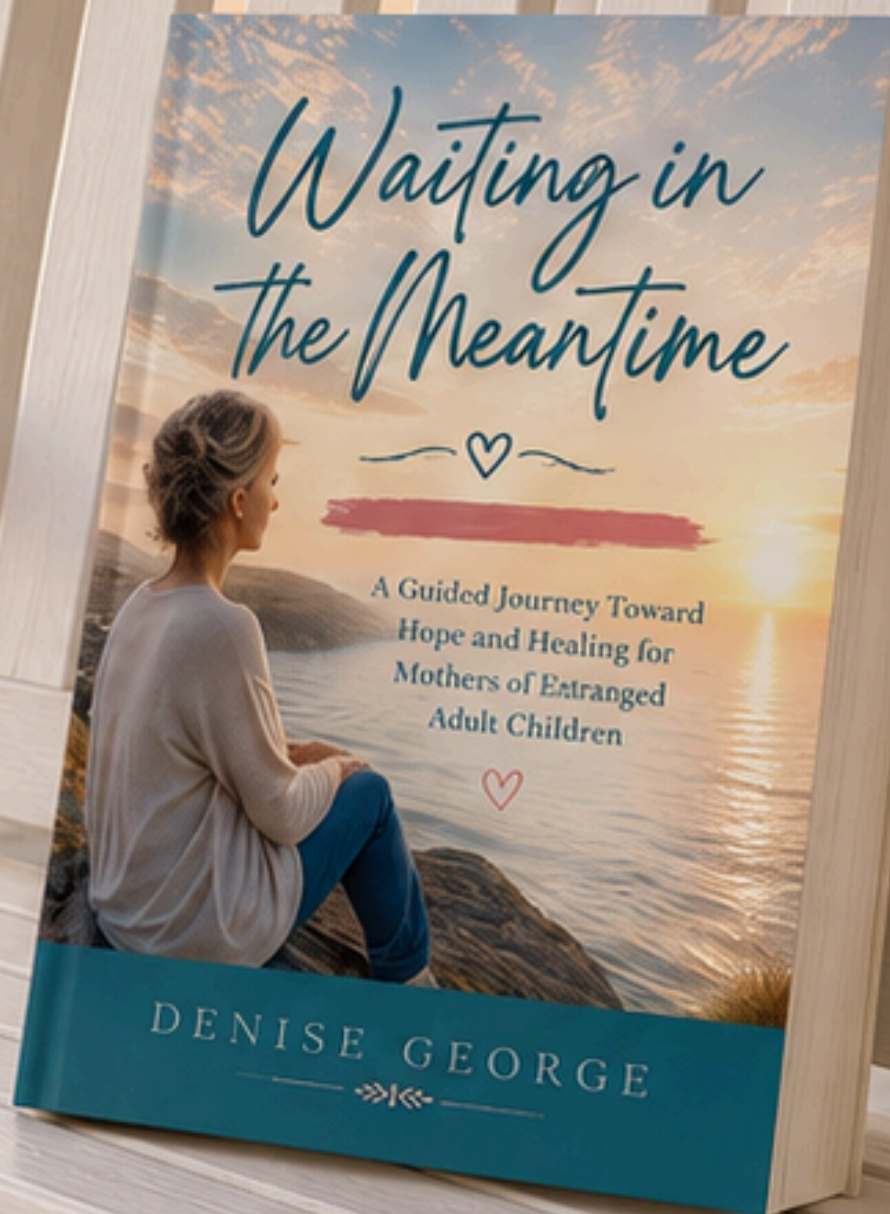


LEADER'S GUIDE

By Denise George



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Waiting in the Meantime:

**A Guided Journey Toward Hope and Healing
for Mothers of Estranged Adult Children**

Introduction for Group Leaders

Thank you for your willingness to lead this study. By opening your heart, home, church classroom, or meeting space to mothers who are experiencing estrangement from an adult child, you are providing a priceless gift: a safe place to be seen, heard, understood, and encouraged.

Many women arrive at this study carrying deep wounds. Some have not seen their adult child in months or years. Others have been separated from grandchildren. Many are struggling with grief, fear, shame, guilt, anger, confusion, loneliness, and unanswered questions. Some may feel reluctant to share their experiences. Others may be eager to tell their story. Your role is not to counsel, fix, solve, or rescue participants. Your role is to guide discussion, encourage participation, keep the group focused on God's Word, and help create a safe environment where healing can begin.

As the leader, you do not need to have all the answers. In fact, it is perfectly acceptable to say, "I don't know." The purpose of this study is not to solve estrangement but to help women walk faithfully with Christ while trusting Him with what they cannot control.

Suggested Session Format

I would recommend **75-90 minutes per week**. Why? Less than an hour will feel rushed. More than 90 minutes becomes emotionally exhausting, especially given the subject matter. Here is a suggested format:

Welcome and Fellowship — 10 minutes

- Greeting
- Light refreshments (optional)
- Informal conversation

Opening Prayer — 5 minutes

Discussion of Weekly Material — 45-55 minutes

- Focus on the discussion questions
- Allow participants to share as desired
- Keep discussion moving if one person dominates

Prayer Requests and Group Prayer — 15-20 minutes

Closing Encouragement — 5 minutes

Total — 75-90 minutes

Helpful Tips for Leading This Group

Here are some tips that might help:

- Silence is okay. Give participants time to think.
- Tears are okay. This is a safe place for grief.
- Do not pressure anyone to share.
- Avoid giving unsolicited advice.
- Listen more than you speak.
- Keep discussion focused on the weekly topic.
- Encourage participants to complete the workbook between meetings.
- Pray often and sincerely.

