the abortion(s)?
- What stands out the most in your memory about the abortion facility or your experience?
- After the abortion(s), did you tell anyone else?

HOMework

- Discuss questions 1-2 on pages 29-30
- Read paragraph on page 30 and introduce question 3
- Discuss question 3 on pages 30-31
- Read or briefly summarize 1 Samuel 16 on page 32. For example, you might say something like, *King David was likely an adolescent when God chose him to be king over Israel; however, David would not become king until many years later*
- Read or invite participants to read text beginning at the bottom of page 32 (“in the spring of the year...”) through all of page 33
- Discuss questions 4 – 6 on page 34 (Reading of 10 Commandments is optional)
- Read Scripture verse on page 36
- Discuss questions 9-10 on pages 36-37
- Read Scriptures on page 38
- Discuss questions 11-12 on pages 38-39
- Read or briefly summarize Exodus 3-4 on pages 39-40. For example, you might say, *God appears to Moses and tells him to confront Pharaoh, demanding that he let God’s people go, but Moses makes excuses and eventually asks God “please send someone else”*
- Discuss question 16 on page 41
- Read both paragraphs at bottom of page 43
- Discuss Lesson Summary on page 45

IF TIME REMAINS

- Ask participants if they wish to discuss any questions that were skipped
- Review “Lesson Summary” at the end of the chapter
- Invite participants to discuss any other highlights from the homework they’d like to share

REMINDERS

- Next week’s homework: Chapter Three
- Attendance: Importance of attending all sessions
- Time: Everyone’s time is valuable; importance of arriving on time
- Songs: Invite participants to bring a song to share next time
- Prayer: Remind participants to turn in prayer cards, if desired

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CLOSING

- Play closing song (optional)
- Closing Prayer

NOTES

(Session Four)
Chapter Three: "The Crossroads"
Standing at the Crossroads
of God's Love

BEFORE THE SESSION

- Read chapter Three "The Crossroads"
- Review discussion questions
- Email a note of encouragement to the participants
- Select a worship song to share (suggestion: How Deep the Father's Love for Us by Phillips, Craig & Dean)
- Select a Scripture to share (suggestion: "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)
- Review "What to Bring" on pages 173-174
- Optional: bring copies of poem "Before Me, You"

WELCOME

- Welcome the group
- Ask if anyone brought a worship song to share (optional)
- Play worship song (optional)
- Set the tone with Scripture
- Opening prayer

OVERVIEW

Abortion is a traumatic experience; however, every woman processes trauma differently. Grief can manifest itself in many ways but no matter where we are, God is willing to meet us there. It is at the Crossroads, where our grief intersects with God's forgiveness, where healing begins.

SHARING OUR STORIES (2-3 min. ea.)

Take turns answering the following questions

- How long ago was the abortion(s)?
- What kind of emotions (if any) did you experience afterwards?
- Did your feelings change over time? If so, how?

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HOMework

- Discuss question 1-2 on page 51-53
- Read 2 Timothy 1:9-10 on page 53
- Discuss questions 3-5 on page 54-56
- Review fill-in answers for question 6 on pages 58-59 (consider inviting participants to take turns reading)
- Invite group (including leader/co-leader/helper) to discuss/share their answers to the following questions:
 - Which truth in question 6 do you struggle to believe and why?
 - Which truth in question 6 was most meaningful to you and why?

GOSPEL (pages 60-61)

Acknowledge that someone in the group may have accepted God's offer of salvation for the first time. Invite anyone who made a decision to follow Jesus to share their decision either with the group or, if she prefers, privately with you (or the co-leader) afterwards.

OPTIONAL

Distribute copies of the poem "Before Me, You." Consider having someone read it out loud. Invite the group to share their thoughts.

REMINDERS

- Next week's homework: Chapter Four
- Attendance: Importance of attending all sessions
- Time: Everyone's time is valuable; importance of arriving on time
- Songs: Invite participants to bring a song to share next time
- Prayer: Remind participants to turn in prayer cards, if desired

CLOSING

- Play closing song (optional)
- Closing Prayer

NOTES

(Session Five)
Chapter Four: "The Mask"
Embracing our True Identity in Christ

BEFORE THE SESSION

- Read chapter Four "The Mask"
- Review discussion questions
- Email a note of encouragement to the participants
- Select a worship song to share (suggestion: Remind Me Who I Am by Jason Gray)
- Select a Scripture to share (suggested: "The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." -1 Samuel 16:7 NIV)
- Review "What to Bring" on pages 173-174

WELCOME

- Welcome the group
- Ask if anyone brought a worship song to share (optional)
- Play worship song (optional)
- Set the tone with Scripture
- Opening prayer

OVERVIEW

Buried secrets are fertile ground for Satan to plant accusations in our minds and hearts. These accusations, if not surrendered to God's Truth, will eventually transform into self-condemnation, leading us further away from what God says is true about us.

