

# POST-ABORTION HEALING

Restoring Abortion Wounded Hearts of Men and Women  
A Leaders Training Retreat



EDITION 2.0



## Post-Abortion Healing

*“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.”*

**2 Corinthians 1:3-4**

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## **Post-Abortion Healing**

### **Acknowledgment:**

LIFE International would like to acknowledge and thank **Deeper Still** for granting permission to use portions of their material in the development of the healing sessions in this manual. Learn more at [www.godeeperstill.org](http://www.godeeperstill.org).

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## Table of Contents

How to Use this Manual .....	7
------------------------------	---

### **PART 1**

Introduction.....	9
Session 1: Worldview.....	11
Session 2: The Abortion Decision.....	13
Session 3: God’s Design for His Creation .....	17

### **PART 2**

Session 1: Establishing a Safe Place.....	21
Session 2: Sharing Your Story .....	23
Session 3: Forgiveness and Reconciliation.....	27
Session 4: Grieving.....	31
Session 5: Restoration.....	35
Session 6: Walking in Freedom .....	39
Session 7: Closing Ceremony .....	45

### **PART 3:**

Session 1: Next Steps.....	47
----------------------------	----

### **Appendices:**

Appendix A: Recommended Materials.....	50
Appendix B: Worldview Chart .....	51
Appendix C: <i>Certificate of Debt</i> .....	52
Appendix D: <i>The Power of Symbols</i> .....	53





## How to Use this Manual

With an estimated 56,000,000 abortions performed around the world every year, there are more than 100,000,000 men and women who will experience abortion's effects *every year*. While the legality, morality, and impact of abortion will always be a source of controversy, it cannot be denied that abortion—for millions of people—is a painful and destructive decision that often leads to intense emotional, psychological, relational, and physiological effects.

***Restoring the Abortion-Wounded Hearts Of Men and Women*** is a training manual developed by LIFE International ([www.lifeinternational.com](http://www.lifeinternational.com)) for the facilitation of healing and restoration in the life of *any* individual, male or female, who has participated in abortion and is experiencing its adverse effects.

This manual has been designed as a guide for two primary user applications:

1. The manual can be used **to directly lead** abortion-wounded people, usually one-on-one or in a small-group setting, through discussions and exercises that will facilitate personal healing and transformation.
2. The manual can be used **to train others** to lead abortion-wounded people through the same discussions and exercises.

Accordingly, the manual is divided into three parts:

**Part 1** introduces abortion, explains how one's worldview affects decision-making, and reviews the biblical foundation for the value of human life as made in the image of God.

**Part 2** is composed of the interactive sessions during which post-abortive individuals will be invited to:

- share their stories,
- grieve their losses,
- receive the forgiveness offered to them by God through Christ, and
- be restored to their God-given roles as mothers and fathers.

**Part 3** is a brief session designed to equip participants to establish an abortion-recovery ministry in their communities.

If you are using this material for application #1—to directly lead abortion-wounded people—you will use **only part two** of this manual. If you are using this material for application #2—to train others to lead abortion-wounded people—you will use **all three parts**.

Abortion is one of many ways in which the sacredness of human life is violated. While not all people have had an abortion, all people **have** participated in these violations in other ways. The content of this manual—about grief, loss, forgiveness, healing, hope, and restoration—is **universal** for all mankind, which means that facilitators *do not have to be post-abortive* to learn how to use this material.

Post-abortive facilitators can certainly offer a meaningful connection to other post-abortive people as they share their stories, but an abortion experience is not a requirement. Most importantly, you cannot train what you haven't practiced, so—post-abortive or not—every facilitator of this manual should participate in the training **before** attempting to lead another person through the material.



**Participatory learning**

This training is intended to be facilitated using “participatory learning” methodology, which encourages active participation among attendees, which is why they are called “participants” throughout the manual. It is most effective for adults to learn by discovering information for themselves, drawing on existing knowledge and personal experience. This is contrasted with lecture-based teaching, in which learners *receive* information from an instructor. Facilitators are encouraged to ask open-ended questions from participants whenever possible.

**About the “note for facilitator”**

These training helps, found throughout the manual, are guidelines and key principles for leaders to keep in mind as they facilitate the sessions. These are suggestions and recommendations to assist facilitators in the sensitive work of shepherding post-abortive individuals through the healing and restoration process.

**Sequence of sessions**

Through our experience of helping people who have had abortions, we have discovered a progressive sequence of conversations, activities, and exercises that is the most helpful. The sessions in this manual, therefore, are presented in an intentional sequential order, which should be followed. This concept will be helpful to explain to training participants in order to anticipate any questions they may have about the sequence of sessions, and to take an early opportunity to build trust between the facilitators and the participants.

**Recommended session times**

Each session has a recommended time allotment. These times are not meant to be exact, and may vary depending on the size of the group. Recommended session times are included to allow for adequate time to be established during the planning phase.

## Part 1

# Introduction

*Recommended Session Time: 30 minutes*

### Note for Facilitator:

In order to model participatory learning methodology (as described in *How to Use this Manual*), this introduction can begin with a simple question to get the participants talking. “What are your expectations for our time together?” will open a discussion during which you can hear from participants about their goals before sharing your desired outcomes.

Whether or not you have had an abortion or have participated in an abortion, be assured that you can bring to the Cross of Christ all of your pain and your sin, including abortion, and that God will be faithful to forgive and cleanse you (1 John 1:9). As you hear from others who share similar experiences, you will discover that ***you are not alone***. Allow the Lord to free you ***from*** the shackles of your past ***to*** the life of blessing He has planned for you.

Each of us has violated the sacredness of human life in some fashion, and each of us has *been* violated. Abortion, abuse (sexual, emotional, physical, etc.), and abandonment are among the ways that we may have wronged—or been wronged by—other people. Regardless of our offenses, or the wounds we carry from the wrongs of others, God stands ready to forgive, to heal, and to restore us to our rightful positions as His victorious children (John 1:9-13).

Accordingly, the goals for this training seminar are as follows:

1. **Abortion-wounded individuals** will encounter God’s mercy and grace, and experience healing and restoration from the wounds of abortion.
2. **Participants that have not experienced abortion** will receive healing and restoration from violations or losses they may have experienced in their lives.
3. **All participants** will be equipped to minister healing and restoration to *others* who have had abortions.

### Note for facilitator:

Because this training material is designed for mixed groups, men and women will often be encouraged to participate together. Cultural customs and personal preferences may lead to discomfort, but deep healing can be found *between* men and women when they hear directly and honestly from each other about their abortion experiences.

It is highly recommended that the group be closed to additional members once the seminar has begun, in order to protect the confidentiality and the trust that will be established throughout the sessions.

### Part 1

#### 1.0: Introduction

- 1.1: Worldview
- 1.2: The Abortion Decision
- 1.3: God’s Design

### Part 2

- 2.1: Establishing a Safe Place
- 2.2: Sharing Your Story
- 2.3: Forgiveness & Reconciliation
- 2.4: Grieving
- 2.5: Restoration
- 2.6: Walking in Freedom
- 2.7: Closing Ceremony

### Part 3

- 3.1: Next Steps



Part 1 | Session 1

# Worldview

*Recommended Session Time: 30 minutes*

## Session Objectives

*The participant will:*

- Identify the ways in which cultural practices reflect a predominant worldview, and describe how these practices align with, or differ from, the biblical worldview.
- Define “worldview” and contrast the biblical worldview to other common categories of worldview.
- Understand how worldview and decision-making are connected.

### Part 1

1.0: Introduction

**1.1: Worldview**

1.2: The Abortion Decision

1.3: God’s Design

### Part 2

2.1: Establishing a Safe Place

2.2: Sharing Your Story

2.3: Forgiveness & Reconciliation

2.4: Grieving

2.5: Restoration

2.6: Walking in Freedom

2.7: Closing Ceremony

### Part 3

3.1: Next Steps

## Exercise 1.1.1 (20 minutes)

1. Before the session has begun, prepare a blank, large-format, worldview chart using the included template (see Appendix B). Title this chart *Opposing Worldviews* and write the row headers included on the chart template: God, the World, Human Life, Right vs. Wrong, Strength vs. Weakness, and Abortion. (You can use whatever media is available to you, such as a whiteboard, PowerPoint slide, poster paper, etc.)
2. Working your way down the rows from the top of the chart, discuss with the group what **the Bible** says about each topic, then ask them what **their culture** says. It is recommended that you complete the full “biblical worldview” column from top to bottom, *before* completing the full “cultural worldview” column. For example, the first row header is “God.” Ask the group the included prompts (included below) for the topic *God*. “According to the biblical worldview, who is God?” Record the group’s answers in the corresponding spaces on the chart. Next, ask the group, “According to the biblical worldview, how did the world come into existence.” After completion of the biblical worldview column, move to the “cultural worldview” column and work your way down from the top. Begin with God: “According to the predominant worldview in your culture, who is God?” Record the group’s answers in the corresponding spaces on the chart. (Some biblical responses are included as guidance for the facilitator, who should let the audience share their own responses.)
3. Use the following prompts, if necessary, to begin a conversation about each topic:
  - God: *Who is God? What is his relationship to human beings?*
  - The World: *How did the world come into existence? What is man’s relationship to the natural world?*
  - Human Life: *How did human life originate? When does an individual human life start? What is the value of human life compared to other creatures? Which sex is more valuable: men or women?*
  - Right vs. Wrong: *How does one determine what is right and what is wrong?*
  - Strength vs. Weakness: *What makes one strong or weak? What is the ideal relationship between the strong and the weak?*
  - Abortion: *When is abortion permissible or not? What are the moral implications of abortion?*
4. Once the discussion has concluded and the chart is complete, the following questions can be used to draw some conclusions about the exercise:

- How do these different worldviews influence our decision-making?
- Can you think of an example of decision-making in this culture where believers struggle between biblical and cultural worldviews?