Some Troubleshooters:

- What if someone dominates the discussion?

Every leader eventually faces this. If this happens in your group, you might thank the participant for sharing and gently redirect by saying, "Thank you for sharing that. I'd also love to hear from some of the others."

- What if someone begins giving advice?

This is a big one. Many hurting mothers do not need more advice. They need understanding. You might want to encourage participants to share their experiences rather than prescribe solutions. Each estrangement situation is unique, and what worked in one family may not be appropriate in another.

- What if someone cries?

Let participants know that tears are welcome in the group. Do not rush to stop them. Do not change the subject. Allow participants time to experience and express their emotions.

- What if someone misses a week?

Encourage participants to complete the missed week's material before attending the next session whenever possible. Remind them that the workbook is designed to be beneficial whether completed individually or in a group setting.

End-of-Study Celebration:

Here are some ideas for closing the study in a celebratory way:

- Share one lesson learned.
- Exchange contact information.
- Continue meeting monthly if desired.
- Pray over each participant individually.
- Enjoy a simple celebration meal or dessert.

Guidelines for the Group Participants

Please share these guidelines with your group's participants.

- Maintain confidentiality. What is shared in the group stays in the group.
- Respect each person's story. Avoid criticism, judgment, or assigning blame.
- Allow everyone an opportunity to participate.
- Listen with compassion rather than attempting to fix another person's situation.
- Encourage discussion but do not force anyone to share.
- Keep conversations focused on the study and Scripture.
- Pray for one another regularly.

For the Leader:

You do not need to be a counselor, therapist, pastor, or Bible teacher to lead this study effectively. You simply need a willing heart, a listening ear, and a desire to point women toward Christ. God often uses ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary ministry. Trust Him to guide your conversations, provide wisdom when needed, and work in the hearts of participants. Your role is not to fix broken relationships but to create a safe environment where women can encounter God's truth, experience His comfort, and find hope for the journey ahead.

Handling Strong Emotions

This study addresses deeply painful experiences. Tears are natural and welcome. Participants may experience sadness, grief, anger, disappointment, or regret. Allow space for emotions while gently guiding the group back to hope found in Christ and His Word.

If a participant becomes overwhelmed, offer compassion and encouragement. If a participant reveals serious emotional distress or a need for professional counseling, encourage her to seek appropriate pastoral or professional support.

Preparing for Each Session

Before each meeting:

- Complete the week's study yourself.
- Pray for participants by name.
- Review the discussion questions.
- Ask God to guide the conversation.
- Arrive with a spirit of grace, humility, and compassion.

May God use this study to bring comfort, healing, renewed hope, and deeper trust in Christ to every woman who participates. Again, thank you for your willingness to lead this group.

Now, let's get started!

WEEK 1: The Grief of Rejection That Estrangement Can Bring

Theme: Grief and the Pain of Rejection

Week 1 establishes the foundation for the entire study. Before participants can address fear, shame, guilt, anger, or any of the other emotions explored in later weeks, they must first acknowledge the reality of their grief.

Many mothers arrive believing they should be stronger, less emotional, or "over it by now." This week gives them permission to recognize their loss honestly and bring it into God's presence.

As a leader, do not feel pressured to solve anyone's pain. Your most important role this week is to create a safe environment where women feel seen, heard, understood, and gently reminded that God cares about every tear they shed. Healing often begins when a person realizes she no longer has to carry her sorrow alone.

The last sentence captures what Week 1 really accomplishes: **Healing often begins when a person realizes she no longer has to carry her sorrow alone.** That is essentially the doorway through which participants enter the entire study.

Session Goal

Help participants recognize that grief is a natural response to estrangement and that God welcomes their sorrow, questions, and tears. Encourage women to begin expressing their grief honestly before the Lord rather than hiding or suppressing it.

Before You Begin

Pray for each participant before the meeting. Ask God to create an atmosphere of safety, compassion, and trust. Many women may be sharing their story for the first time. Others may have carried this burden silently for years.

Opening Prayer—Suggested Only

(You may wish to voice your own prayers to God for the group.

This goes for all prayers in the leader guide.)

Father, thank You for bringing us together today. You know every heart in this room and every burden we carry. Give us courage to be honest, grace to listen well, and comfort through Your Word. Remind us that You see our pain and care deeply about our struggles. Help us experience Your presence today. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Discussion Questions

1. What first drew you to this study?
2. What emotions have you experienced as a result of estrangement?
3. What part of this week's study spoke most deeply to your heart?
4. Which Scripture passage brought you the greatest comfort?
5. What is one truth you want to remember this week?
6. In what ways have you experienced God's presence during this difficult season?

Leader Insights

Many participants have never been given permission to grieve the loss of a living child relationship. Some may feel embarrassed by their sorrow or believe they should be "over it by now." Remind them that grief has no timetable.

Avoid comparing stories or measuring pain. Each woman's experience is unique.