OPTIONAL

Ask the group:

- What comes to your mind when you think of someone who wears a mask?
- What are some reasons people might hide behind a mask?

SHARING OUR STORIES (2-3 min. ea.)

Take turns answering the following questions, which are on pages 67-68 (questions 2-3):

- Do you believe you have suppressed your feelings about having an abortion? If so, how?
- Do you have a mask? If so, how would you describe it?

HOMework

- Read Jeremiah 17:9 on the top of page 69
- Discuss questions 4-7 (if you are short on time, focus on questions 5 and 7)
- Ask participants to read silently along with you as you read aloud the bottom of page 72 and all of page 73
- Discuss what they just read on pages 72-73
- Participants to take turns reading Scripture verses on pages 74 and 76; after each Scripture ask the group to share what Keywords they chose (questions 8-9, note some key words may work for more than one Scripture)
- Discuss question 10 (which refers readers back to pages 70-71)
- If there is time, discuss question 11, otherwise skip to question 13 on page 78
- Ask if anyone wishes to share from questions 13-14 on pages 78-79

IF TIME REMAINS

- Ask participants if they wish to discuss any questions that were skipped
- Review “Lesson Summary” at the end of the chapter
- Invite participants to discuss any other highlights from the homework they would like to share

REMINDERS

- Next week’s homework: Chapter Five
- Attendance: Importance of attending all sessions
- Time: Everyone’s time is valuable; importance of arriving on time
- Songs: Invite participants to bring a song to share next time
- Prayer: Remind participants to turn in prayer cards, if desired

CLOSING

- Play closing song (optional)
- Closing Prayer

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NOTES

(Session Six)
Chapter Five: "The Stone"
Surrendering our Burdens to God

BEFORE THE SESSION

- Read chapter Five "The Stone"
- Review discussion questions
- Email a note of encouragement to the participants
- Select a worship song to share (suggestion: At the Foot of the Cross by Women of Faith)
- Select a Scripture to share (suggested: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." - Matthew 11:28 NIV)
- Review "What to Bring" on pages 173-174

WELCOME

- Welcome the group
- Ask if anyone brought a worship song to share (optional)
- Play worship song (optional)
- Set the tone with Scripture
- Opening prayer

OVERVIEW

The burdens we carry will look different for each one of us: the fears, regrets, guilt, emotional numbness, or shame we had been punishing ourselves with as a result of our choices. God knows they are too heavy for us; that is why He wants us to surrender them to Him.

SHARING OUR STORIES (2-3 min. ea.)

Take turns answering the following questions, which are on pages 88-89 (questions 1-3):

- How long ago was the abortion (or abortions)?
- Do you believe the saying "time heals all wounds?" Why or why not?
- Is this the first step you have taken toward healing? What has, or has not, been helpful up to this point?

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HOMework

- Ask the group if there is anything they would like to share from question 6 on pages 91-93
- Discuss question 7 on page 94
- Discuss question 9-10 on page 96
 - If you answered yes to question 10, did you try the suggestion to pray for the person you struggle to forgive? What were the results?
- Encourage each participant to share their acronyms and/or drawings on pages 98-99

IF TIME REMAINS

- Ask participants if they wish to discuss any questions that were skipped
- Review “Lesson Summary” at the end of the chapter
- Invite participants to discuss any other highlights from the homework they’d like to share

REMINDERS

- Next week’s homework: Chapter Six
- Attendance: Importance of attending all sessions
- Time: Everyone’s time is valuable; importance of arriving on time
- Songs: Invite participants to bring a song to share next time
- Prayer: Remind participants to turn in prayer cards, if desired

CLOSING

- Play closing song (optional)
- Closing Prayer

NOTES

(Session Seven)
Chapter Six: "The Battle"
Confronting our Giants with
The Word of God

BEFORE THE SESSION

- Read chapter Six "The Battle"
- Review discussion questions
- What to bring: attractive stationary with envelopes for each participant to take home. They will use the stationary to complete exercise 10a on page 158 for the last session. Suggestion: using a sticky note, write a brief note or prayer and place inside each envelope; however, ask participants not to jump ahead or open the envelopes until they reach page 158
- Email a note of encouragement to the participants
- Select a worship song to share (suggestion: A Mighty Fortress by Christy Nockels)
- Select a Scripture to share (suggested: Ephesians 6:10-17)
- Review "What to Bring" on pages 173-174