### What is a worldview?

A worldview is simply the framework from which we view reality and make sense of the world. We all have a worldview that is shaped by our culture, our heritage, our family, our socio-economic status, the environments in which we've lived, our life experiences, and other factors. How you view and experience the world *is* your worldview; you can't *not* have one.

### Why does worldview matter?

**Note for facilitator:** Instead of *telling* the participants why worldview matters, you can use this opportunity to simply ask them this question: "Why does worldview matter?" The preceding exercise should have equipped them to provide an adequate answer. Use the following paragraph to supplement the discussion if necessary.

Our worldview deeply influences how we see things, how we think, how we behave, and how we live. Most importantly, our worldview directly influences our decision-making. If you are a man, for example, who believes that men are inherently more valuable than women, this will influence your interactions with your wife, or the treatment of your children. If you are a woman, for example, who believes that your family's vast wealth gives your life greater value to society, this will influence how you treat the poor.

### The biblical worldview

Understanding how our worldviews are shaped, and recognizing how they guide our lives and our decision-making, will influence *all* of our interactions with other people, and will also influence our relationships with God. God has revealed himself to us through His Creation, through the Bible, and through Jesus Christ. This revelation serves as the foundation for what can be called the biblical worldview, which serves as the basis for how we live, the values we embrace, the thoughts we have, and the decisions we make.

As believers living in worldly cultures, we are constantly being influenced by both worldviews. Spiritual maturity is learning to recognize the difference and choosing the biblical worldview when the cultural worldview does not align with the Bible. The Gospel of Jesus—and the biblical worldview—*surpasses* the countless differences between, and even within, cultures. Imagine the Tower of Babel story in reverse: instead of humanity *being divided* into numerous cultures and languages, humanity is *united* into one culture, with one language, serving one Lord: Jesus Christ.



Part 1 | Session 2

# The Abortion Decision

*Recommended Session Time: 2 hours*

## Session Objectives

*The participant will:*

- Discuss the topic of abortion in a non-threatening environment.
- Describe his or her culture's practice of abortion.
- Recognize the opportunity for relationship-building among the group.
- Identify the spiritual, emotional, and relational consequences of an abortion decision upon a man or woman's identity.

### Part 1

1.0: Introduction

1.1: Worldview

**1.2: The Abortion Decision**

1.3: God's Design

### Part 2

2.1: Establishing a Safe Place

2.2: Sharing Your Story

2.3: Forgiveness & Reconciliation

2.4: Grieving

2.5: Restoration

2.6: Walking in Freedom

2.7: Closing Ceremony

### Part 3

3.1: Next Steps

## Abortion in the nations

Every year, at least 46 million lives are lost to abortion around the world. The effects of abortion reach far and wide into our lives, our families, our churches, our communities, and our nations. In addition to physical consequences, abortion often leads to spiritual, emotional, and relational effects in a person's life.

Beyond the catastrophic loss of preborn lives, mothers, fathers, and entire families are being devastated by abortion. But the good news is that God desires to redeem all those whose hearts and lives have been impacted by abortion, whether they have *had* an abortion or *have participated* in one.

### Exercise 1.2.1

1. Divide participants into four groups: two groups of women only (**Women 1** and **Women 2**), and two groups of men only (**Men 1** and **Men 2**). Give each group a sheet of poster paper. A spokesperson should be chosen from each group.
2. Ask **Women 1** and **Men 1** to each write a story of a **woman** who experienced an unwanted pregnancy and chose to have an abortion.
3. Ask **Women 2** and **Men 2** to each write a story of a **man** who fathered an unwanted child and pressured the mother to have an abortion.
4. For each group, include in the story enough information to answer the following questions:
  - *What are the circumstances of the man and woman in each situation?* Examples: Are they married or single? What is their financial and social situation? What is their level of education and family relationships?
  - *What circumstances led to the decision to choose abortion over giving birth?* Examples: Was the mother abandoned by the father of the baby? Did the father or his family pressure her to have an abortion?
  - *What impact did the abortion decision have on the individual's relationships with other people?* Example: Did the individual remain social or withdraw from friends and family?
  - *What impact did the abortion decision have on the individual's relationship with God?* Example: Did it bring him/her closer to Christ or push them away from God?

- *What effect did the abortion decision have on the individual's future decisions about children and family?* Example: Did the desire to have children increase or has it made him/her more apathetic about having a family?
5. Give groups 20 minutes to write their stories. At the 10-minute mark direct them to begin writing story **highlights** down on the poster paper to share with the full group. (Make sure that they do not attempt to transcribe the full story.)
  6. After the groups have written their stories, reconvene the full group. A spokesperson from each small group can be invited to share their group's story with the full group. After all the individual groups have presented, the entire group will be invited to discuss their answers to the following questions:
    - What similarities did you observe between the women's stories and the men's stories? Differences?
    - Why did the individuals choose abortion?
    - Did their Christian beliefs make a difference in their decision? Why or why not?
    - Who were they *not* considering in this abortion decision?

**Note for facilitator:**

This exercise should take about one hour: 20 minutes for writing stories, 20 minutes for sharing, and 20 minutes for discussion.

1. Form the groups with the help of the host who will give input on the criteria to organize the participants according to regions, ministries, or affinity relationships. It is important that the participants are grouped in a manner that maximizes their comfort and trust in speaking openly within their groups.
2. When the groups present their stories, listen for traditions or practices that violate the biblical worldview. You will want to make note of these examples in order to reference them at later points in the training. For example, when the group is later discussing the God's design for life, you could say to participants: "Remember when you shared how abortion is not consistent with the biblical worldview?"

**Exercise 1.2.2**

1. Participants can be invited to discuss their answers to the following questions:
  - From what you have observed or heard from friends or family who have participated in an abortion, tell us what you know about how they feel about themselves.
  - How do you think abortion might affect a person's relationship with his or her *living* children?
  - What effects might you see in a person's life due to unresolved anger after an abortion decision?
  - How do you think a person would act in order to compensate—or "make up for"—their abortion decision?

**Note for facilitator:** Exercise 1.2.2 is an opportunity for participants to discover for themselves how abortion impacts lives and relationships. The following paragraphs can be helpful for enhancing the conversation, and can easily be incorporated into the discussion that naturally occurs when you ask the questions in the exercise.

### **The effects of abortion**

Abortion has deeply impacted our communities and our churches, and few people remain untouched by its effects. In addition to the aborted child, who has lost his or her life, mothers and fathers are always the most immediate victims of abortion, even at the times when the effects remain unfelt by the individual, or when individuals are unable to recognize their loss. But the ripple effects of abortion quickly spread past the parents to grandparents, siblings, extended family, communities, and even nations.

In the decision to abort, the mother and father demonstrate a lack of trust in the sovereignty of God and His decision to give life to an individual in the womb. Their actions also convey that they do not trust His capacity for goodness toward all, provision for their needs, and protection for their child.

There is hope, however, for the man and woman who have had an abortion, and it is a hope greater than the deepest guilt or shame that a person can face. God knows all about that person's abortion decision: the circumstances, the details, and the pain. He plans to take the very thing that Satan intended for evil and use it for good. And although restoration is a process that will take time, God promises forgiveness, healing, and renewal for those who have been wounded by abortion and reach out to Him for redemption.



Part 1 | Session 3

# God's Design for His Creation

*Recommended Session Time: 1 hour*

## Session Objectives

*The participant will:*

- Summarize the biblical foundation, as well as the implications, of men and women being made in the image of God.
- Review what the Bible teaches about God's original plan for men, women, children, and families.
- Understand, in a deeper way, the impact abortion has on our identities, and the need for healing and restoration.

## The war over human life

According to the Bible, God made men and women in His image (Genesis 1:27). This truth is what makes abortion such a grave offense: because it results in the destruction of an image-bearer of God. Man and woman were created equal in value but were given different roles to fulfill by His intended design.

God has made each of us with a purpose (Psalm 100:3, Psalm 139:13–16a), and He has a plan for our lives that begins at conception. That purpose and plan uniquely aligns with the male and female identities that were created by God and were assigned to each of us at the first moment of our existence (Jeremiah 1:4–5).

All human life is of equal worth and immeasurable value, from conception to natural death. God has given each of us a unique destiny to fulfill as part of the body of Christ. Our enemy, however, also has a plan for our lives. Where God purposes to bring life, Satan's sole purpose is to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10).

This is the unseen battle being waged around us, according to Ephesians 6:12. In the Bible we can discover some of the characteristics and roles that were given to men and women that enable us to reflect His image and likeness as believers here on Earth.

## Exercise 1.3.1

1. Divide participants into groups of 3-4 participants (men and women can be together in these groups).
2. Assign each group 2-3 of the following Scripture passages (and it's okay if multiple groups review the same passages). Groups should be given about 20 minutes to make a list of all of the **characteristics of God** and **roles of men and women** that they can discover in their assigned passages.
  - "Then God said, 'Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground...'" (Genesis 1:26).
  - "...So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27).
  - "God blessed them and said to them 'Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it;

### Part 1

- 1.0: Introduction
- 1.1: Worldview
- 1.2: The Abortion Decision

### 1.3: God's Design for His Creation

### Part 2

- 2.1: Establishing a Safe Place
- 2.2: Sharing Your Story
- 2.3: Forgiveness & Reconciliation
- 2.4: Grieving
- 2.5: Restoration
- 2.6: Walking in Freedom
- 2.7: Closing Ceremony

### Part 3

- 3.1: Next Steps

have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth...” (Genesis 1:28).