Gently guide participants toward God's character and faithfulness rather than focusing exclusively on the actions of the estranged child.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for hearing every unspoken prayer and seeing every tear. As we leave today, remind us that we never walk this journey alone. Surround each woman with Your peace, comfort, and love. Help us trust You with what we cannot change and rest in Your presence throughout the coming week. In Jesus' name, Amen.

As You Prepare to Lead Week 1:

The Purpose and Goal of Week 1

Week 1 lays the foundation for the entire study by addressing the grief that accompanies estrangement from an adult child. Many mothers arrive carrying profound sorrow but have never fully acknowledged or processed that grief. Some have spent months or years suppressing painful emotions, attempting to remain strong, or believing they should simply "move on." This week gives participants permission to recognize their loss honestly and view it through the lens of Scripture. The goal is not to remove grief but to help mothers understand that grief is a normal and understandable response to the loss of a cherished relationship. Participants are encouraged to bring their sadness, questions, disappointments, and heartache into God's presence, trusting that He sees, understands, and cares deeply about every tear they shed.

How This Week Helps Participants

Week 1 helps participants realize they are not alone in their experience. Many estranged mothers feel isolated, misunderstood, or ashamed of their pain. Through biblical teaching, personal reflection, journaling, prayer, and group discussion, women

begin to discover that their grief matters to God and that He invites them to bring every emotion honestly before Him. This week's material helps participants identify emotions they may have ignored or buried and provides a safe framework for expressing them in healthy ways. As women begin acknowledging their grief rather than denying it, they often experience relief, validation, and a renewed sense of God's presence. This foundation prepares them for the healing work that unfolds throughout the remainder of the study.

A Prayer for You, the Leader

Heavenly Father, as I prepare to lead this session, fill me with Your wisdom, compassion, and grace. Help me create a safe place where each woman feels welcomed, valued, heard, and understood. Give me a listening heart, a gentle spirit, and sensitivity to the needs of those You bring into this group. Remind me that I do not need to have all the answers, for You alone are the source of comfort and healing. Use Your Word, Your Spirit, and our time together to begin bringing hope to hearts that are hurting. May every participant leave knowing she is deeply loved by You and never walks this journey alone. In Jesus' name, Amen.

WEEK 2: When Fear and Worry Take Hold: Trusting God with What You Cannot See or Control

Theme: Fear, Anxiety, and Learning to Trust God

This one is especially powerful because Week 2 often uncovers fears that participants have carried silently for years. The purpose statement helps you, as the leader, understand that the week's objective is not to solve those fears but to help women transfer them from their own shoulders to God's capable hands.

Session Goal

Help participants identify the fears they carry regarding their estranged adult child, grandchildren, family relationships, future circumstances, and unanswered questions. Encourage them to place those fears into God's capable hands and trust His loving care, even when they cannot see what He is doing.

Before You Begin

Many mothers carry fears they rarely express aloud. Some worry about their child's physical safety, spiritual condition, finances, marriage, health, or future. Others fear they will never see their child or grandchildren again. Some fear growing older alone or facing future hardships without family support. Pray that God will help participants honestly acknowledge their fears while discovering His peace and faithfulness.

Opening Prayer

Father, You know the fears we carry in our hearts. You know the worries that keep us awake at night and the questions that have no easy answers. Thank You that nothing about our children, grandchildren, or future is hidden from You. As we meet today, help us release our fears into Your hands and trust Your loving care. Fill us with Your peace and remind us that You are always at work, even when we cannot see it. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Discussion Questions

1. Which fear discussed in this week's study most closely reflects your own experience?
2. How has fear affected your emotions, thoughts, or daily life?
3. What worries are most difficult for you to release to God?

4. Which Scripture passage from this week's study brought you the greatest comfort or reassurance?
5. Have you seen evidence of God's faithfulness during this season, even in small ways?
6. What practical step can you take this week to replace fear with trust?

Leader Insights

Fear often convinces us that we must somehow control situations that are beyond our control. Gently remind participants that trusting God does not mean ignoring reality; it means believing that God is present and working even when circumstances remain difficult.

Some women may express fears about their child's salvation, safety, marriage, health, finances, or parenting. Encourage the group to respond with compassion rather than advice. Often the greatest gift we can offer one another is a listening ear and faithful prayer.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for being our refuge and strength. Thank You that we never face our fears alone. We place our children, grandchildren, unanswered questions, and uncertain futures into Your hands. Help us trust You one day at a time. Replace our anxiety with Your peace and our worry with confidence in Your faithfulness. As we leave today, remind us that You are watching over those we love even more carefully than we ever could. In Jesus' name, Amen.

As You Prepare to Lead Week 2

The Purpose and Goal of Week 2

Week 2 focuses on the fears and anxieties that often accompany estrangement from an adult child. Many mothers carry a heavy burden of worry regarding their child's physical safety, emotional well-being, spiritual condition, relationships, finances, future decisions, and eternal destiny. Others fear they may never see their child or grandchildren again, face future illnesses alone, or spend the remainder of their lives with unanswered questions. This week's purpose is to help participants identify the fears that have taken root in their hearts and begin surrendering them to God. The goal is not to eliminate uncertainty but to strengthen trust in the God who sees what they cannot see, knows what they do not know, and remains faithfully at work even when circumstances seem unchanged.