WELCOME

- Welcome the group
- Ask if anyone brought a worship song to share (optional)
- Play worship song (optional)
- Set the tone with Scripture
- Opening prayer

OVERVIEW

As we walk through our journeys, we have discovered how lies inevitably require us to keep secrets. In order to keep the secrets, we must hide behind a mask. All of this deception burdens our souls with weights too heavy for us to carry. Even after we surrender our burdens to God, battles can still rage in our minds and in our hearts. There is only one weapon powerful enough to crush the schemes of the enemy warring against us: the Word of God.

*“We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ...”
(2 Corinthians 10:5).*

SHARING OUR STORIES (2-3 min. ea.)

Take turns answering the following questions, which are on page 112 (question 3-4):

- After the abortion, did you sense a change in your relationship with God? If so, how?
- After the abortion, did you sense a change in your relationship with others? If so, how?

HOMEWORK

- Ask participants if there is anything they want to share from pages 108-111
- Discuss question 2 on page 111
- Discuss question 5 on page 113
- Ask participants if there is anything they want to share from pages 115-116
- Discuss question 8-9 on page 118-119
- Ask participants if there is anything they want to share from pages 121-122
- Take turns sharing what each person found most significant from the week's lesson (“Lesson Summary” on page 123) and why it was meaningful to them

IF TIME REMAINS

- Ask participants if they wish to discuss any questions that were skipped
- Review “Lesson Summary” at the end of the chapter
- Invite participants to discuss any other highlights from the homework they'd like to share

REMINDERS

- *IMPORTANT:* next week's homework includes Chapters Seven AND Eight
- Give each participant one of the pretty blank notecards in an unsealed envelope; explain they are not to open it until they reach the exercise on page 158

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CLOSING

- Play closing song (optional)
- Closing Prayer

NOTES

(Session Eight)
Chapters Seven & Eight
"Our Wish" & "His Gift"
Releasing the Memories of Our Children

BEFORE THE SESSION

- Read chapter Seven "The Wish" and Eight "The Gift"
- Review discussion questions
- Review "What to Bring" on pages 173-174
- IMPORTANT: Prepare for the "Ceremony of Remembrance"
 - Email a note of encouragement to the participants; remind them to complete exercise 10a on page 158 and to bring their notes to the last session
 - Read question 10 on page 158 for a list of ideas to incorporate into your ceremony
 - Leaders/co-leaders/helpers who are post-abortive should also complete exercise 10a and be prepared to share their letters with the group
 - Choose a song to play in the background during the ceremony (suggested: instrumental worship song playing softly and continuously in a loop; suggestion: *How Deep the Father's Love for Us - Instrumental*)
 - Bring copies of "Heavenly Conversation" poem
 - Bring candles (one candle for each child lost, including the children of leaders/co-leaders/helpers that were lost to abortion, plus extra 'torch' candle to light all the others)
 - Suggested: small gift for each participant (such as a white rose)
 - Bring copies of "Evaluation" form
- Select a worship song to share at beginning of session (suggestion: Amazing Grace)
- Select a Scripture to share (suggested: "*Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.*" – Mark 5:34 NIV)

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WELCOME

- Welcome the group
- Play worship song (optional)
- Set the tone with Scripture
- Opening prayer

OVERVIEW

We always have a choice. God's Word never fails but we must choose to believe it. God's promises cannot be broken but we must choose to receive them. His Word says we are forgiven and He promises to heal us. 1 Peter 2:24 promises, *"He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed."* (1 Peter 2:24 NIV)

HOMEWORK

Chapter 7 "The Wish"

- Discuss question 2 on page 130
- Discuss question 7 on page 133
- Discuss question 10 on page 136
- Discuss question 12-13 on page 138

Chapter 8 "The Gift"

- Discuss question 1 on page 146
- Ask if anyone has anything else they want to share from pages 150-151
- Discuss question 5 on pages 152-153
- Briefly review Keywords/Scriptures on page 154
- Ask if anyone has anything else they want to share from pages 156-157
- Ask if anyone read "A Mothers' Hope" on page 160 (optional)

MINI BREAK

(Set up for ceremony)

SETUP

- Prepare music (instrumental worship song to play softly in background in a continuous loop)
- Arrange unlit candles, including “torch” candle, which will be used to light the other candles
- Have gifts (such as roses) ready, but out of sight