- “The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it” (Genesis 2:15).
  - “The Lord God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him...’ Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man” (Genesis 2:18, 22).
  - “That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh. Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame” (Genesis 2:24-25).
  - “Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living”... “Adam made love to his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, ‘With the help of the Lord I have brought forth a man’” (Genesis 3:20, 4:1).
  - “Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are children born in one’s youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them” (Psalm 127:3-5a).
  - “For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well” (Psalm 139:13-14).
  - “See that you do not despise one of these little ones” (Matthew 18:10a).
  - “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full” (John 10:10).
3. Participants can now be gathered together into the full group to review small-group responses. The full group can then be invited to discuss the following questions:
- What unique roles for women and men do you see that may be denied or deeply damaged when an abortion decision is made?
  - In what ways is abortion part of the plan of the enemy to “steal and kill and destroy”?
  - If you know a person that has had an abortion, have you noticed any changes in his/her personality after the abortion? If so, what are those changes? Are they contrary to God’s design for them?
  - Do you think that what has been lost or stolen can be restored?

### **Abortion is a weapon of the enemy**

Scripture teaches us that we were created in the image and likeness of God. In addition, God gave men and women the ability and blessing to bring forth life, joining Him in the creation of children who bear the image of God. Satan’s goal is to attack God and destroy His image in the earth by killing these image-bearers. Abortion is one of his most effective weapons.

Abortion not only ends the life of a child, but it also corrupts God’s design for women to nurture life from the womb and to “mother” her children. For men, their God-given roles as protectors and providers of life are rejected when they participate in abortion. The enemy steals our identities and uses the weapons of guilt, fear, and shame to defeat us and hinder our relationship with God and other people. Consequently, we are hindered in pursuit of our calling and purpose as God’s image-bearers and witnesses here on Earth.

Through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, and by believing in Him and His redemptive plan

for humanity, we can be reconciled and our identities restored as children of God so that we can more fully live out the roles for which He created us.





Part 2 | Session 1

## Establishing a Safe Place

*Recommended Session Time: 30-45 minutes*

### Session Objectives

*The participant will:*

- Discuss the ways in which the Church of Jesus Christ can provide a safe environment for people to share with each other about personal matters.
- List characteristics and parameters of a safe place to share openly.
- Understand how he/she can become a safe individual for others, as an expression of Christian community that is strong, loving, and caring.

#### Part 1

- 1.0: Introduction
- 1.1: Worldview
- 1.2: The Abortion Decision
- 1.3: God's Design

#### Part 2

- 2.1: Establishing a Safe Place**
- 2.2: Sharing Your Story
- 2.3: Forgiveness & Reconciliation
- 2.4: Grieving
- 2.5: Restoration
- 2.6: Walking in Freedom
- 2.7: Closing Ceremony

#### Part 3

- 3.1: Next Steps

### Finding trust and confidentiality

As we talk about the effects of abortion in our personal lives, as well as in the lives of those whom we serve, it is important that the participants know the facilitators are trusted individuals and that they are in a confidential environment. So when we talk about a “safe place,” we are not only talking about a physical *place*, but also about being a safe *person*. Some participants have held their abortion experiences in secret for many years and, due to feelings of shame, have never told anyone about these events.

Every human knows the pain of loss, even if that loss takes a different form than abortion. People with particular experiences (such as abortion) are often naturally able to relate more easily to those with similar experiences. But even those who have not experienced a particular event can still offer compassion, understanding, and empathy to others. You need not have walked the exact same path as another person in order to be used by God as a vessel to minister His healing, restoration, and freedom.

### Exercise 1.4.1

1. The facilitator can invite the full group to discuss their answers to the following questions:

*Has there been a time when you felt vulnerable, afraid, insecure, or at risk just by being with someone or being in a certain place?*

- Briefly describe the situation.
- What made you feel afraid, at risk, or vulnerable?
- How would you describe an unsafe environment?

*Take a minute and think of a time in your life when felt completely **safe**. For example, think of a time when you felt comfortable and relaxed, and where you could act and speak without any reservations.*

- What does it feel like to be in a “safe” place?
- What made it safe for you?
- How would you describe a place that is safe?

- How would you describe a person who makes you feel safe?
- How can a safe place be established?

2. The group should be allowed about 15 minutes for discussion of their answers.

**Note for Facilitator:**

If participants are hesitant to speak, you can prompt a conversation with an example, such as: “One time I was facing a very difficult situation and went to talk with my best friend. In trying to help me, instead of listening to me she began to give me solutions. I felt she was trying to fix me.” This will demonstrate that they can safely share **personal** experiences without sharing **private** details.

**What is a safe place?**

We understand then that a “safe place” is an environment where people can:

- Experience an environment that is trusted and peaceful,
- Share honestly and authentically,
- Be vulnerable without fear of judgment or criticism,
- Be assured of complete confidentiality, and
- Find a safe place to trust others with their difficulties when they understand that “safety” is not found in a **location**, but in a **person**.

*It is crucial for individuals to not only **feel** safe to share about their abortions, but to **be** safe.*

One must demonstrate himself or herself to be completely trustworthy, above reproach, in order to contribute to an atmosphere of honor toward each other, where people will be safe to share openly about the pain and shame they may be carrying from their past decisions or circumstances.

**Confidentiality** is an essential component of any safe and trustworthy environment. A loving response when entrusted with a secret is to “cover” it by keeping the secret. Gossip is a violation of trust and will lead to broken relationships. “He who covers a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates intimate friends” (Proverbs 17:9).

The loving response to being entrusted with deeply personal information of any nature, including past abortion experiences, is confidentiality, protection, and lack of judgment. The “safe place” must be more than just theoretical; it must be *real* and it must be *practiced*. This training will be an ideal opportunity for participants to learn (or relearn) the value of confidentiality, then immediately put it into practice.

**Note for Facilitator:**

At this point in the training, it will be appropriate to ask the participants a direct question: “Can we all agree to make a pledge of confidentiality for all that is shared here?” This may be the first time of openly sharing their abortion stories. It is critical that participants are assured of being in a safe place with people who are completely committed to confidentiality.

Part 2 | Session 2

## Sharing Your Story

*Recommended Session Time: 2 hours*

### Session Objectives

*The participant will:*

- Observe transparency and authenticity being modeled as an individual shares about his or her abortion decision and the resulting loss.
- Share about his or her abortion decision (or other trauma resulting from a violation of the sacredness of human life) to begin the healing journey in a protected small-group setting.

### Exercise 2.1.1

1. The facilitator can invite the full group to discuss the following Scriptures and answer the included questions. The facilitator should record (or have someone else record) the group's responses.
  - Do you believe that it is important to share your story? Why? Why not?
  - What results would you like to see upon sharing your story?

- *"He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them, finds mercy" (Proverbs 28:13).*

**Possible responses include:** By choosing to bring into the light your hidden secrets you live in the light of truth, and Satan's influence will be diminished. Telling your story is like breaking up the soil so that seeds of life can take root and healing can grow again.

- *"Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed..." (James 5:16a).*

**Possible responses include:** When you bring other people into your story, it validates your experiences and will often demonstrate that you are not as alone as you have felt. Confession not only brings forgiveness, it releases healing.

- *"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:7, 9).*

**Possible responses include:** Because walking in the light leads to forgiveness by God, increased intimacy with Him will also result from this lifestyle. Increased intimacy with God and fellowship with other believers will serve as a foundation for authentic and transparent Christian community: the safest place.

### Walking in the light

1 John 1:7 teaches us that when we choose to walk in the darkness of sin, we remain in bondage and slavery to our old nature, and we are prone to the influence of our enemy who continuously attacks and accuses us of our sin and failures. We must, therefore, bring hidden things to light. 1 John 1:7 tells us that *"if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin."* And, we must be obedient to *"confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed"* (James

#### Part 1

- 1.0: Introduction
- 1.1: Worldview
- 1.2: The Abortion Decision
- 1.3: God's Design

#### Part 2

- 2.1: Establishing a Safe Place
- 2.2: Sharing Your Story**
- 2.3: Forgiveness & Reconciliation
- 2.4: Grieving
- 2.5: Restoration
- 2.6: Walking in Freedom
- 2.7: Closing Ceremony

#### Part 3

- 3.1: Next Steps

5:16).

These two verses portray the double effect of transparency in our lives. When we confess our sins, we establish a healthy *vertical* relationship with God. And when we confess to one another we establish a healthy *horizontal* relationship with our brothers and sisters where healing can take place. This step of faith brings forgiveness from sin and healing from deep wounds caused by our sin. It also builds a strong Christian community that is bound by God's love.

When you take the courageous step to tell your story, you open yourself up to the opportunity for your hurt and deep pain to be validated by someone who understands; also, you are able to look at your wounded heart and allow God to heal you. By telling your story you break the silence where Satan has kept you captive in shame and guilt. You regain your voice and the Lord is able to use your story as a witness and a testimony to give hope to others!

### Exercise 2.1.2

1. At this time the lead facilitator(s) can share their own experience of being involved in an abortion. If they have not had an abortion (or participated in one), they can share another significant loss or violation from their past. (It is important, however, for the facilitator to share an abortion story if that is also part of their experience.) They should keep the sharing time to 15 minutes, and in the same format that the participants will be asked to share as an example for them to follow. *Note: As the facilitator models transparency and vulnerability by sharing his or her abortion experience, participants will hopefully find the courage they need to share more openly when they are soon asked to tell their own stories in a small-group setting.*
2. Upon the telling of his or her story, the facilitator should create a "safe place" for honest and authentic sharing by reminding participants of the expectation of strict confidentiality.
3. Divide large group into small groups (4-6 people each) of men only and women only.
4. The participants can be invited to take 15-20 minutes each to share their abortion story with their small group. While those who have had an abortion (or have participated with abortion) should share about their abortion experience, some participants may not have ever had an abortion. They can be encouraged to share a personal story about an experience of loss such as abuse (sexual, physical, emotional), abandonment, death of a loved one, miscarriage, etc.
5. The facilitator should encourage the participants to "say the hard thing first." When we directly declare our offense—"I had an abortion," for example—that act of confession reveals our hidden sin to the light of Christ and sets us on the path toward the healing we are promised.
6. The participants are encouraged to consider the following questions when sharing their stories:
  - What were the circumstances in your life when you made your decision to abort?
  - What was the primary influence in your abortion decision?
  - What memories do you have about your abortion(s)?
  - How did your life change after your abortion(s)?
  - What are the areas where you know (or suspect) that you still need healing from God?
  - What would complete freedom mean for you?
7. **Important note:** The participants should be instructed not to pray or minister to one

another. This is a time to share your experience; there will be opportunity for prayer ministry at a later time.