How This Week Helps Participants

Week 2 helps participants recognize how fear influences their thoughts, emotions, decisions, and spiritual lives. Many women have become so accustomed to

carrying worry that they no longer recognize its impact on their peace, sleep, relationships, or walk with God. Through Scripture, reflection, prayer, and discussion, participants learn to replace fearful assumptions with biblical truth. They are reminded that while they cannot control the choices of their adult children, they can entrust those children to the loving care of a sovereign God. As women learn to release fears they were never intended to carry, they often experience greater peace, renewed hope, and deeper confidence in God's faithfulness. This week encourages participants to shift their focus from what they cannot control to the One who holds all things securely in His hands.

Prayer for the Leader

Heavenly Father, as I prepare to lead this week's discussion, help me point each woman toward Your faithfulness and care. Many participants carry fears they may never have spoken aloud. Give me wisdom to listen with compassion, patience to allow each woman space to share, and sensitivity to the work of Your Spirit. Help me gently guide our conversation away from fear and toward trust in You. May Your Word bring peace to anxious hearts and remind each participant that You are watching over the people they love even more carefully than they can imagine. Use this session to strengthen faith, encourage hope, and deepen trust in Your unfailing promises. In Jesus' name, Amen.

WEEK 3: When Shame Moves In: Releasing the Judgments of Others

Theme: Shame and Finding Your Identity in Christ

Of all the weeks, Week 3 may be the one that produces the greatest sense of relief for many participants. Grief and fear are painful, but shame attacks a woman's identity. This week begins the important work of helping mothers separate who they are from what has happened to them.

Session Goal

Help participants recognize the difference between shame and conviction. Encourage mothers to reject the false belief that their worth, identity, or value is determined by the choices of their adult child. Help them embrace their true identity as beloved daughters of God.

Before You Begin

Many mothers silently carry shame. They may believe they have failed as parents, wonder what others think of them, or assume they are somehow responsible for every choice their adult child has made. Pray that God will help participants release false shame and see themselves through His eyes rather than through the lens of rejection, criticism, or regret.

Opening Prayer

Father, thank You for loving us completely and unconditionally. Thank You that our identity is found in You and not in the opinions of others, our circumstances, or the choices of our children. As we meet today, help us recognize and release any false shame we are carrying. Remind us that we are Your beloved daughters, covered by Your grace and deeply loved by You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Discussion Questions

1. Before this week's study, how would you have described the difference between guilt and shame?
2. Have you ever felt judged by others because of your estrangement? How did that affect you?
3. What false messages has shame tried to convince you to believe?
4. Which part of this week's study helped you see yourself differently?

5. Which Scripture passage most clearly reminded you of your identity in Christ?
6. What truth about yourself as God's daughter do you want to remember this week?

Leader Insights

Many participants may have spent months or years carrying burdens God never intended them to carry. Shame often tells us that we are defective, unworthy, or defined by our failures. God's Word tells a very different story. Remind participants that while all parents make mistakes, no parent controls every choice an adult child makes. Some women may become emotional as they realize how much shame they have been carrying. Allow time for reflection and encourage participants to replace shame-filled thoughts with biblical truth. Keep returning the discussion to God's grace, forgiveness, love, and acceptance.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You that our identity rests securely in You. Thank You that we are not defined by rejection, estrangement, regret, or disappointment. Help us see ourselves through Your eyes and believe what Your Word says about us. Replace shame with confidence in Your love, and help us walk in the freedom and dignity You have given us as Your daughters. In Jesus' name, Amen.

As You Prepare to Lead Week 3

The Purpose and Goal of Week 3

Week 3 addresses one of the most painful and often hidden emotions associated with estrangement: shame. Many mothers silently wonder what others think of them, whether they somehow failed as parents, or whether the estrangement reflects their worth as a mother and as a person. Shame whispers damaging lies, convincing women that they are defined by their child's rejection, mistakes from the past, or circumstances they cannot control. The purpose of this week's study is to expose those lies and replace them with God's truth. The goal is to help participants understand that their identity is not determined by the choices of an adult child, the opinions of others, or the pain of estrangement. Their true identity is found in Christ, who loves them, values them, and calls them His own.

How This Week Helps Participants

Week 3 helps participants identify shame-based thinking that may have influenced their emotions, relationships, and spiritual lives for months or even years.

Through Scripture, reflection, journaling, and discussion, women begin to recognize the difference between what shame says and what God says. They discover that while estrangement may be part of their story, it is not their identity. As participants learn to view themselves through God's eyes rather than through the lens of rejection, they often experience greater freedom, confidence, and peace. This week encourages women to release false labels, embrace God's grace, and rest in the assurance that they are beloved daughters of God whose value and worth remain secure in Him.

Prayer for the Leader

Heavenly Father, as I prepare to lead this week's session, help me reflect Your grace, compassion, and truth. Many women carry hidden shame that has weighed heavily on their hearts for a long time. Give me wisdom to create an atmosphere of acceptance and safety where participants feel free to be honest about their struggles. Help me gently point them away from self-condemnation and toward the truth of who they are in Christ. May Your Word silence the lies of shame and replace them with the assurance of Your love. Use this session to help each woman see herself as You see her—valued, cherished, forgiven, and deeply loved. In Jesus' name, Amen.