CEREMONY OF REMEMBRANCE

- Begin music
- Give each participant a copy of “Heavenly Conversation” poem to read silently
- Take turns (including leaders/helpers) reading aloud the letters/ poems written to each lost child (exercise 10a on page 158)
- Gather around the candles and pray a simple prayer for the group. A sample prayer might be, *“Father, we are here tonight to honor the memory of our children and to thank you that they are safe in Your arms. We look forward to one day being reunited with them in Heaven. Amen.”*
- Using the the ‘torch’ candle, be the first to light a candle to honor the memory of your own child(ren) with simple words, such as *“I light this candle in honor of my daughter Amanda.”* (If you have not personally lost a child to abortion, you may elect to light a candle for a family member you have lost to abortion or simply delegate this task to a co-leader or helper who is post-abortive).
- Pass the ‘torch’ candle to the next participant, who will follow your example. If someone has lost more than one child, she should light a candle for each of her children before passing the ‘torch’ candle to the next participant.
- Offer a closing prayer

CLOSING

- Ask participants to complete Evaluation form
- Encourage participants to help spread awareness of the study by sharing a review on Amazon.com or Christianbook.com or visiting the **Worthy of Love** Facebook or Pinterest page
- Collect evaluation forms
- Give each participant a parting gift

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AFTER THE SESSION

- Contact participants in the days/weeks following to encourage them and offer your support if they are considering leading a **Worthy of Love** group of their own
- Participant and leader feedback is vital to the ongoing development and effectiveness of the ministry. Please send evaluation forms (see additional forms/helpful documents) to:
 - Email: info@shadiahrichi.com
 - Postal mail:

Shadia Hrichi, Author/Speaker
PO Box 24874
San Jose, CA 95154

NOTES

Modified (4.5-Week) Schedule

Introduction

BENEFITS & CHALLENGES

This modified schedule provides some benefits as well as some challenges when compared to the typical 8-week format. It also requires some additional pre-planning, which is outlined below.

Benefits include being able to offer participants (and leaders) a shorter time commitment in terms of number of sessions (total hours invested is the same as in the 8-week format). The half-day retreat also provides a wonderful opportunity for women in the group to bond. Further, by the time participants have completed the first session, they will be substantially invested in their healing; therefore, they are far more likely to return and complete the remaining sessions.

Some challenges include making sure that participants have access to books several weeks prior to the first session in order for them to arrive prepared. In addition, participants will need to work through the first three chapters of the book on their own without the benefit of group support.

Despite the challenges, this format is well-suited for women who are motivated to complete the assignments and who find a shorter time commitment more appealing.

PLANNING & LOGISTICS

- This format includes one half-day mini-retreat followed by one evening each week for four weeks (sample schedule to follow)
- Because participants will need to complete the homework for chapters 1-3 prior to the first session, be prepared to offer instructions on how participants can obtain copies of the books
- It is recommended that registration/sign-up for the study closes approximately two weeks prior to the first session in order to give participants time to complete all of the homework for chapters 1-3
- Be prepared to serve a light lunch or brunch during the half-day retreat

Modified Schedule

Introduction

SCHEDULE

- Below is a suggested schedule (if the size of your group exceeds five participants, consider extending the half-day retreat by one hour)
- Note: be sure to leave enough time between the half-day retreat and the next group meeting to allow participants to complete the homework for the next session. For example, if the half-day retreat is scheduled for Saturday and the remaining sessions will be held on Mondays, then skip the first Monday that follows the Saturday half-day retreat

Session One: SATURDAY 9am - 1pm

Chapter One "The Lie"

Chapter Two "The Secret"

~ Break for Lunch ~

Chapter Three "The Crossroads"

Session Two: WEDNESDAY 7pm - 9pm

Chapter Four "The Mask"

Session Three: WEDNESDAY 7pm - 9pm

Chapter Five "The Stone"

Session Four: WEDNESDAY 7pm - 9pm

Chapter Six "The Battle"

Session Five: WEDNESDAY 7pm - 9pm

Chapter Seven & Eight "The Wish" & "The Gift"