8. Upon conclusion of the sharing time, during which every participant has been given the opportunity to tell his or her own personal story within his or her small group, the full group should be reassembled for closing comments and a prayer of blessing by the facilitator.

### **Offering the gift of safety to others**

It can feel very risky—and frightening—to share deeply personal and painful experiences with other people, especially for the first time! It is important to always maintain the utmost confidentiality in order to protect the private information of our brothers and sisters; you do not have permission to share any of these personal stories with anyone else!

As you begin to “walk in the light” you will find healing and restoration of your honor by God and freedom from your past experiences (including participation in abortion), you may also find restoration in your relationships with others. As you experience this “safe place” through a trustworthy and non-judgmental response, you also can offer that gift of safety to others through honoring their stories with compassion, confidentiality, and dignity. This moment of vulnerability and transparency can be an opportunity for you to participate with Father God as their shame is released and their honor is restored.



## Forgiveness and Reconciliation

*Recommended Session Time: 90 minutes*

### Session Objectives

*The participant will:*

- Recognize that Jesus Christ's death and resurrection is the *only place* for anyone to find forgiveness and redemption.
- Take time to identify the person(s) that he/she has sinned against, identify those who have sinned against him or her, and offer the opportunity to extend forgiveness. Identify areas where the participant has not yet accepted God's forgiveness in his/her own life.
- Receive God's forgiveness for the sin of abortion (along with other violations of the sacredness of human life), and experience restoration of one's honor and inheritance in the relationship with our Heavenly Father.

#### Part 1

- 1.0: Introduction
- 1.1: Worldview
- 1.2: The Abortion Decision
- 1.3: God's Design

#### Part 2

- 2.1: Establishing a Safe Place
- 2.2: Sharing Your Story
- 2.3: Forgiveness & Reconciliation**
- 2.4: Grieving
- 2.5: Restoration
- 2.6: Walking in Freedom
- 2.7: Closing Ceremony

#### Part 3

- 3.1: Next Steps

### Exercise 2.3.1

1. The facilitator can ask for a volunteer to read aloud Luke 8:40-56.
2. The participants can be encouraged to consider the following questions after hearing this passage:
  - What was the posture and attitude of Jairus, the synagogue leader?
  - What was the posture and attitude of the afflicted woman?
  - What can we assume about these two individuals who made their way through the crowd in order to experience Jesus' healing?
  - What does Jesus' response to these two individuals confirm about their postures and their attitudes?
  - What lessons can we learn from these two individuals about how we can approach Jesus for healing and restoration?
3. The participants will be given 5-10 minutes for solitary prayer and reflection. Encourage them to meditate on the areas of their lives in which they need the Lord's healing touch.

### Jesus' healing touch

In Luke 8 we see two individuals who came to Jesus in a condition of absolute desperation. The 12-year-old daughter of Jairus, a synagogue leader, was ill to the point of death, and an unnamed woman had suffered from a hemorrhaging disorder for 12 years. Both of them "fell at Jesus' feet" not only in desperation of their conditions, but with deep faith that Jesus, and only Jesus, could provide complete healing.

The passage says that the street was so crowded that the mass of people almost "crushed" Jesus as he was walking with His disciples. It was in this crowd that Jairus and the woman risked much to seek Jesus' healing touch. One experienced profound personal healing of a deep affliction, and when the other sought healing for his daughter, he found **resurrection from the dead!** If Jesus has the power to raise the dead to life, what experience, circumstance, choice, or sin of our own can He **not** redeem? He can, and will, bring new life to *any* person in *any* circumstances.



Scripture tells of many other people whose afflictions were healed and whose sins (sometimes explicitly scandalous and grave) were forgiven. Each of us is a sinner in need of salvation, and Jesus has the power to restore honor and bring life where there is death. Come to Jesus with your sin—your abortion, your unbelief, your lies, your anger, your pride—and He will forgive you! **Ask** Him to reveal to you, even now, the places in your heart that you have not allowed Him to touch before. **Invite** Him to shine His light into your life in order to completely remove the darkness. **Trust** Him to hold you close while He removes the cancer of sin. He loves you and will do as He has promised!

### Receiving God's forgiveness

Isaiah 53:5b says: “the punishment that brought us peace was on [Jesus], and by his wounds we are healed.” The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ was sufficient to heal all of us because God laid on Jesus “the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:6b). Forgiveness involves the cancelation of a debt that we cannot pay, and we only need to accept that Christ paid the full debt when He laid down His life on the Cross. Confession and repentance, then, are the first—and only—steps to receiving God's forgiveness. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

### Exercise 2.3.2

1. The facilitator can ask for a volunteer to read Isaiah 53:2-12 aloud.
2. The participants can be encouraged to consider the following questions after hearing this passage:
  - According to this passage, what is Jesus' appearance?
  - People often wonder if anyone can understand how they feel. What can we know from this passage about Jesus' ability to relate to our suffering?
  - Describe in your own words what you think it must have *felt* like for Jesus to suffer in the way that the passage describes?
  - What is made available to every believer because of Jesus' death and resurrection and His triumph over sin on the Cross?
  - Even in the face of intense oppression and suffering, Jesus did not open His mouth in objection to unjust treatment. What application can we make from this in our own relationships and experiences?
  - Describe the ways in which Jesus experienced disgrace and humiliation. How does this assure us that He knows how we feel during our own times of disgrace and humiliation?
  - In what ways have you tried to make yourself, or others, pay a debt that only Jesus can pay?

### The difference between guilt and shame

Guilt is an objective state in which a law has been violated. One is either **guilty** or **not guilty**, regardless of how he or she may *feel* about the matter. Shame, on the other hand, is a *feeling* of distress often caused by the consciousness of wrong or foolish behavior. A common paradox is that a person may not *feel* guilty when, in fact, they *are* guilty. Conversely, a person who is **not guilty**—because he or she has been forgiven of objective guilt—may continue to *feel* guilty.

In the case of sin, shame is an appropriate response to being confronted with our wrongdoing. The shame of our sin should drive us to the Cross of Christ, where both the shame and its

cause—our guilt—can be removed. Once our forgiveness is granted, the guilt is gone, and the shame no longer serves its sanctifying purpose of leading us to the Cross.

If shame lingers after forgiveness, it often becomes a form of bondage. While God may “forgive and forget,” we often remember, which can become a source of perpetual shame even to ourselves, let alone when our memories of wrongdoing are wielded as a weapon by “the thief” who only wants to destroy us. Jesus’ work on the Cross paid the full penalty of your sin (guilt) and it erased the pain and humiliation (shame). This is the once-and-for-all victory we can claim when our enemy accuses us in areas for which we have already been forgiven!

### **Offering forgiveness to others**

Colossians 3:13 instructs us to “bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.” We have a tendency to view forgiveness as a *gift* to the one who offended us, as a benefit to that person. For this reason, we are hesitant to forgive. Forgiveness, however, is a gift to *ourselves*—it sets us free from bitterness and resentment in our own lives. Forgiveness severs the root of bitterness and releases a lifestyle of gratitude to the One who has forgiven us. Also, forgiveness is not an option; it’s a command. We must be obedient to offer to others the same grace that God has offered to us through the forgiveness of our own offenses against others and against Him!

### **Exercise 2.3.3**

*Note: Due to the sensitive nature of this exercise, it is best facilitated by the local host, who will be able to offer security and cultural sensitivity that will increase the impact of the exercise.*

1. The facilitator can read Colossians 2:14, then ask the following questions of the participants. “[Jesus,] having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross” (NASB).
  - Do you believe that the sacrifice of Christ on the cross was the complete payment of our debt? Was any part of our debt left unpaid?
  - If so, how is the freedom that He purchased for us manifested in your life?
2. Each participant can be given the *Certificate of Debt* (see Appendix C) to complete individually and privately. Participants should be given 15-20 minutes to complete the handout. (Reminder: The responses that participants write on this handout will not be shared with anyone else.) *Note: The handout formatting should not be changed, because it’s intended for the participants’ personal use. Leave the back side of the handout blank.*
3. Upon completion of the handout, participants can be gathered to read aloud, in unison, the following prayers of repentance and release.
  - **For the sin of abortion**  
Dear God, I repent and ask for forgiveness for my abortion(s). I receive your gift of complete forgiveness for this sin. I acknowledge that apart from the full atonement of Jesus’ death and resurrection, I could never repay the great debt I owe for the sin of abortion. I therefore renounce all forms of self-atonement and proclaim my agreement with you that Jesus has paid this debt for me and has declared it “paid in full!”
  - **For sins against others**  
Dear God, I repent and ask for forgiveness for my sins against others. [People’s names and the specific offenses should be listed on the participants’ *Certificate of Debt*, but not spoken aloud at this time.] I receive your gift of complete forgiveness for my sins against others. I proclaim my agreement with You that Jesus has paid this

debt for me and has declared it “paid in full!”

