



6 Encounters  
with Jesus to Heal  
Your Deepest  
Hurts

*never alone*

A Bible Study by  
Tiffany Bluhm

# Praise for *Never Alone: 6 Encounters with Jesus to Heal Your Deepest Hurts*

“With raw honesty and in-depth study of Scripture, Tiffany brings flesh-and-blood life to this biblical truth: *Jesus. Is. With. Us. Always.* This study is for those (like me and everyone I know) who need this reminder and a fresh look at how the ‘with-ness’ of Jesus changes everything, even in our most desolate seasons.”

—**Jodi Detrick, author of *The Jesus-Hearted Woman: 10 Leadership Qualities for Enduring and Endearing Influence***

“Loneliness and isolation plague our generation, yet Tiffany is relentless in her encouragement, her passion for freedom, and her desire to communicate the love of Jesus. She lives what she teaches, which gives her a unique authority to speak truth. This study will not only bring freedom but also provide a safe place for women to share, grow, and change.”

—**Ashley Abercrombie, director of Liberty City, New York**

“Through the stories of biblical women and her own personal stories, shared with vulnerability and remarkable insight, Tiffany invites us into meaningful reflection on our lives and the truth of God’s Word. This is a must-do Bible study for anyone who needs a reminder that she is never alone!”

—**Harmony Dust, MSW, founder and executive director of Treasures Ministries**

“This study is rich and full of insight. Savor every word and rest in the warmth of the revelation that you are *Never Alone.*”

—**Brian Dolleman, author of *An Invitation to Peace and Rest* and pastor of NWLife Church, Renton, Washington**

“*Never Alone* is a journey to healing and wholeness. With vulnerability, tenderness, and wisdom, Tiffany leads us through six Gospel stories to unveil the heart of God toward the brokenhearted. This study will give you the courage to face your pain and embrace the unfailing love of Jesus!”

—**Nicole Reyes, writer, speaker, and director of Liberty Foundation, New York**

“Tiffany so beautifully articulates biblical and personal stories of pain and rejection with which we can all identify, only to make way for acceptance in the presence of Jesus. What a beautiful study to usher in wholeness and freedom.”

—**Kelsey Chapman, Radiant Podcast**

“God has brought Tiffany from an orphanage in India to be a voice of hope and healing the world needs to hear. Though her story is unique, the struggles she speaks to are within us all. This study will ignite hope and healing deep in your heart.”

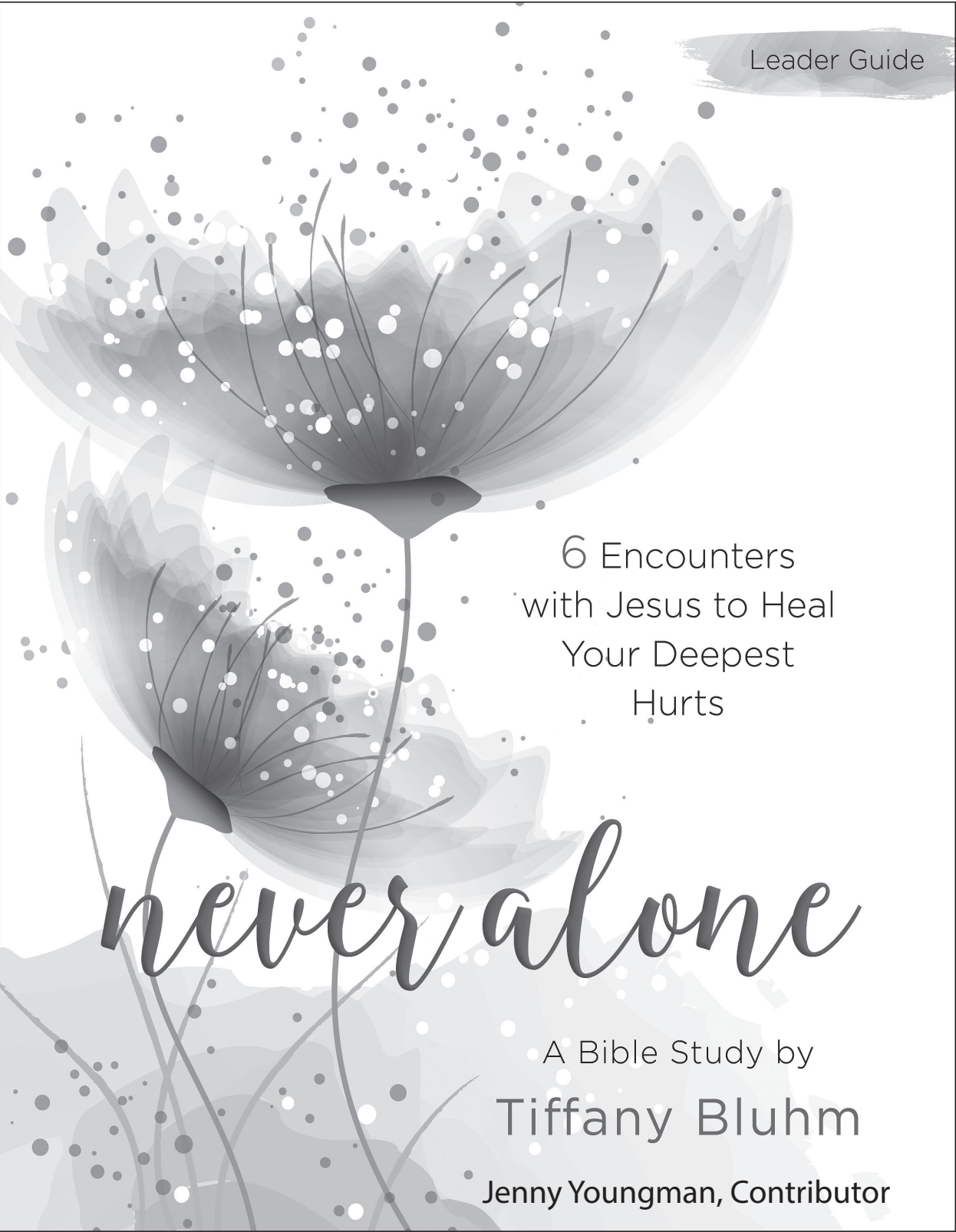
—**Tyrone Rinta, senior pastor, Bell Road Church**