(Session One)
Half-day Retreat

BEFORE THE SESSION

- Read “A Note from the Author.” Underline key phrases to discuss
- Read “Foreword by Brian Fisher” and the poem “A Mother’s Lament.” Note anything that you wish to share with the group
- Read chapters One, Two and Three and review discussion questions
- Be prepared to introduce yourself and what you hope to gain from your time together
- Schedule time prior to the start of the session for leader, co-leader, and host to pray together
- Optional: bring copies of the following forms to review/complete at the first session:
 - Group Etiquette
 - Commitment Form
 - Confidentiality Waiver
- Select a Scripture to share (suggestion: “*The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.*” - Deuteronomy 31:8 NIV)
- Select a worship song to share (suggestion: In His Time by Maranatha Music)
- Email a note of encouragement to the participants
- Optional: bring copies of the poem “Before Me, You” to give to each participant at the end of the half-day session
- Before you begin, review “What to Bring” on pages 173-174

Reminder: All forms, documents, and poems referenced in this Leader’s Guide are included at the end of this Guide and are available for free download at www.shadiahrichi.com

INTRODUCTION

~ 15 minutes ~

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

- Welcome the group. Commend them for participating and for making the time to care for themselves when so many other things compete for their time
- Introduce yourself and share what led you to serve as leader/co-leader
- Ask each person (including co-leaders) to introduce herself, including her name and what she hopes to gain from the study

REVIEW FORMS (Optional)

- Distribute and review "Group Etiquette" form
- Review and ask participants to read and sign "Commitment form"
- Distribute and review "Confidentiality waiver"

OPENING PRAYER

- Set the tone with Scripture
- Play a worship song
- Opening prayer

CHAPTER ONE: THE LIE

(taken from pages 177-178)

~ 1 hour ~

OVERVIEW

(Consider reading or re-stating in your own words)

Every choice we make effects how we view our self, the world, and even God. While abortion may provide a temporary relief from stress and fear, in the long run, instead of bringing freedom, abortion often leaves us in captivity. In this session, we will explore the lies we believed and examine them in light of God's Truth.

SHARING OUR STORIES (2-3 min. ea.)

Take turns answering the following questions (*Note: leaders/co-leaders who are post-abortive should share first*)

- How many abortions have you had and do you recall how old were you each time?
- If you remember how far along you were in each pregnancy, what did you believe about your pregnancy in terms of fetal development?

HOMEWORK

What Abortion Did to Me

- Introduce question 1 on page 6; share a personal example (or review author's examples)
- Discuss responses/fill-ins on pages 6-7

Lies about Pregnancy

- Depending on the group's comfort level, invite participants to take turns reading each lie and the Scripture verses on page 11 or the leader and co-leader can read them
- Discuss question 6 on page 12
- Discuss question 9 on page 14

Lies about God

- Invite participants to take turns reading each lie and the Scripture verses on page 15
- Ask participants which Scripture captured their attention the most? Why?
- Discuss responses to question 15

Lies about Myself

- Invite participants to take turns reading each lie and the Scripture verses on page 18
- Discuss question 17 on page 19
- (Optional) Re-read the first paragraph at the bottom of page 20
- Discuss questions 19 through 21

IF TIME REMAINS

- Ask participants if they wish to discuss any questions that were skipped

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- Review “Lesson Summary” at the end of the chapter
- Invite participants to discuss any other highlights from the homework they’d like to share

NOTES

~ Mini Break (15 minutes) ~

CHAPTER TWO: THE SECRET

(taken from pages 180-181)

~ 1 hour ~

OVERVIEW

(Consider reading or re-stating in your own words)

Keeping secrets invariably leads us to hide from one another and from God. Because God is holy, these internalized secrets create a barrier between God and us. Over time, we may come to believe (either consciously or subconsciously) that God cannot forgive us, or use us, or love us.

SHARING OUR STORIES (2-3 min. ea.)

Take turns answering the following questions (Suggestion: Leaders/co-leaders who are post-abortive should share first)

- Who went with you when you underwent the abortion(s)?
- What stands out the most in your memory about the abortion facility or your experience?
- After the abortion(s), did you tell anyone else?

HOMework

- Discuss questions 1-2 on pages 29-30
- Read paragraph on page 30 and introduce question 3
- Discuss question 3 on pages 30-31
- Read or briefly summarize 1 Samuel 16 on page 32. For example, you might say something like, *King David was likely an adolescent when God chose him to be king over Israel; however, David would not become king until many years later*
- Read or invite participants to read text beginning at the bottom of page 32 (“in the spring of the year...”) through all of page 33
- Discuss questions 4 – 6 on page 34 (Reading of 10 Commandments is optional)
- Read Scripture verse on page 36
- Discuss questions 9-10 on pages 36-37
- Read Scriptures on page 38
- Discuss questions 11-12 on pages 38-39
- Read or briefly summarize Exodus 3-4 on pages 39-40. For example, you might say, *God appears to Moses and tells him to*