- **For sins against myself**

Dear God, I repent and ask forgiveness for the sins and judgments I hold against myself. [Specific offenses should be listed on the participants’ *Certificate of Debt*, but not spoken aloud at this time.] I acknowledge that these are not pleasing to You. I renounce all forms of self-hatred and self-punishment. I receive your gift of complete forgiveness for the judgments I hold against myself. I proclaim my agreement with You that Jesus has paid this debt for me and has declared it “paid in full!”

- **For those who have sinned against me**

Dear God, I bring before you those who have sinned against me. [People’s names and the specific offenses should be listed on the participants’ *Certificate of Debt*, but not spoken aloud at this time.] I accept and receive the payment Jesus has made for their sins against me. I hereby forgive them and release them from the debt they owe me, and I renounce my unforgiveness toward them. I ask you to bless them according to your grace and mercy. I proclaim my agreement with You that Jesus has paid this debt for them and has declared it “paid in full!”

- **Renouncing demonic influence**

Dear God, In the name of Jesus Christ, I repent of and renounce any alignments or agreements with Satan or with any evil spirits of murder, violence, death, false religion, or witchcraft as a result of my abortion(s), which is the shedding of innocent blood. I command any evil spirit who has gained access to my life—my body, my mind, and my soul—to leave. I choose life and truth, and I place my faith in the full atonement of Jesus Christ’s death and resurrection. I proclaim my agreement with You that Jesus has paid this debt for me and has declared it “paid in full!”

- **Removing guilt and shame**

Dear God, I accept that the blood of Jesus has removed my guilt. The power of the enemy to wield shame against me is now broken, and I renounce his attempts to accuse me for any of my sins. I renounce all spirits of shame, guilt, and accusation. In the name of Jesus Christ, I command you to leave. I ask you, God, to heal me and restore my created identity through the atonement of Jesus’ death and resurrection.

- **Closing**

Thank you, God! Nothing I can do or have ever done could ever accomplish what Jesus Christ accomplished on my behalf through His death and resurrection. I receive this great gift and proclaim my agreement with You that Jesus has paid *all of my debts* and has declared them “paid in full!” Amen!

4. Participants can be invited to write “PAID IN FULL” (in red ink) across their *Certificate of Debt*.
5. Participants can be invited to keep the certificates as a reminder of God’s forgiveness, or they can destroy them as a symbol of the cancelation of their debt. The certificates can be burned or, perhaps, shredded and placed in a basin of water to symbolize the washing away of sin. The decision about what to do with the certificates should be left to each participant.

## Grieving

*Recommended Session Time: 2 hours*

### Session Objectives

*The participant will:*

- Describe the cultural grieving process when a family member or community member dies, and discuss the difference in the grieving process when a child has been aborted.
- Acknowledge the inherent value, existence, and personhood of the preborn child, as one made in the image of God.
- Recognize that in abortion, the life that was lost was *their* child.
- Make available an experience during which each participant will be encouraged to acknowledge and grieve the loss of a child (or children) through abortion; or grieve loss from abuse, abandonment, or other violations they may have experienced.
- Offer a prayer to release the aborted children to God's loving care.

#### Part 1

- 1.0: Introduction
- 1.1: Worldview
- 1.2: The Abortion Decision
- 1.3: God's Design

#### Part 2

- 2.1: Establishing a Safe Place
- 2.2: Sharing Your Story
- 2.3: Forgiveness & Reconciliation
- 2.4: Grieving**
- 2.5: Restoration
- 2.6: Walking in Freedom
- 2.7: Closing Ceremony

#### Part 3

- 3.1: Next Steps

### Exercise 2.3.1

1. Participants can be invited to discuss their answers to the following questions:
  - How do people grieve the loss of a loved one in your culture?
  - Does the grieving process differ with the age (baby, teenager, adult, elder, etc.) or role of the person (mother, father, child, grandparent, etc.)? If so, how?
  - What is a typical response in your culture when a woman miscarries? What about when she has an abortion?
  - Should there be a difference between how people grieve the loss of a **preborn** person and a **born** person?

### Abortion: a private grief

In many cultures, the public response to the loss of a preborn child through miscarriage is quite different from the way people react when a *born* person, of any age, dies. Even at the times when parents share about this loss with their loved ones (versus bearing their grief privately), the responses often demonstrate a worldview in which the preborn child is less valuable than a born child or older person. In the case of an abortion, which is usually kept secret by the mother and father, the grief of losing a child is amplified and compounded by a deep shame over the intentional nature of the act. Mothers and fathers are usually not free to grieve openly over this painful loss.

Abortion decisions are often kept private. For married people, the abortion decision may not be openly acknowledged in order to protect reputations and maintain confidentiality. Unmarried people may keep an abortion decision hidden to conceal the sin that led to the pregnancy, erase the evidence, and return to a "normal life" as quickly as possible. Abortion is therefore often chosen as a way to return to a point in time before the woman became pregnant, **but that's not possible**. Even if the preborn child's life is brought to an end, the child **did live** (for however brief a time), and the loss of that child's life is real.

If an abortion is seen only as the solution to a “problem,” or the fixing of a “mistake,” the humanity of the preborn child who lost his life will have been denied. It is when we acknowledge the truth that abortion ends a unique human life that we can grieve, be forgiven, and begin the path to healing. At the same time, your ability to grieve the loss of your baby in a redemptive way requires the assurance that you have been forgiven and reconciled with God in this matter. Only then can you grieve without guilt and shame. Only then can you allow your mother’s heart or your father’s heart to express the desires that a mother or father would want, such as “What would it have been like to hold you, comfort you, speak to you, play with you? Were you a boy or a girl? What would you have looked like?” This path can be challenging, but it is straight and it is true, and its destination is the one place where true and lasting restoration can be found: the Cross of Jesus Christ!

### **What happens to deceased children?**

Scripture suggests that when young children die, they go to heaven. After the child of King David became ill and died, he said of the deceased child, “I will go to him, but he will not return to me” (2 Samuel 12:23). Ecclesiastes 12:7 says that “the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.” During His recorded life, Jesus spoke often about His love for children and His unwavering commitment to their good. We can rest in the comfort that God is righteous, loving, and just, and that His plan and intentions for deceased children are the same.

### **Exercise 2.3.2**

*Note: This exercise will require advance planning. Prior to the retreat the facilitator should discuss with the host what culturally appropriate symbol of a child’s life can be used as an expression of grief from a loss of that life. One or more of these expressions can be prepared ahead of time, to be experienced by the group during this exercise. These expressions may include an object that represents their child, for example: a ribbon with a “precious hands/feet” pin, a pair of child’s shoes, a blanket, a small stuffed animal, etc. Also, the rite of placing flowers at a cross could be used, with the flower representing the child. Other appropriate expressions of grief can be substituted. For the purpose of explaining this activity we are going to use flowers.*

1. The facilitator can prepare necessary articles for exercise, including cut or artificial flowers, and a cross. The cross can be erected in the front or center of the room, and chairs should be arranged to allow unobstructed access. The flowers can be laid on a nearby table. *Note: These articles should simply be gathered from what is readily available or already on hand. Example: flowers can be cut from the property or purchased from a local vendor. The cross can be as simple as two sticks tied together.*
2. The participants can be invited to select a flower, and bring it to the cross. This is meant to be a quiet and reflective moment. Peaceful worship music can be played in the background at a low volume, when culturally appropriate.
3. The facilitator should allow as much time as the participants need to respond. Once most participants have placed their flowers, the facilitator can offer a few more minutes, before bringing the activity to a close.
4. This exercise can be concluded with thoughtfully selected songs of thanksgiving or celebration.
5. The host or facilitator can lead the following prayer with all the participants praying together:

*Dear Heavenly Father, Thank you for bringing me to this place of healing and closure. I*

*acknowledge that because of the shed blood of Jesus Christ I have received your forgiveness and cleansing from all my guilt and shame. I have also received the ministry of reconciliation that has reconciled me first to You and then also to my child(ren). Therefore, I now have the peace and the joy to fully release my child(ren) back to You, into your loving arms. And now Lord, I receive your grace to fully walk out the calling and destiny on my life. In Jesus name, Amen!*

**Important Note:** Participants should be given time and opportunity to memorialize this experience at its conclusion. They may choose to take a photograph, but this should be done at individual participants' discretion, with a commitment to confidentiality.



Part 2 | Session 5  
**Restoration**

*Recommended Session Time: 1 hour*

**Session Objectives**

*The participant will:*

- Identify the spiritual, emotional, and relational consequences of an abortion decision upon a man or woman's identity.
- Reaffirm his or her God-given identity as mother or father.
- Participate in a ceremony that symbolically restores those areas of fatherhood and motherhood that have been damaged by abortion.

**Restoration after abortion**

The knowledge of restoration after an abortion is a critical message that must be offered to those who have aborted their children. Abortion is not the end of the story. In fact it can make a way for a new beginning! Genuine and lasting healing from sin, including abortion, is possible. "The Lord is compassionate and gracious; slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him" (Psalm 103:8–11).

In order to receive healing from the sin of abortion, we must turn to God for His help. Abortion is first a sin against God before it is a sin against ourselves or others, including the preborn child whose life is ended. Those who were involved in an abortion decision must renounce their prior agreement with the enemy, who persuaded them that abortion was the only solution for the challenges presented by an unwanted child. *The mother and father must choose to believe in God's truth and align themselves with it.*

Abortion also leads to profound harm to a person's God-given identity. For a woman, she has violated her God-given role as a mother to bring forth life, and to protect and nurture her child. Her failure to fulfill this role also damages her trust in herself, and may cause her to question her worthiness to ever mother a child. For a man, abortion is a betrayal of his innermost self. By participating in an abortion, a man's choice to neglect the role of protector and provider impairs his trust in himself. Lack of trust then, for both the woman and the man, undermines every relationship (including a person's relationship with God) and it often leads to great relational damage.