“One of the most profound women of spiritual influence and insight for encouraging us in our walk with our Abba Father!”

—**Josh Dunn, president and publisher, Premier Media**

“Tiffany Bluhm presents a map and compass to anyone longing to find the seemingly elusive reality of God’s ever-present love.”

—**David Resinger, senior pastor, Redeem Church**



Leader Guide

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A Bible Study by  
Tiffany Bluhm

Jenny Youngman, Contributor

Abingdon Women  
Nashville

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Leader Guide**

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# About the Author

**Tiffany Bluhm** is a speaker and writer who is passionate about helping women come to know their worth, value, and purpose because of a loving, redeeming God. In an engaging and relevant approach that speaks to women right where they are, she shares insights from a life spent chasing after Jesus while walking alongside women from suburbia to the inner city, jails and brothels, and the slums of Kolkata. Because of her own story of international adoption and the adoption of a son from Uganda, Tiffany has a heart for women and children in the margins and has created a number of unconventional outreaches to serve them. In addition to speaking regularly at conferences and events, she leads a local gathering called Sip at the Table, where women break bread, study God's Word, and commune with God and one another. Tiffany writes for a number of online and print publications as well as popular blogs, including the YouVersion Bible app, *Deeply Rooted Magazine*, *ScaryMommy.com*, and her own weekly blog at [TiffanyBluhm.com](http://TiffanyBluhm.com). She lives in Tacoma, Washington, with her husband and two sons.

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and booking information)



# Introduction

From the time we're little girls, we long to be loved and accepted—from the playground to the lunchroom to the places where we live and work as grown women. We spend our lives doing our best to prove we are lovable and to avoid being left all alone. For many of us, one of our greatest fears is that we will be left to our solitary selves to fight the hardest battles of our lives.

The truth is that it's impossible to walk through life without experiencing the pain and loneliness of betrayal, shame, guilt, loss, judgment, or rejection. These wounds can shape our views of ourselves, others, and God and even make us question if we are worthy of love and acceptance. Our heartache, whether old or new, can chip away at who we are created to be—women of worth, value, and dignity—convincing us there's no one who understands or cares. No one to dress our wounds and wipe our tears. Yet Jesus tells us a different story, promising us that we are never alone. It's a story of beauty, hope, grace, and divine companionship—and it is our destiny. The Redeemer of broken lives and wounded hearts longs to heal our deepest hurts and satisfy us with His unending love and presence—regardless of our pasts.

If this seems too good to be true, consider the women in the Gospels who encountered Jesus. To them He was the most revolutionary gentleman, breaking cultural norms as He not only engaged with them but actually lifted them up. Even the most bedraggled, shame-filled women were restored to a place of purpose and influence as He spoke life into their present situations and their futures, offering hope, second chances, and grace-giving love. His plans for them were good—and far superior to any plans of their own.