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confront Pharaoh, demanding that he let God's people go, but Moses makes excuses and eventually asks God "please send someone else"

- Discuss question 16 on page 41
- Read both paragraphs at bottom of page 43
- Discuss Lesson Summary on page 45

IF TIME REMAINS

- Ask participants if they wish to discuss any questions that were skipped
- Review "Lesson Summary" at the end of the chapter
- Invite participants to discuss any other highlights from the homework they'd like to share

NOTES

~ LUNCH BREAK (30 minutes) ~

CHAPTER THREE: THE CROSSROADS

(taken from pages 183-184)

~ 1 hour ~

OVERVIEW

Abortion is a traumatic experience; however, every woman processes trauma differently. Grief can manifest itself in many ways but no matter where we are, God is willing to meet us there. It is at the Crossroads, where our grief intersects with God's forgiveness, where healing begins.

SHARING OUR STORIES (2-3 min. ea.)

Take turns answering the following questions

- How long ago was the abortion(s)?
- What kind of emotions (if any) did you experience afterwards?
- Did your feelings change over time? If so, how?

HOMEWORK

- Discuss question 1-2 on page 51-53
- Read 2 Timothy 1:9-10 on page 53
- Discuss questions 3-5 on page 54-56
- Review fill-in answers for question 6 on pages 58-59 (consider inviting participants to take turns reading)
- Invite group (including leader/co-leader/helper) to discuss/share their answers to the following questions:
 - Which truth in question 6 do you struggle to believe and why?
 - Which truth in question 6 was most meaningful to you and why?

GOSPEL (pages 60-61)

Acknowledge that someone in the group may have accepted God's offer of salvation for the first time. Invite anyone who made a decision to follow Jesus to share their decision either with the group or, if she prefers, privately with you (or the co-leader) afterwards.

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OPTIONAL

Distribute copies of the poem "Before Me, You." Consider having someone read it out loud. Invite the group to share their thoughts.

REMINDERS

- Present blank Prayer Cards and encourage participants to share their prayer requests (prayer cards to be collected at end of each session for leader/co-leader to pray over)
- Advise participants of the importance of carving out time to do the homework each week in order to listen for God's leading. Be mindful that the enemy does not want them to be healed; they are likely to encounter spiritual warfare and distractions along the way
- Attendance: Importance of attending all sessions
- Time: Everyone's time is valuable; importance of arriving on time
- Songs: Invite participants to bring a song to share next time
- Remind participants to complete the homework in Chapter Four for the next session

CLOSING PRAYER

- Closing prayer (pray for participants' prayer requests and for them to sense God's Peace and Presence and as they work through the study)

~

NEXT SESSIONS

For the remaining sessions, continue with Chapter Four: "The Mask" on page 186

NOTES

Additional Forms & Helpful Documents

For your convenience, the following pages include a variety of documents, forms, and poems to enrich your group experience and to help prepare you and the participants for the journey ahead. Keep in mind that not every group uses all forms; choose what works best for you. All forms are available for FREE download at www.shadiahrichi.com. Simply look for the *Worthy of Love* Resources page.

Recommended

- **Group Etiquette Guidelines** (Recommended): This document helps set the tone for the study. It should be distributed and reviewed with all members of the group at the first session.
- **Commitment to Group**: This document is designed to help participants take “ownership” of their commitment to healing. Participants should read, sign, and turn in this form during the first session.
- **Confidentiality Waiver**: Use this form to ensure participants understand the importance of building group trust by committing to keep information shared within the group confidential. Participants should read, sign, and turn in this form during the first session.
- **Sign up/Contact Information** (Recommended): Use this form to collect participants’ contact information. Bring to first session.
- **Before Me, You** – a poem (Recommended): This poem is introduced in Session 4. Copies should be provided to all members of the group.

- **A Pre-born Child's Conversation** – a poem
(Recommended): This poem is introduced in Session 8.
Copies should be provided to all members of the group.

Optional

- **Participant Information Questionnaire:** This form is provided to help the leaders/co-leaders better prepare to serve each participant. Participants should complete the form either prior to or during the first session.
- **Objectives:** This form provides participants with a clear outline of the group's objectives. This form may be helpful for women who arrive at the first session, but who are still considering whether or not to sign up for the study.
- **Support Team Letter:** This document provides participants with a simple way to invite prayer support from friends and family as well as providing friends and family with helpful advice as their loved one journeys through **Worthy of Love**.
- **Evaluation** (Respectfully Requested): Please have each participant as well as leaders/co-leaders complete the evaluation form. This feedback is exceedingly helpful to the ongoing work of the ministry. Forms should be completed at the end of the last session.