**The mantles of father and mother**

Symbols have been used in most cultures throughout all of human history. Crowns are used as a symbol of leadership. Jewelry is used to symbolize marriage and partnership. Circles are often used to symbolize eternity. A cross symbolizes Christ's death and resurrection.

The meaning of a symbol resides in the connection to its object. A gold-plated hat doesn't mean anything without the foundation of a monarchy. A gold ring in itself may have some monetary value, but its true richness comes from the meaning of the marriage covenant it signifies. With

**Part 1**

- 1.0: Introduction
- 1.1: Worldview
- 1.2: The Abortion Decision
- 1.3: God's Design

**Part 2**

- 2.1: Establishing a Safe Place
- 2.2: Sharing Your Story
- 2.3: Forgiveness & Reconciliation
- 2.4: Grieving
- 2.5: Restoration**
- 2.6: Walking in Freedom
- 2.7: Closing Ceremony

**Part 3**

- 3.1: Next Steps



most symbols of leadership and authority comes a high degree of honor.

Another common cultural symbol is that of the mantle (or cloak). The mantle has come to symbolize authority in many cultures. Many historical kings and queens wore mantles as symbols of their authority, along with crowns and scepters. In 2 Kings 2:11–15 we read about the cloak/mantle of Elijah being used to symbolize *spiritual* authority. When Elijah is taken up into heaven, Elisha tears his own garment and picks up Elijah’s fallen cloak and uses it to perform a miracle, which leads observers to conclude, “the spirit of Elijah is resting on Elisha.”

In Genesis 1:28 we read, “God blessed [Adam and Eve] and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number.’” It could be said that along with God’s blessing came a mantle of *parental* authority for these first parents, and all parents to follow. The mantle, in this case, symbolized:

- the honor and high calling to be fathers and mothers,
- who God designed them to be as men and women, and
- their roles and responsibilities in parenting children.

After an abortion, mothers and fathers often consider themselves unworthy of the mantle of parenthood. God desires to restore these mantles and reinstate post-abortive mothers and fathers to their rightful identities. Abortion is a grave sin, but it does not disqualify one from her calling and capacity as a mother, or his calling and capacity as a father, along with their roles as leaders and influencers within their churches and communities in which they live.

### Exercise 2.5.1

*Note: See “The Power of Symbols” in Appendix D.* Prior to this exercise, the facilitator team should work together with the event host to identify and prepare culturally appropriate symbols of mother and father mantles. For women, a shawl or a scarf (to place over their shoulders) is often an apt symbol. For men, a sword, a shield, or a staff can be a suitable representation of fatherhood and leadership in the home and community. Have these items ready for use, but out of sight prior to the beginning of the exercise.

NOTE: It is important to recognize that *only God has the authority to restore our identities* as men and women. In the following prayers, we are simply agreeing with Him.

1. All the men will gather together to stand in a circle, facing inward. All the women should form an outer circle around the men.
2. The facilitator can distribute—to all of the men—the items (shield, staff, sword, etc.) chosen as the symbolic representation of the father mantle. Alternatively, a single item (such as a sword) can be used and each man can gather around the item and hold it.
3. The facilitator leads the men in the following prayer and the men can repeat.  
*Dear Lord, I receive the gift and calling of my father mantle. Help my father’s heart to be a reflection of yours. I believe that I have what it takes to be a godly father because of your grace, design, and anointing. Thank you for giving me another chance. Lord, I ask that you would help me to live in a way that honors and respects women. I pray that you would give me opportunities to model godly fatherhood to my sons and to the young men in my community. I also pray that I would grow in character and trustworthiness for my daughters and the young women in my community. In Jesus name, Amen.*
4. The men and the women can be invited to reverse their positions, with the women gathered in the inner circle, facing inward, and the men surrounding them.

5. The facilitator can distribute—to all the women—the items (shawl, scarf, etc.) chosen as the symbolic representation of the mother mantle. The facilitator (and leadership team) can place these items on the women’s heads or shoulders after asking for permission to do so.
6. The facilitator can lead the women in the following prayer and the women can repeat.  
*Dear Lord, I receive the gift and calling of my mother mantle. Allow my mother’s heart to come alive and be a life-giving fountain, flowing with wisdom, courage, and love. Thank you for giving me another chance. Lord, I ask you to help me to display inner beauty and purity to my daughters and to the young women in my community. I also pray that you would increase my renown as a godly woman and mother in the eyes of my sons and the young men in my community. In Jesus name, Amen.*
7. All participants can be invited to return to their seats after the conclusion of these prayers. The mantles are intended to be kept by all recipients.
8. After you finish the exercise, offer the participants the freedom to celebrate, they may choose to sing praises of thanksgiving to the Lord, share testimonies, or take pictures.

**Note for Facilitator:**

Keep in mind that the call of motherhood is not restricted to those who have physically given birth. While not all women are mothers, *all women* have within themselves the call to mother. (We see in Genesis 3:20 that Eve was called “the mother of all the living” before she had ever given birth.) To *mother* is to nurture, train, educate, and rear. Women mother others as they encourage; offer their concern, care, and comfort; and meet needs as they arise.



Part 2 | Session 6

# Walking in Freedom

*Recommended Session Time: 2 hours*

## Session Objectives

*The participant will:*

- Describe how a person's habitual sins can become strongholds over his or her life.
- Identify common strongholds in the life of a post-abortive person, or those that have been affected by sexual sin, abuse, abandonment, etc.
- Recognize the ways in which past behaviors contribute to an abortion decision.
- Discuss the ways in which sexual activity can create lasting bonds with other people.

### Part 1

- 1.0: Introduction
- 1.1: Worldview
- 1.2: The Abortion Decision
- 1.3: God's Design

### Part 2

- 2.1: Establishing a Safe Place
- 2.2: Sharing Your Story
- 2.3: Forgiveness & Reconciliation
- 2.4: Grieving
- 2.5: Restoration
- 2.6: Walking in Freedom**
- 2.7: Closing Ceremony

### Part 3

- 3.1: Next Steps

## Exercise 2.6.1

1. Participants can be invited to discuss their answers to the following questions:
  - When you hear the word "stronghold" what comes to mind?
  - How would you define a stronghold in a person's life?
  - What might an example of a stronghold be?

### Note for facilitator:

All of the sessions up to this point have been dealing with past abortion decisions and their effects. This final teaching session, before the closing ceremony, will give participants the opportunity to examine patterns and choices in their lives that led to their abortion decisions. Since the preceding sessions have focused on healing and restoration, this next activity can be undertaken from a position of wholeness and authority, to allow participants to understand what led to their abortion experiences, and how they can experience true and lasting freedom.

## Strongholds of sin

*"For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."*

### 2 Corinthians 10:3-5

Each of us is prone to certain patterns of habitual sin due to our influences, our experiences, and our decisions. These habitual sins can be called "strongholds," where Satan has gained authority, influence, and a grip on a specific area in your life. Strongholds can keep you from breaking free from old lifestyles of sin and iniquity.

In order for complete and lasting healing to occur, we must take action in repentance to bring those areas under submission to the Lord Jesus Christ. Victory is possible if we submit ourselves to God's authority and truth. God has promised that the devil will *flee* from us when we do this (James 4:7)!

### **Common strongholds for those with abortion-wounded hearts**

While the following sinful attitudes and lifestyles are not unique to those who have participated in an abortion, they are (or were) often present in the life of a post-abortive individual. These attitudes can both be at the “root” of abortion, and they can be the “fruit” of a stronghold of sin.

**Sexual license:** “I decide when and with whom I have sex.”

**Rebellion:** “I choose to disobey God and I am in control of my life.”

**Judgment against men/women:** “I have been wounded by them and hold them in resentment and contempt.”

**Control of others:** “I will manipulate people in order to have relationships on my own terms.”

**Unforgiveness and bitterness:** “I choose not to forgive because I was deeply wronged and I am entitled to my position.”

**Victim mentality:** “God is punishing me for my sin by allowing others to abuse me.”

The weapons we fight with—God’s word, worship, prayer, and other methods of spiritual warfare—can be combined with the Armor of God for use in our struggle “against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 6:10-18).

### **Exercise 2.6.2**

1. Participants can be invited to discuss their answers to the following questions:
  - What are some examples of habitual sins in the life of a believer?
  - How could each of these strongholds *lead to circumstances* in which a person might choose abortion? How are these the *root* of abortion?
  - Take a moment in silence and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you any patterns of habitual sin that could be described as strongholds in your life.

### **Breaking free of bondage and walking in freedom**

Any person who is held in bondage to habitual (or one-time) sins can experience profound freedom through repentance and confession. When this act of turning *from* sin *to* God has been done, we can claim the victory over sin that was accomplished once-and-for-all by Jesus Christ upon His atoning death and triumphant resurrection. Surrender your heart fully to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and you can experience a new beginning and walk in victory.

*Note: Each of the following categories will likely be familiar to every believer, but not every specific example will apply to every person. You are encouraged to make each prayer authentically your own by substituting words or ideas as you are led by the Holy Spirit. The host or pastor should be asked to lead the participants in these corporate prayers.*

### **Sexual license**

Dear Lord, I acknowledge that my sexuality is a glorious gift from you that I have distorted for my own pleasure. I have allowed myself to be deceived into thinking that I could fill my intimacy needs by participating in sexual activity outside of Your will and design. Please forgive me. In the name of Jesus Christ, I renounce any agreements that I have made—even unconsciously—with demonic forces. I repent of all my past sexual sin, including lust, fornication, homosexuality, masturbation, adultery, incest, or other offenses. Please break all spiritual, emotional, and relational bonds that were formed through my sexual activity. I receive your forgiveness through the precious blood of Jesus that completely cleanses, heals, and restores my sexual dignity and purity. In Jesus name, Amen!