WEEK 4: When Self-Blame and Guilt Become a Prison

Theme: Guilt, Grace, and God's Forgiveness

Week 4 is often a profound week because many mothers have spent years serving as both prosecutor and judge in the courtroom of their own minds. This lesson begins helping them lay down that role and trust God's grace instead.

Session Goal

Help participants distinguish between true guilt and false guilt. Encourage mothers to honestly acknowledge mistakes they may have made, receive God's forgiveness, and release responsibility for choices that belong to their adult child. Help them embrace God's grace and walk in freedom rather than self-condemnation.

Before You Begin

Many mothers struggle with guilt after estrangement. They replay conversations, revisit parenting decisions, and wonder what they should have done differently. While healthy reflection can be beneficial, excessive guilt often becomes a heavy burden that God never intended them to carry. Pray that participants will experience the freedom that comes from God's forgiveness, grace, and truth.

Opening Prayer

Father, thank You for Your mercy and grace. Thank You that You know every detail of our lives and understand both our strengths and our weaknesses. As we meet today, help us honestly examine our hearts without becoming trapped in guilt or self-condemnation. Where we need forgiveness, help us receive it. Where we are carrying false guilt, help us release it. Remind us that Your grace is greater than our failures. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Discussion Questions

1. What thoughts or memories most often trigger feelings of guilt for you?
2. How has this week's study helped you understand the difference between true guilt and false guilt?
3. Are there parenting mistakes you have struggled to forgive yourself for?
4. What does God's forgiveness mean to you personally?

5. Which Scripture passage from this week's study spoke most powerfully to your heart?
6. What burden of guilt do you need to surrender to God this week?

Leader Insights

Many participants will have genuine regrets. It is important to acknowledge that no parent is perfect. Every mother can identify things she wishes she had done differently. However, regret and guilt are not meant to become permanent companions.

Help participants understand that true guilt points us toward confession, repentance, and restoration. False guilt continually accuses, condemns, and keeps us trapped in the past. Encourage women to focus on God's grace rather than endlessly replaying yesterday's mistakes.

If participants begin listing numerous parenting failures, gently redirect them toward God's forgiveness and the reality that adult children ultimately make their own choices. The goal is not to deny mistakes but to place them under God's grace.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for Your forgiveness and unfailing love. Thank You that we do not have to carry burdens You have already taken upon Yourself. Help us release guilt that keeps us trapped in the past and receive the freedom You offer through Your grace. Teach us to trust Your mercy, rest in Your forgiveness, and walk forward with hope. Thank You that Your grace is sufficient for every weakness, every regret, and every sorrow. In Jesus' name, Amen.

As You Prepare to Lead Week 4

The Purpose and Goal of Week 4

Week 4 focuses on guilt, one of the heaviest burdens many mothers carry after estrangement occurs. It is common for women to replay conversations, revisit parenting decisions, and wonder what they could have done differently. Some carry legitimate regrets, while others assume responsibility for choices that belong to their adult child. The purpose of this week's study is to help participants distinguish between true guilt and false guilt. The goal is to encourage honest self-examination where needed while also helping women receive God's forgiveness, grace, and freedom. Participants are reminded that while no parent is perfect, God does not call them to live under a continual burden of self-condemnation. Instead, He invites them to experience the peace that comes from confession, forgiveness, and trust in His mercy.

How This Week Helps Participants

Week 4 helps participants evaluate their feelings of guilt through the lens of Scripture rather than through emotions, assumptions, or hindsight. Many women discover they have been carrying responsibility for circumstances they did not create and cannot control. Others may identify areas where they need to seek God's forgiveness or extend forgiveness to themselves. Through biblical teaching, personal reflection, prayer, and discussion, participants learn that God's grace is greater than their failures and stronger than their regrets. As women begin releasing false guilt and embracing God's forgiveness, they often experience a renewed sense of freedom, hope, and spiritual rest. This week helps participants stop living in the shadow of yesterday's mistakes and begin walking forward in the light of God's grace.

Prayer for the Leader

Heavenly Father, as I prepare to lead this week's discussion, grant me wisdom, compassion, and discernment. Help me recognize the difference between guilt that leads toward healing and guilt that keeps women trapped in self-condemnation. Give me a gentle spirit as I listen and speak. May Your Word guide our conversation and remind each participant of the forgiveness, mercy, and grace available through Christ. Help the women in this group release burdens You never intended them to carry and find peace in the assurance of Your love. Use this session to bring freedom where there has been bondage and hope where there has been regret. In Jesus' name, Amen.

WEEK 5: When Anger Burns: Finding God in the Fires of Anger, Resentment, and Bitterness

Theme: Anger, Bitterness, and Learning to Release the Hurt

Week 5 is often one of the most transformative weeks in the study because participants begin realizing that healing does not require them to deny their pain. Instead, they learn that God invites them to bring their deepest wounds into His presence, where genuine healing can begin.

Session Goal

Help participants acknowledge anger honestly and biblically. Encourage mothers to recognize the difference between anger and bitterness, understand the dangers of allowing resentment to take root, and begin surrendering their hurt to God. Help them move toward forgiveness without minimizing the pain they have experienced.

Before You Begin

Anger is often one of the most difficult emotions for Christian women to discuss. Many have been taught that anger is always wrong and therefore suppress it, deny it, or feel ashamed of it. Yet anger is a normal response to deep hurt, betrayal, injustice, and loss. Pray that participants will feel safe enough to acknowledge their emotions honestly and allow God to begin healing wounded hearts.