Group Etiquette Guidelines

- No Rescuing - Please refrain from advising, analyzing, rescuing, or attempting to 'fix' another member of the group, as this can interrupt or hinder her healing journey. This may be the first time she has been given freedom to grieve; give her space to do so.
- Freedom to Exit – Participants may elect to drop out of the study after attending the first session.
- Commitment – Participants are expected to commit to attend all group sessions and to arrive each week prepared to discuss the homework.
- Respect - This is a non-judgmental Christ-centered group that integrates recovery tools from the study *Worthy of Love*, the Bible, and prayer. Please recognize that participants may have different religious backgrounds.
- Considerate – Please do not interrupt another person while they are speaking (remember “no rescuing”). Be sensitive to the time by not monopolizing the conversation; leave time for each person to share.
- Healthy Environment – No alcohol or other substances that may hinder your ability to fully participate in the group. No cell phones.
- Focus – In order to gain the most from the study, the focus should remain on abortion. At the same time, be mindful that this is not a therapy group. The leaders/co-leaders are volunteers who serve out of their own life experience and do not necessarily have professional training.
- Confidentiality - Due to the sensitive nature of the *Worthy of Love* study, it is important for all participants to keep the information discussed within the study group confidential.
- Arrive on Time - Be considerate of each another's time; please arrive on time.

Commitment to Group

I, _____ (participant) am making
this commitment beginning on _____ (start date)
to _____ (end date) with _____
_____ (leaders/co-leaders).

- I commit to attend all sessions except in the case of an emergency.
- I agree to call a group leader if I am unable to attend a meeting due to an emergency.
- I agree to keep in confidence all personal information discussed in the group.
- I agree to do the homework each week and participate fully in the group.
- I agree to share my thoughts, memories, feelings and discoveries with the group.
- I agree to respect and value each member of the group.
- I agree to refrain from discussing the lesson with others until it is discussed with the group.
- I understand that if I arrive under the influence of alcohol or non-prescription drugs, I will be asked to leave and someone will be called to drive me home.
- I agree to abide by the Group Etiquette Guidelines during each session.

I understand and agree to all the above statements and willingly enter into a relationship with the members of this *Worthy of Love* Bible study group.

Note: *Worthy of Love* Bible Studies are offered by grateful volunteers, and do not intend to substitute for any mental health treatment.

Signed _____

Date _____

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Confidentiality Waiver

Worthy of Love Bible studies are facilitated by volunteers who have not necessarily been trained in counseling. Consequently, the Bible study and the post-abortion group are not intended as substitutes for professional counseling. Leaders may suggest outside counseling to participants if they see a need.

While the Participant Information Questionnaire is for the group leader/ co-leaders use only, all other information discussed within the study group is to be kept completely confidential. At no time are participants to disclose the names of other group members to anyone outside the group. Nor are participants to share part, or all, of another group member’s story with anyone outside the group without that member’s consent.

There are certain circumstances under which the leaders/co-leaders would be compelled to break confidentiality. For example, if they believe you are at risk for suicide; if they suspect criminal sexual or physical abuse; or if they believe you intend to harm another person.

Due to the sensitive nature of the *Worthy of Love* study, it is important for each participant to be able to trust that what they share with the group will remain confidential. The purpose of this waiver is to confirm that participants understand and agree with this need for confidentiality. Once signed, the group leader will retain this waiver with your personal information.

~

I have read and understand the above. I realize that all information shared during *Worthy of Love* group meetings is strictly confidential.

_____ Participant _____ Date

_____ Group Leader _____ Date

Before Me, You

by Shadia Hrichi

Before I entered the womb you prepared for me,
You knew me.

Before I was born,
You looked upon me.

Before my first cry,
You whispered my name.

Before I could walk,
You carried me.

Before I turned to you,
You died for me.

Before I carried my cross,
You walked to Calvary.

Before I whispered your Name,
You cried out for me.

Before I looked up,
You rose for me.

Before I knew you,
You entered heaven to prepare a place for me.

A Pre-born Child's Conversation With His Heavenly Father

by Delia Baker Hutto March

Father God, when is my mommy going to be here?

Soon, my child, soon.

Can you tell me how long?

There is no measure of time with me, my child.
She is busy right now doing the work I've given her to do.
When all that is done, she'll be here.

Is she going to know me when she gets here?

Yes, she will, my child, I'll let her know.

What does she look like, Father God?