### **Rebellion**

Dear Lord, I confess that I have chosen to go my own way, make up my own rules, and break your laws. Instead of humbly seeking **your** ways, I have been driven by pride to expect you to conform to **my** ways. Please forgive me for my rebellious heart, attitude, and behavior. I confess that You are God, and that Your ways and laws are perfect. I renounce my tendency to stray from Your Lordship, and I declare that You are Lord of my life. Please help me to submit to Your ways and authority. Thank You for cleansing me and creating in me a new and submissive heart toward You. In Jesus name, Amen!

### **Judgment against men**

Dear Lord, at times I have embraced a foundational distrust and contempt for men. I have engaged in disrespectful words and derision toward them. Please forgive me for devaluing these brothers who are made in Your image, and forgive me for these attitudes and behaviors. Please cleanse my mind, my heart, and my memories with your redemptive blood. I choose to forgive the men that have wronged me, and I renounce my past judgments against them. Help me to walk in newness of heart, mind, and speech. Jesus lived His Earthly life as a man and I choose to honor Him by looking for His reflection in every man I encounter. In Jesus name, Amen!

### **Judgment against women**

Dear Lord, I have had a difficult time trusting women. I have been resistant to vulnerability and authenticity. At times I have blamed them for my failed relationships. Please forgive me for devaluing these sisters who are made in Your image, and forgive me for these attitudes and behaviors. I repent and ask that you cleanse and heal me. I renounce my judgment against women and I give You permission to transform my heart and my mind toward them. Please help me to see the women in my life through Your eyes. Prepare me for new, healthy, joyful and fulfilling relationships with the women in my life. In Jesus name, Amen!

### **Manipulation**

Dear Lord, I recognize that it's not easy for me to trust the leadership or judgment of other people—whether it's my boss, pastor, boyfriend, husband, wife, or girlfriend. I feel more secure about things when I think I'm in control. When I sense that things aren't going my way, I often act out of emotion and manipulate people in order to regain control. I confess that I have not trusted You to protect me and to develop my character. Please forgive me. Cleanse me from these old patterns of control and manipulation and empower me to trust Your leadership and the leadership of those you have placed in my life. I renounce a spirit of control and manipulation in my life. I want to be trustworthy and I want to graciously serve others. In Jesus name, Amen!

### **Unforgiveness/bitterness**

Dear Lord, I confess that I have not obeyed your instructions to forgive others as you have forgiven me (Matthew 6:14, Colossians 3:13, Ephesians 4:32). I have justified my unforgiveness and bitterness because I've been deeply wounded by others, and they have not experienced the consequences that I think they deserve. I renounce this spirit of unforgiveness, bitterness, and vengeance toward those in my life who have hurt me, and I now ask You to forgive me for my judgment against others. I ask you to bless those who have hurt me according to the counsel of Your will and mercy. In Jesus name, Amen!

### **Victim mentality**

Dear Lord, You know the ways that I have been abused and victimized by other people. I have

believed at times that you were punishing me, and that I deserved this treatment by other people. I now renounce this belief as a lie, and I ask You to forgive me for blaming You for the enemy's schemes. You are trustworthy, just, and good. You love me and are able to redeem my life—not only from these lies that I have believed, but from the damage caused by others. As you have forgiven me for my wrongs against others, I now forgive others for their wrongs against me, and I release them to You for your correction and redemption. In Jesus name, Amen!

**Note for facilitator:**

At conclusion of corporate prayers, you can conclude this time by praying the following prayer over the participants:

*In response to your confession and prayers, as your sisters and brothers in Christ, and on the authority of God's Word and your confession, we declare that you are forgiven of these sins and that you are released from these areas of bondage. You are now released to live in freedom and to experience a new beginning! Amen!*

**The bond of sexual intercourse**

Sexual intercourse **bonds** two people together; that is God's gift and intended design. This design was meant to be experienced within the protective—and lifelong—union of a marriage covenant between a man and a woman. But sexual intercourse creates a “one-flesh” bond (Genesis 2:24) between man and woman—**whether they are married or not**. There should be no surprise, then, that sexual intercourse *outside* of marriage, with men and women that are not your lifelong spouse, leads to pain, suffering, and damage to our souls when those relationships end. It is precisely **because** two people have experienced a special bonding through sexual intercourse that there is so much sorrow and hurt when a relationship ends.

The facilitator can ask a participant to read the following scripture:

*“The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, “The two will become one flesh.” But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body” (1 Corinthians 6:13b-19).*

Among the bitter fruits of sexual sin are the bonds or attachments that are made between people during sexual activity as we saw in the words of the Apostle Paul. Sexual immorality (fornication, rape, incest, homosexuality, etc.) is sin (Galatians 5:19-21). When believers engage in sexual immorality, they sin against God, against their partners, and against themselves. Additionally, these sins result in the formation of spiritual, emotional, and relational bonds between two people, and these bonds often persist beyond the end of a relationship. These bonds are real and can even complicate an existing relationship by diverting a couple's attention from God's design for their sexual activity.

### Exercise 2.6.3

1. The facilitator can prepare ahead of time four large paper hearts, made of construction paper: *two* each of *two* different contrasting colors. Two contrasting hearts should be glued together ahead of time to allow the glue to dry and bind the two pieces of paper together.
2. The facilitator can display the two separate contrasting hearts (keeping the glued hearts aside for now). Each of these hearts represents a person.
3. The facilitator can illustrate a brief story of a man and woman who join together in a relationship and become sexually active. When they have intercourse together, their hearts are bonded together.
4. At this point, the facilitator can set down the separate hearts and pick up the glued hearts. If the couple is married, their hearts remain bonded together through their continued sexual relationship. (Hold up the paper hearts and show both sides to illustrate the one-flesh union of sexual intimacy in marriage.) If the couple is unmarried, and breaks up—or if a married couple divorces—the sexual bond can create great damage when it comes undone.
5. The facilitator can slowly pull apart the two paper hearts, without commentary, allowing the participants to see how the paper shreds when the hearts are separated.
6. The facilitator can ask the participants: “What could this damage look like in an actual relationship?” Allow participants time to discuss their reactions to this illustration.
7. The facilitator can end with sharing God’s promise from Psalm 147:3, which says, “He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.”

It can be tempting for many people to view intercourse as “just sex,” as if what we do with our bodies does not involve our whole persons: body, mind, and spirit. When we engage in sexual immorality, our sin is not limited to just our physical bodies.

Scripture clearly teaches us in 1 Thessalonians 5:23b (ESV) that we are physical, emotional and spiritual beings and that our sin can affect all three parts of our life. “Every believer is commanded to ‘glorify God in your body’ precisely because the body is “a temple of the Holy Spirit.” This body/soul integration is part of our created nature, and we ignore it at great peril to ourselves and to those we have chosen to bond with.

### Breaking the bonds

Just as people can overlook the areas of habitual sin (sexual license, rebellion, unforgiveness, etc.) that are often at the root of abortion, they can easily miss the connections between *past* sexual relationships and *current* relational difficulties. The weight of unconfessed sin can itself be a great—and often unrecognized—hindrance in the life of a believer. Add to that the burden of unbroken sexual bonds and you have a deeply wounded and defeated Christian. But because the individual remains unmindful of these relational bonds, he or she may continue the behaviors that led to enslavement in the first place. As long as these bonds remain, they will be unlikely to find the freedom they long for!

### Exercise 2.6.4

1. The participants can be invited to ask the Holy Spirit to bring to mind any people that they have bonded with through sexually immoral activity.
2. The facilitator can allow for 10-15 minutes of private reflection during which the



participants can pray and repent of these sins in order to receive God's grace, forgiveness, and freedom.

3. The participants can be invited to pray privately the following *Prayer for breaking sexual bonds* over each person they have thought of. If time and opportunity allows, participants can also be partnered together to pray these prayers with each other or with a member of the facilitation team.

### **Prayer for breaking sexual bonds**

Dear Heavenly Father,

I submit my heart and soul to your Lordship. I repent for inappropriately surrendering my body, mind, and spirit to another person through the sin of sexual immorality, for wronging another person by participating in sexual sin, and for the idolatry that elevated my sexual gratification above Your commands. Please forgive me. I receive your cleansing blood that washes away my sin.

I now bring before you [person's name]. I repent for the sinful behavior that I participated in willingly, or those acts that were forced upon me by [person's name]. For those forcible acts I now forgive [person's name]. I ask you, Lord, to break the unholy bonds that were formed between myself and [person's name] during our sexual involvement. Please restore my soul, renew me, and heal my wounds.

I place [person's name] into the hands of Jesus Christ, and I ask you, Lord, to bless him/her and bring him/her into salvation, healing, and restoration in you. I also ask you to be Lord over any of my future interactions with [person's name]. In Jesus' Name, amen!

Part 2 | Session 7

## Closing Ceremony

*Recommended Session Time: 45 minutes*

### Session Objectives

*The participant will:*

- Seal the transformative work done by Jesus in his or her life.
- Receive an anointing to move forward in liberty, having been forgiven and restored.

### Exercise 2.7.1

**Note for Facilitator:** Isaiah 61:3 says that we are promised “a garland instead of ashes,” and “the oil of gladness instead of mourning.” This exercise will use actual garlands and anointing oil in order to symbolize the profound healing offered to the participants by God. Tell the participants that the elements used in this exchange are *symbols*, based on the included Bible verses, that are intended to bless them.