The same Lord who healed the hearts of harlots, beggars, and outcasts longs to do the same for you and me. He's patient and kind, strong and brave. We may test His limits, doubt His trustworthiness, or even walk away from Him, but He is always faithful and good to us. No matter what. Though we may mistake our own questions and doubts for His absence, the truth is that we can never escape His presence or His love. We do not possess that kind of power. Without a doubt, life is hard; but our Sovereign Savior is always near. Whether in times of tears or bouts of laughter, He is near. Whether in singing or silence, He is near. And as season after season brings both unforeseen misery and fresh mercy, the Good Lord promises to walk with us, bringing healing and wholeness and abundant life.

In this six-week study, you will guide a group of women on a journey of discovering the healing power of Jesus' unconditional love by exploring six encounters He had with hurting women in the Gospels:

- the woman caught in adultery
- the hemorrhaging woman
- the woman at the well
- the woman who anointed Jesus





- Mary Magdalene
- Mary, the Mother of Jesus

These life-changing encounters, as well as the stories and experiences that we will share together, will help every woman in your group to recognize and embrace her incredible value and indispensable role in the Kingdom. As you study, share, and pray together, it is my prayer that you will find healing for your deepest hurts, experience the unfailing companionship of Jesus as never before, and embrace the sacred truth that you are *never alone!*

## About the Participant Workbook

Before the first session, you will want to distribute copies of the participant workbook to the members of your group. Be sure to communicate that they are to complete the first week of readings before your first group session. For each week there are five readings that feature the following components:

<b>Read God's Word</b>	A portion of the Bible story for the week, occasionally with other Scripture readings.
<b>Reflect and Respond</b>	A guided reflection and study of the Scriptures with space for recording your responses.
<b>Talk with God</b>	A prayer suggestion to guide you into a personal time of prayer.
<b>Act on It</b>	An idea to help you act on what you have read.

Each reading can be completed in about twenty to thirty minutes. Completing these readings each week will prepare the women for the discussion and activities of the group session.

## About This Leader Guide

As you gather each week with the members of your group, you will have the opportunity to watch a video, discuss and respond to what you're learning, and pray together. You will need access to a television and DVD player with working remotes.

Creating a warm and inviting atmosphere will help to make the women feel welcome. Although optional, you might consider providing snacks for your first meeting and inviting group members to rotate in bringing refreshments each week.

This leader guide and the DVD will be your primary tools for leading each group session. In this book you will find outlines for an optional introductory session (45 minutes) and six group sessions, each formatted for either a 60-minute or 90-minute group session:

# Week 1

## Unashamed and Free

### Jesus and the Woman Caught in Adultery (John 8:1-11)

#### Leader Prep

#### Bible Story Overview

This week we're looking at shame and rejection through the lens of Jesus' encounter with the woman caught in adultery. The scoffers and the religious elite used this woman to trick Jesus; but He not only put those religious leaders in their place, He also showed mercy and compassion for a woman whom society had shamed and legally could have stoned to death. As we read her story, it touches our hearts to remember that the One who showed her mercy, the One we love and follow, would Himself be no stranger to accusation, shame, and rejection.

#### Main Point

Shame will always try to convince us that we are a colossal problem never to be solved. But God, in His infinite kindness, longs to rid us of our disgrace by convincing us we are worthy and whole. We can see His handiwork when we speak over ourselves His promises of healing, mercy, and outright grace.

#### Key Scriptures

*<sup>1</sup>But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. <sup>2</sup>Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them. <sup>3</sup>The scribes and the Pharisees brought*



*a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst<sup>4</sup> they said to him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery.<sup>5</sup> Now in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?"<sup>6</sup> This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground.<sup>7</sup> And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her."<sup>8</sup> And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground.<sup>9</sup> But when they heard it, they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him.<sup>10</sup> Jesus stood up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"<sup>11</sup> She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more."*

*(John 8:1-11)*

*Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.*

*(Romans 8:34)*

*"For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him."*

*(John 3:17)*

*For whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything.*

*(1 John 3:20)*

## **What You Will Need**

- *Never Alone* DVD and a DVD player
- Markerboard or chart paper and markers
- Stick-on name tags and markers (optional)
- iPod, smartphone, or tablet and portable speaker (optional)

## **Session Outline**

### **Welcome and Opening Prayer (2 minutes)**

To create a warm, welcoming environment as the women are gathering before the session begins, consider lighting one or more candles, providing coffee or other refreshments, and/or playing worship music. (Bring an iPod, smartphone, or tablet and a portable speaker if desired.) Be sure to provide name tags if the women do not know one another or you have new participants in your group. Then, when you are ready to begin, pray the following prayer or offer your own:

*Dear God, we know that You are full of grace and truth, even though we often believe the lie that we should be ashamed of ourselves. Free us from the bondage of shame, Lord. Put the light back into our eyes, and help us to run our race strong, brave, free, and with joy. Amen.*

### **Icebreaker (3 minutes)**

Invite the women to share short, “popcorn” responses to the following question:

- How would you describe what shame “feels” like? Why do you think shame is such a common feeling among women?