Why, she looks a lot like you, my child. The same color hair,
the same eyes, the same nose,-
you resemble her a lot.

What do you think she's going to do when she sees me?

She will run to you, take you in her arms,
and love you just as any other loving Mother would do.

Father God -why has she never held me in her arms before?

She never had the chance to do so, my child.

Why did she never have the chance, Father God?

I don't remember, my child.

"For I will be merciful to their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more."

(Hebrews 8:12 NASB)

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Participant Information Questionnaire

The purpose of the Participant Information Questionnaire is twofold. First, having some background information about you will help the group leaders/co-leaders better understand how to support you as you work through *Worthy of Love*. Second, answering these questions will help you begin the important process of thinking back on the abortion(s), perhaps for the first time, as you prepare to move forward through your participation in the study group. The questionnaire is intended for leader/co-leaders use only. No one else will have access to this information without your consent.

You will be invited to share your abortion story with the study group. This is a very important step in the healing process, especially if you have never talked about it with others. As the study gets underway, you will be encouraged to engage in the group discussions as much as possible; to “break the silence.” The more you allow yourself to bring details associated with the abortion(s) into the open, the more opportunity there will be for healing.

It may be difficult to recall some details as you go through the questionnaire. That is okay; you are likely to remember more as the study progresses. For now, please answer as completely as possible. Bless you, dear sister, as you begin this journey of hope and healing!

Participant Information Questionnaire

(Confidential information - leader/co-leaders use only)

Name:

Today's Date:

Address:

Email:

Phone:

Date of Birth:

Occupation:

Marital Status: Married__ Separated__ Divorced__ Single__ Widowed__

Abortion History

	Approximate Date of the abortion	Your age at the time of the abortion	Approximately how many weeks pregnant were you?	Abortion type/ procedure
1				
2				
3				
4				

(Use additional paper or the back of this form if you need more space.)

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Have you ever sought counseling regarding the abortion(s)? Yes No
If yes, what were the results?

Have you ever been prescribed medication, for example, antidepressants, for depression or other psychological or emotional symptoms? Yes No
If yes, please explain:

Have you ever been or are you currently involved in counseling or support groups (i.e., AA, drug abuse recovery, grief recovery, sexual or physical abuse recovery)? Yes No
If yes, please explain:

How familiar are you with the Bible?
Not familiar Somewhat familiar Very familiar

Thank you for completing the Participant Information Questionnaire.

Objectives of the Worthy of Love Study Group

The primary objective of this study group is to provide you, the participant, with a safe, confidential place to process wounds from past abortion(s). By entering into a community of peers who have experienced similar wounds and stories, you will find encouragement by discovering you are not alone.

A second objective is to help you recognize the destructive beliefs you have held onto, and to replace those beliefs with truths from God's Word. Part of the healing process is to explore and understand sources of destructive beliefs within a safe place, surrounded by others on the same journey.

A third objective is to provide you with meaningful relationships within the study group itself, where you can experience God's unconditional love as well as grace and compassion from others who have walked a similar path.

A fourth objective is to encourage you to take an active role in your healing journey. You are strongly encouraged to take the steps necessary to create space in your life to complete all homework assignments, and to keep a journal (not required, but strongly recommended). You will be expected to attend each session and encouraged to participate in the group discussions.

Support Team Letter

Dear Supporting Friend/Family Member(s):

Your loved one has begun a journey of healing from past abortion by choosing to participate in a post-abortion study group called *Worthy of Love*. As this can be a difficult time, you are encouraged to be sensitive to her needs and, if you are a person of prayer, to pray for your loved one during the course of the study, and in the weeks following its completion.

Here are some ways you can support and encourage her:

- Allow her to share her feelings with you if she expresses a desire to do so. Always let her be the one to initiate the discussion.
- Be a good listener.
- Remind her that healing is a process, and may not happen immediately.
- Be dependable.
- Let her know that you are praying for her.

Thank you for your support!

Evaluation

Your Name:

Date:

Your City/State:

1. Did this study meet your expectations? Why or why not?
2. What did you like most about this study?
3. Is there anything you would change about this study?
4. What would you tell someone else who is considering doing this study?
5. May we use your comments to encourage others about the study?
YES NO
- If yes, may we include your first name and city/state? YES NO
6. Please help spread awareness by rating the book on Amazon.com and Christianbook.com.

Thank you for taking the time to make this Bible Study better for future readers.

Let's stay in touch!
Find *Worthy of Love* on Facebook.

Worthy of Love - Leader's Guide
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