#### Part 1

- 1.0: Introduction
- 1.1: Worldview
- 1.2: The Abortion Decision
- 1.3: God’s Design

#### Part 2

- 2.1: Establishing a Safe Place
- 2.2: Sharing Your Story
- 2.3: Forgiveness & Reconciliation
- 2.4: Grieving
- 2.5: Restoration
- 2.6: Walking in Freedom
- 2.7: Closing Ceremony**

#### Part 3

- 3.1: Next Steps

The facilitator can prepare and acquire ahead of time the following materials needed for this exercise:

- Large basin filled with water; 1-2 towels.
  - Anointing oil.
  - Flowered wreaths for garlands (enough for the number of female participants), made of flowers, ribbons, vines, etc.
  - Arrows (enough for the number of male participants). *Note: Arrows will be handled freely, so they should not have dangerously sharp tips.*
1. The facilitation team can set up three stations: one for handwashing and anointing (all participants), one for women to receive their head wreaths, and one for men to receive their arrows.
  2. Ask a participant to read Isaiah 61:1-3.
  3. The participants can rotate among the available stations. **All** participants will go through the handwashing and anointing station, the **women** will go through the wreath station, and the **men** will go through the arrow station. At each station, a facilitator or host should mention the verse related with the symbol.
  4. Handwashing: A table can be set up with a basin of water. Towels should be available for drying hands. Each participant can wash their hands in the basin, and dry them on the towel. “*The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false god. They will receive blessing from the Lord and vindication from God their Savior*” (Psalm 24:4-5).
  5. Wreath station (women): Simple wreaths can be placed on the heads of female participants as they come forward to the station. The facilitator or host can preside over a brief prayer of blessing after the participant has received her wreath. “*He has sent me...to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes*” (Isaiah 61:1b-3a).
  6. Arrow station (men): Arrows can be handed to each male participant as the facilitator presides over a brief prayer of blessing. “*Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are children born in one’s youth*” (Psalm 127:4).

7. Anointing station: A vial of oil should be available for anointing and a final prayer. “...to bestow on them...the oil of gladness instead of mourning” (Isa 61:3b)
8. Note: Upon completion of this exercise, after all participants have gone through each station, the participants can reconvene for the following prayer of corporate repentance.

**Note for Facilitator:**

Remind the participants at this time that the garlands and the oil are *symbols* that have no mystical power or authority.

**Exercise 2.7.2**

The facilitator can read 2 Chronicles 7:14 before leading the participants through the following prayer of corporate repentance.

“...If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”

*2 Chronicles 7:14*

Dear Heavenly Father,

Through the sin of abortion, our nation has rebelled against your laws. The weight of our iniquities has defiled our families, our culture, and our land. The consequences of our iniquities have impacted our children. We together confess our familial, cultural, and national offenses:

- We have rejected you as creator.
- We have denied the sacred value of human life.
- We have spilled innocent blood in our land.
- We have elevated personal autonomy into an idol.
- We have defiled our bodies and minds through sexual immorality.

Lord, we confess and repent on behalf of our families, churches, cities, states, and nation. Please forgive us of these transgressions and iniquities and heal our land. We stand before you as the united Body of Christ, and as corporate representatives of our nation. We renounce our agreement with the enemy’s lies, and ask you to sever the bonds that have kept our hearts, minds, bodies, and relationships in bondage. Our only hope is in your Word, which assures us Your mercy triumphs over judgment (James 2:13). In Jesus’ name, I receive the freedom that can be found only in Christ! Amen!

**Note for Facilitator:**

Upon completion of this session and before beginning the final session of the seminar—*Next Steps* (Part 3, Session 1)—make sure to give participants a rest time or a tea break. This pause will give them time to reflect upon their experiences and will allow them to prepare for the next discussion, when they will be asked to consider how they may develop a plan for implementing an abortion-recovery ministry in their community.

## Part 3 | Session 1

# Next Steps

*Recommended Session Time: 1 hour*

### Session Objectives

*The participant will:*

- Share what God has spoken to him or her about reaching out to others who have been wounded by abortion.
- Recognize the value and significance of establishing a foundation of prayer and worship before beginning an abortion-recovery ministry.
- Identify steps to develop a plan for a culturally appropriate abortion-recovery ministry for men and women within their community.

#### Part 1

- 1.0: Introduction
- 1.1: Worldview
- 1.2: The Abortion Decision
- 1.3: God's Design

#### Part 2

- 2.1: Establishing a Safe Place
- 2.2: Sharing Your Story
- 2.3: Forgiveness & Reconciliation
- 2.4: Grieving
- 2.5: Restoration
- 2.6: Walking in Freedom
- 2.7: Closing Ceremony

#### Part 3

##### 3.1: Next Steps

### Exercise 3.1.1

**Note for Facilitator:** This exercise will be an opportunity for the participants to discuss two things: their experiences during the training, and their impressions of what God is speaking to them about initiating an abortion-recovery ministry in their communities. During the following discussion, encourage the participants to recognize God for His activity and to glorify Him for any healing or transformation that may have taken place.

1. Participants can be invited to discuss their answers to the following questions **as they look back** on their experiences during the training:
  - How did God meet with you this week?
  - In what ways did you experience healing? Transformation? Deliverance?
2. Participants can be invited to discuss their answers to the following questions **as they look ahead** to plans they may be led to make for initiating an abortion-recovery ministry:
  - What are some strategic next steps to establish an abortion-recovery ministry in your community or church?
  - What is the role of prayer in an abortion-recovery ministry? What are some ways that prayer can be incorporated into the planning and execution of an abortion-recovery ministry?
  - Who are the men and women that are called to be involved in your abortion-recovery ministry?
  - How can you best reach out to the men and women in your community and church who have been wounded by abortion?
  - Where could this ministry be located that would provide a safe and confidential environment?
  - When could you launch your abortion-recovery ministry?
3. After adequate time has been given for the participants to discuss the included questions, the session and the training can be closed in prayer:
  - to seal the activity that has taken place during the sessions,
  - to commission the participants to walk in liberty from their own past abortion decisions, and

- to walk in boldness as they purpose to offer God's healing to others in their communities that are burdened from past abortion decisions.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A: List of recommended materials

Appendix B: Worldview chart (used in Exercise 1.1.1)

Appendix C: *Certificate of Debt* (used in Exercise 2.3.3)

Appendix D: *The Power of Symbols* (used in Exercise 2.5.1)

## **Appendix A: List of recommended materials**

1. Free-standing cross: The cross can be as simple as two sticks tied together
2. Symbol that represents authority for men and women to be used as mantles. *Example: staff for the men and shawls for the women*
3. Bowl or basin for water
4. Hand towels
5. Anointing oil
6. Garlands
7. Symbol for the *Grieving* session: flowers, pins, or other culturally appropriate symbol
8. Hearts cut out of colored construction paper or cardstock
9. Meditative background music
10. Red markers
11. Scissors, glue
12. Copies of the blank worldview chart (found in appendix B)
13. Copies of the *Certificate of Debt* (found in appendix C)
14. Large poster paper for exercises
15. Tape for poster paper

## Appendix B: Worldview chart

Opposing Worldviews	Biblical Worldview	Cultural Worldview
<b>God</b> <i>Who is God? What is his relationship to human beings?</i>		
<b>The World/Creation</b> <i>How did the world come into existence? What is man's relationship to the natural world?</i>		
<b>Human Life</b> <i>How did human life originate? When does an individual human life start? What is the value of human life compared to other creatures? Which sex is more valuable: men or women?</i>		
<b>Right vs. Wrong</b> <i>How does one determine what is right and what is wrong?</i>		
<b>The Strong vs. The Weak</b> <i>What makes one strong or weak? What is the ideal relationship between the strong and the weak?</i>		
<b>Abortion</b> <i>When is abortion permissible or not? What are the moral implications of abortion?</i>		



## Certificate of Debt

*When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.*

**Colossians 2:13-14 NASB**

These are the names of the people I have sinned against, and the ways in which I wronged them:

- 
- 
- 
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- 
- 

These are the sins I have committed and the judgments I have made against myself:

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

These are the names of the people who have sinned against me, and the ways in which they wronged me:

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

**Status of Payment:**

## Appendix D: The Power of Symbols (for use in exercise 2.5.1)

A LIFE International ministry partner shared the following story about his experience with mother and father mantles:

*“I recently walked into a store with an intention to buy a gift for my children. I wasn’t sure what to buy so I asked the Lord. He led me to some very nice, beautiful and warm blankets. The kind you just want to embrace. So I bought each of them a little blanket. Military colors for my 10-year old soldier and pinkish for the little queen. The Lord led me to buy the covering for my amazing kids.*

*The trip to the store reminded me of other coverings in scripture and in life.*

*I thought of how the African culture is filled with the need for the covering. Bride price negotiations are always tough and an African bride can be expensive. So, you’re allowed to pay the cows and goats in installments for the rest of your life. But there’s one thing you have to deliver before the talks begin—not in the form of money and not in installment—a blanket for the girl’s father and mother, one for the uncles and one for the aunts.*

*I thought of Joseph in the Bible and his coat of many colors. While he ventured into a lonely life driven away by his own brothers, his only hope and assurance of care came from that coat—from his father.*

*I thought of the sons of Noah in Genesis 9. After much wine, Noah’s nakedness was exposed. One son saw it, laughed and told others. But two sons chose not to see their father’s nakedness; instead they brought him a garment and covered him.*

*Then I thought of another one. A Galilean. An Ambassador from heaven. The Son of God, who was stripped and hung on a cross slightly over 2,000 years ago; and as He hung bare in shame between heaven and earth, the soldiers balloted for His garment. Why would this bloodstained garment be so precious that it can only be inherited through a ballot?*

*Fortunately, it was the blood from His body that provided us with the Covering for our sin and shame and not the torn garment they gambled over that fateful night.*

*Jesus then provides the Covering and reminds us that there is now no condemnation for those who are in Him.*

*Be creative and ask the Lord to show you what is something that, in your culture, can represent the mantle—that it may be accessible and well received.*