Opening Prayer

Father, You know every hurt we carry and every wound hidden within our hearts. You understand the pain, disappointment, betrayal, and loss we have experienced. Today, help us be honest with You and with ourselves. Show us where anger has taken root and where bitterness may be growing. Give us the courage to surrender these burdens to You and trust You with our pain. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Discussion Questions

1. What did you learn this week about the difference between anger and bitterness?
2. Why do you think anger is often difficult for Christian women to acknowledge?
3. What situations related to your estrangement have caused the deepest hurt?

4. How has unresolved anger affected your relationship with God, others, or yourself?
5. Which Scripture passage or truth from this week's study spoke most clearly to you?
6. What is one hurt you need to place into God's hands this week?

Leader Insights

Some participants may be surprised to discover how much anger they have been carrying. Others may immediately identify feelings of resentment, betrayal, or disappointment. Remind the group that acknowledging anger is not the same as acting on anger. God invites us to bring every emotion to Him honestly.

Forgiveness may become part of the discussion. Gently remind participants that forgiveness is a process, not a single event. Forgiveness does not excuse harmful behavior, erase healthy boundaries, or eliminate consequences. Rather, it releases our right to seek personal revenge and entrusts justice to God.

Avoid pressuring participants to reach a specific place emotionally. Healing often unfolds gradually as women continue bringing their wounds to the Lord.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for loving us even when our hearts are heavy with hurt and disappointment. Help us release anger that has become a burden and protect us from allowing bitterness to take root. Teach us to trust You with the injustices we cannot fix and the wounds we cannot heal on our own. Fill our hearts with Your peace, Your wisdom, and Your grace. Continue Your healing work within us as we walk with You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

As You Prepare to Lead Week 5

The Purpose and Goal of Week 5

Week 5 addresses anger, resentment, and bitterness—emotions many mothers feel but are often reluctant to admit. Estrangement frequently brings deep wounds, broken trust, harsh words, false accusations, rejection, and profound disappointment. These experiences naturally produce anger. The purpose of this week's study is to help participants understand that anger itself is not a sin; rather, it is often a signal that something painful has occurred. The goal is to help women acknowledge their anger honestly before God, recognize the danger of allowing bitterness to take root, and begin surrendering their hurt to the Lord. Participants are encouraged to move toward forgiveness—not because the pain was insignificant, but because God desires freedom and healing for their hearts.

How This Week Helps Participants

Week 5 helps participants identify emotions they may have ignored, suppressed, or denied. Many Christian women feel guilty for being angry and therefore attempt to hide their feelings from themselves, others, or even God. Through Scripture, personal reflection, prayer, and discussion, participants learn that God already knows their hearts and invites them to bring every hurt honestly before Him. This week provides a safe framework for processing disappointment, betrayal, and loss while avoiding the trap of bitterness. As women begin releasing anger into God's hands, they often experience greater peace, emotional freedom, and renewed trust in His ability to handle the injustices they cannot fix. This lesson helps participants understand that forgiveness is not about excusing wrong behavior but about entrusting their pain and desire for justice to God.

Prayer for the Leader

Heavenly Father, as I prepare to lead this week's session, give me wisdom, compassion, and sensitivity. Help me create a safe environment where women feel free to speak honestly about their hurts without fear of judgment. Guard our discussion from bitterness, criticism, or blame, and keep our focus on Your truth and Your healing power. Give me discernment to know when to listen, when to encourage, and when to gently redirect the conversation. May Your Spirit bring comfort to wounded hearts and help each participant take another step toward freedom, healing, and peace. Use this session to replace resentment with grace, bitterness with hope, and anger with trust in Your perfect justice. In Jesus' name, Amen.

WEEK 6: When You Miss Your Grandchildren: Trusting God with the Little Ones You Can No Longer Hold

Theme: The Unique Grief of Losing Contact with Grandchildren

Week 6 is often the most emotional week of the entire study because it touches a secondary loss that many people overlook. Mothers may grieve the estrangement from their adult child, but many grandmothers grieve daily for grandchildren they miss, milestones they never witness, and memories they are unable to make. This week's purpose is not only to comfort that grief but also to remind participants that God's loving care extends to every grandchild, every day, whether a grandmother can see it or not.

Session Goal

Help participants acknowledge the profound grief that often accompanies separation from grandchildren. Encourage mothers and grandmothers to entrust their grandchildren to God's loving care, remain faithful in prayer, and find comfort in knowing that God is actively at work in the lives of those they love.

Before You Begin

For many participants, this may be one of the most emotional weeks of the study. Some women have been separated from grandchildren they helped raise. Others have never met a grandchild or have missed important milestones, birthdays, holidays, school events, and daily moments they once treasured. Pray for wisdom, compassion, and sensitivity as participants share their experiences.

Opening Prayer

Father, You know the deep love we have for our grandchildren and the sorrow many of us feel because of separation and loss. Thank You that You know each child by name, see every moment of their lives, and love them even more than we do. As we meet today, comfort our hearts, strengthen our faith, and remind us that no child is ever beyond Your reach. Help us trust You with those we love so dearly. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Discussion Questions

1. What part of this week's study spoke most directly to your heart?
2. What has been the most difficult aspect of being separated from your grandchildren?
3. How have you experienced God's comfort during this season of loss?
4. Which Scripture passage gave you the greatest hope regarding your grandchildren?
5. What helps you continue praying when you cannot see what God is doing?
6. What truth about God's care for your grandchildren do you want to remember this week?