### **Video (20–25 minutes)**

Play the Week 1 video segment on the DVD. Invite participants to complete the Video Viewer Guide for Week 1 in the participant workbook as they watch (page 41).

### **Group Discussion (25–35 minutes, depending on session length)**

*Note:* More material is provided than you will have time to include. Before the session, select what you want to cover, putting a check mark beside it in your book. Page references are provided for questions related to questions or activities in the participant workbook. For these questions, invite participants to share the answers they wrote in their workbooks.

#### *Video Discussion Questions*

- When have you ever struggled to believe that Jesus was near?
- What are some examples from the Scriptures of Jesus as a champion for women?
- Have you ever let your sin or situation define you? How did meeting Jesus redefine your understanding of who you are?
- How have you known Jesus to be your Protector?

#### *Participant Workbook Discussion Questions*

1. In our quest for love and acceptance, the shackles of shame distort what is true of us. Shame finds us through rejection, abandonment, and approval that ebbs and flows based on our performance. Shame tells us we aren’t good enough, pretty enough, smart enough, skinny enough, or ever worthy of the love Christ gives for free. Shame is the very opposite of what our souls desire. Shame battles against the truths of love. (Day 1)
  - Read John 8:1-11. Where do you find rejection, abandonment, and disapproval in this story?
  - How do you imagine this woman felt as she stood before Jesus and her accusers? (page 12) What are the lies she might have believed about herself?
  - Read 1 Corinthians 13. Name the ways that love is the opposite of shame.

2. Our rejection, no matter where it comes from, kicks at our belief that we belong; that we are lovable and capable of loving others; that we are worthy of belonging; that we are beloved by a holy and sacred God. It leaves us susceptible to searing shame. (Day 1)
  - Do you remember a time you felt shame? Perhaps it was a time when you felt that who you are is not enough or acceptable, that you didn't belong, or that you were unlovable. Describe it briefly. (page 16)
  - Look again at the second half of Jesus' statement to the woman in John 8:11. Why do you think Jesus gave her this instruction? (page 16)
  - Based on His words and actions, what do you think Jesus believed about this woman caught in adultery? Why does this matter for us today? (pages 14–15) What do you think Jesus believes about you, right now, just as you are?
  
3. Shame attempts to disqualify and condemn us from the love and acceptance our hearts so deeply crave. From others' biting words, unlovable actions, or blatant sin we can experience a deep sense of shame that clouds our understanding and belief that we are loved. The shame we feel from others' judgment or rejection coupled with the angst that festers from our own sin reminds us we fall short. And regardless of whether our shame results from others' sin or our own sin, it leaves us with a shattered view of self and despair for who we are. (Day 2)
  - Have you ever felt disqualified to receive love and acceptance? Why do you think we sometimes believe the lie that we are unworthy of being loved and accepted?
  - Read Isaiah 53:5 and 1 Peter 2:24-25. What did Jesus endure on our behalf? What did His sacrifice produce? (page 20)
  - How is our righteousness in Christ connected to our freedom from shame?
  
4. Sin and shame, like bad apples, can rot our hearts, causing us to forget the taste of freedom in Jesus. But there is sweet freedom in the unending love of Jesus! And with the help of the Holy Spirit, we can learn to walk in that freedom. (Day 2)
  - Read Galatians 5:16-23. According to these verses, what happens when we walk by the Spirit? What word is used here for the evidence of the Spirit in our lives? (pages 21–22)
  - What fruit does sin produce in our lives?
  - What fruit is produced in us as we walk in the Spirit?
  
5. Jesus knew that shame was to be despised. His cross was to be endured. His cross—a life lived for the glory of God and the salvation of humankind—led to His sacred sacrifice in obedience to the Father. Only when He despised the shame was He able to obediently follow in the path God had planned. Shame

had no place in the life of Christ, and it has no place in yours or mine. The danger of shame is its ability to trip us up, stop us short, and peck at our belief in the God who orders our days. (Day 3)

- When has shame ever tripped you up, stopped you short, or pecked at your belief in God's plan for your life? (page 25)
  - Read Hebrews 12:1-2. How does Jesus show us how to deal with shame? (see the blanks on pages 24–25)
  - What does it mean to “despise” shame?
  - Have you ever despised life's difficulties instead of enduring them? Have you ever endured shame instead of despising it? Explain your responses. (page 26)
6. In our honest communion with Christ we discover life-giving joy that can stand up against anything we encounter. He actually cloaks us in joy as we choose to place our faith in Him. This joy, a gift of our salvation, gives us strength. It gives us feet to stand on when our world comes crashing down—when the person we love ends the relationship or when the unexpected diagnosis alters the life we once knew. Joy provides us with a heavenly perspective of our earthly troubles. It's living proof that Christ dwells richly in our hearts. (Day 3)
- How has joy sustained you when your world came crashing down?
  - Do you look first to Jesus or to something else when you face temptations and trials?
  - How is your “race” going right now? Would you say you are running with the joy of the Lord? If not, why?
7. [Christ] endured the cross so that we could have a place at the table—the table of salvation, freedom, and grace. In Christ, we belong. We are accepted. Because of Jesus, shame has *no place* in our lives. That is incredible news! (Day 4)
- Describe what it means to you to have a place at Christ's table.
  - If in Jesus shame has no place in our lives, why do you think we sometimes can't get free from it?
  - Read Isaiah 53:1-12. What encourages you most from these verses? How does knowing that Jesus experienced rejection yet was victorious over it give you comfort and hope for your own hurts? (page 31)
8. After she was caught in the act, the accused woman in John 8 was paraded in front of a crowd for the sin of adultery—*alone*. Her partner in crime? Absent. She was the one whose feet were held to the fire. The disgust for a woman who was “out of line” came from both parties opposed to Jesus' ministry. While the man who should have been accused of adultery wasn't thrown on center stage to be judged, the Pharisees and teachers of the Law had no qualms throwing a woman under the proverbial bus. (Day 4)

- What are some of the unfair expectations of women that contribute to a culture of shame?
  - Read John 8:3-5. Why do you think the Pharisees and religious leaders chose to publicly shame the woman and not the man? (page 33)
  - What are some ways that you could push back against a culture of shame and offer grace and compassion as Jesus did?
9. The devastating effects of shame can be healed, but not on our own. We need a Helper, a Savior, to rewrite our story and renew our thinking. We need Him to tell us we aren't beyond repair. We need to know it won't always be like this—feeling like we can't get ahead, stuck in a forsaken cycle of life. (Day 5)
- How has Jesus rewritten your story?
  - Imagine what might have happened to the woman caught in adultery. What might have become of her? How did her encounter with Jesus rewrite her story?
  - Read 1 John 3:20. What does this passage indicate about the power of Jesus? How does this verse encourage you? (page 37)
10. It's the healing grace of God that steers our ship away from lies of shame and condemnation for who we are, where we have come from, what we have done, and what we look like. Shame will always try to convince us that we are a colossal problem never to be solved. That is the danger of shame; its power lies in deceit and sour thinking. But God, in His infinite kindness, longs to rid us of our disgrace by convincing us we are worthy and whole. We can see His handiwork when we speak over ourselves His promises of healing, mercy, and outright grace. (Day 5)
- Read Matthew 11:28-30; Romans 6:14; Ephesians 2:8-9; 4:7; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 4:16; and 2 Peter 1:2. What is the recurring theme in these promises? (see page 39) How can these promises silence the voice of shame?
  - Is there an area of your life that is out of balance? An area where you are trying to call the shots? (page 38)
  - What does it mean that grace “lifts us up, dusts us off, and gives room to grow, forgive, and move on”? How have you seen that to be true in your own life?
11. Think about all of your study and reflection this week.
- What thoughts or discoveries are sticking with you from this week's study?

### **Deeper Conversation (15 minutes)**

Divide into smaller groups of 2–3 for deeper conversation. (Encourage the women to break into different groups each week.) Before the session, write on a markerboard or chart paper the question or questions you want the groups to discuss:

- What has stirred in your spirit through your weekly readings and today's discussion?
- What are some promises from Scripture that encourage your spirit when you are feeling shame and loneliness? Search the Bible together now and identify verses that might light a path to wholeness.
- How will you be different because of what God is doing in your heart?

Give a two-minute warning before time is up so that the groups may wrap up their discussion.

### **Closing Prayer (3–5 minutes, depending on session length)**

Close the session by taking personal prayer requests from group members and leading the group in prayer. As you progress to later weeks in the study, you might encourage members to participate in the Closing Prayer by praying out loud for one another and the requests given.