Leader Insights

This week may bring tears and strong emotions. Allow participants time to share memories and losses if they wish. Listening with compassion is often more helpful than offering solutions.

Some participants may express guilt about not being present in their grandchildren's lives. Others may fear that their grandchildren will forget them or never know how deeply they are loved. Gently remind the group that God remains present in every child's life and is able to work in ways we cannot see or understand.

Encourage participants to continue praying faithfully for their grandchildren. Remind them that prayer is not a last resort—it is one of the most powerful ways they can continue loving and influencing those they cannot presently reach.

If appropriate, invite participants to share one specific prayer request related to a grandchild and spend time praying together before concluding the session.

Closing Prayer

Father, we place our grandchildren into Your loving and capable hands. Thank You for knowing every detail of their lives and for watching over them day and night. When we feel helpless, remind us that You are never helpless. When we cannot be present, You are there. Strengthen our faith, comfort our hearts, and help us trust Your plans and purposes for each child. May our prayers continue to surround them with love and grace. In Jesus' name, Amen.

As You Prepare to Lead Week 6

The Purpose and Goal of Week 6

Week 6 addresses the unique and often overlooked grief of being separated from grandchildren. For many mothers, estrangement involves not only the loss of a relationship with an adult child but also the heartbreaking loss of precious connections with grandchildren they deeply love. Some participants may have helped raise their grandchildren, cared for them regularly, attended school events and birthday

celebrations, or shared a close and meaningful bond. Others may have been prevented from building a relationship at all. The purpose of this week's study is to acknowledge this profound loss and validate the sorrow that accompanies it. The goal is to help participants entrust their grandchildren to God's loving care, find comfort in His promises, and continue expressing their love through faithful prayer even when direct contact is no longer possible.

How This Week Helps Participants

Week 6 helps participants understand that their grief over lost relationships with grandchildren is real, significant, and worthy of God's attention. Many women feel isolated because others fail to recognize the depth of this particular loss. Through Scripture, reflection, prayer, and discussion, participants are reminded that God knows each grandchild by name, sees every circumstance, and remains actively involved in their lives.

Women learn that while their opportunities for influence may have changed, their role as prayer warriors has not. This week's material helps participants move from feelings of helplessness toward renewed confidence in God's ability to work in the lives of their grandchildren. It encourages them to continue loving, praying, trusting, and hoping, knowing that God's reach extends far beyond their own.

Prayer for the Leader

Heavenly Father, as I prepare to lead this week's session, fill me with compassion, wisdom, and sensitivity. You know the deep love these women carry for their grandchildren and the sorrow many feel because of separation. Help me create a safe place where participants can share openly, grieve honestly, and find comfort in Your presence. Give me the right words to encourage, the patience to listen well, and the discernment to respond with grace. Above all, help me continually point each woman toward Your faithfulness and Your unfailing love. May this session remind every participant that while circumstances may separate them from their grandchildren, nothing can separate those children from Your watchful care. Strengthen our faith and renew our hope as we trust You with those we love most. In Jesus' name, Amen.

WEEK 7: Empty Chairs at Christmas: When the Holidays Hurt

Theme: Holidays, Special Days, and Trusting God in Difficult Seasons

Week 7 often becomes a deeply meaningful session because participants realize they are not alone in dreading certain dates on the calendar. The lesson helps them understand that while holidays and special occasions may never look exactly as they once did, God can still meet them there. He can provide comfort in the emptiness, peace in the uncertainty, and even moments of unexpected joy as they learn to trust Him with the seasons they cannot change.

Session Goal

Help participants prepare emotionally and spiritually for holidays, birthdays, Mother's Day, Christmas, family gatherings, and other special occasions that often intensify feelings of loss and loneliness. Encourage mothers to bring their disappointment honestly to God while learning to create meaningful new traditions and memories.

Before You Begin

Many participants will identify this as one of the most difficult aspects of estrangement. Holidays often highlight empty chairs, absent grandchildren, unanswered invitations, and unmet expectations. Special days that once brought joy may now bring sadness and grief. Pray that God will use this session to replace dread with hope and help participants discover His presence even during difficult seasons.

Opening Prayer

Father, You know the special days that bring both joy and sorrow to our hearts. You understand the pain of empty chairs, unanswered invitations, and family traditions that have changed. As we meet today, help us bring our disappointment, sadness, and longing to You. Remind us that Your presence remains constant through every season and every holiday. Fill us with hope and help us trust You with the days ahead. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Discussion Questions

1. Which holidays, family celebrations, or special occasions have been most difficult for you since the estrangement began?

2. What emotions do you typically experience as these special days approach?
3. How has this week's study changed the way you think about upcoming holidays or family gatherings?
4. What comfort did you find in the biblical examples discussed in this week's study?
5. Are there new traditions, activities, or opportunities God may be inviting you to embrace during this season of life?
6. What truth from God's Word do you want to carry with you into future holidays and special occasions?

Leader Insights

Many participants will share painful memories connected to holidays, birthdays, Mother's Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, or family milestones. Allow women to express their sadness honestly without rushing to "fix" their feelings.

Gently remind participants that grief often resurfaces during meaningful dates and celebrations. This does not mean they are failing or moving backward in their healing journey. It simply reflects the significance of the relationships they miss. Encourage women to consider ways they can continue living fully in the present while still honoring the people they love. New traditions do not replace old ones, but they can become evidence of God's continued faithfulness and provision.

Help the group focus on what remains true: God's presence, God's love, God's faithfulness, and God's promises remain unchanged regardless of family circumstances.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for walking with us through every season of life. Thank You that even when special days bring sorrow, You remain our source of comfort, strength, and hope. Help us face future holidays and family celebrations with confidence in Your faithfulness. Teach us to cherish good memories, release unmet expectations, and trust You with the future. Fill our hearts with Your peace and remind us that we are never alone. In Jesus' name, Amen.

As You Prepare to Lead Week 7

The Purpose and Goal of Week 7

Week 7 focuses on holidays, birthdays, Mother's Day, Christmas, family gatherings, and other special occasions that often intensify the pain of estrangement. While grief may ebb and flow throughout the year, it frequently resurfaces during seasons that once held treasured family traditions and joyful memories. Empty chairs, unopened gifts, missing grandchildren, and absent family members can make these occasions particularly difficult. The purpose of this week's study is to help participants

prepare emotionally and spiritually for these challenging seasons rather than being caught off guard by them. The goal is to encourage women to bring their disappointment, sadness, loneliness, and unmet expectations honestly before God while learning to find comfort in His presence and faithfulness. Participants are reminded that although family traditions may change, God's love, care, and companionship remain constant.

How This Week Helps Participants

Week 7 helps participants understand that grief often returns during meaningful dates and celebrations and that these emotional responses are normal. Many women feel discouraged when sadness resurfaces during holidays, believing they should have "moved on" by now. This week's material reassures participants that such feelings are a natural part of loving deeply and experiencing loss. Through Scripture, reflection, prayer, and discussion, women learn practical ways to navigate difficult seasons with grace and faith. They are encouraged to release unrealistic expectations, create healthy new traditions when appropriate, and focus on God's presence rather than what is missing. As participants learn to entrust special days to the Lord, they often discover renewed peace, hope, and the freedom to experience joy again without guilt.

Prayer for the Leader

Heavenly Father, as I prepare to lead this week's discussion, fill me with Your wisdom, compassion, and understanding. You know how difficult holidays, birthdays, and special occasions can be for women who are separated from their children and grandchildren. Help me create an atmosphere where participants feel safe sharing both their sorrow and their hopes. Give me a listening heart, gentle words, and sensitivity to the emotions that may surface during our conversation. Use Your Word to bring comfort where there is sadness, peace where there is anxiety, and hope where there is discouragement. Remind each woman that Your presence is not dependent upon circumstances and that You walk faithfully beside her through every season. May this session strengthen faith, encourage perseverance, and point hearts toward the lasting hope found in You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

WEEK 8: Trusting God with the Rest of Your Story: When Hope Returns

Theme: The Day I Stopped Waiting—Living Faithfully While Trusting God with the Future

Week 8 is the destination toward which the entire study has been moving. It does not promise that every estranged relationship will be restored, nor does it minimize the pain that participants have experienced. Instead, it offers something even more enduring: the assurance that God remains faithful regardless of what happens next. Women leave understanding that they can continue praying, continue hoping, continue loving, and at the same time continue living. The study closes not with an ending, but with a new beginning—a life lived one day at a time, trusting the God who holds both their present and their future securely in His hands.

Session Goal

Help participants move from placing life on hold to embracing the life God has given them today. Encourage mothers to continue loving and praying for their estranged adult children while surrendering the future to God. Help them leave the study with renewed hope, purpose, and confidence in God's faithfulness.

Before You Begin

This final session may bring a mixture of emotions. Some participants will feel encouraged and hopeful. Others may still be carrying deep sorrow. Remind the group that healing is a journey, not a destination. The goal of this study has never been to eliminate pain or guarantee reconciliation. Rather, it has been to help mothers walk faithfully with Christ while trusting Him with what they cannot control.

Take time to celebrate the courage it took for participants to complete the study. Acknowledge the growth, honesty, and faithfulness you have witnessed throughout the past eight weeks.

Opening Prayer

Father, thank You for walking beside us throughout this journey. Thank You for every lesson You have taught us, every burden You have helped us carry, and every moment You have reminded us of Your presence. As we conclude this study, help us move forward with hope and confidence in Your faithfulness. Teach us to live fully in the present while trusting You completely with the future. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Discussion Questions

1. Looking back over the past eight weeks, what has been the most meaningful lesson God has taught you?
2. Which week's study impacted you most deeply and why?
3. What burdens have you learned to release into God's hands?
4. How has your relationship with God changed during this study?
5. What practical step do you believe God is calling you to take as you move forward?
6. What message of encouragement would you share with another mother beginning this journey?

Leader Insights

This session is an opportunity to help participants recognize how far they have come. While circumstances may not have changed, many women will discover that God has changed them. Encourage participants to reflect on the growth they have experienced in their faith, perspective, and trust.

Remind the group that hope is not dependent upon reconciliation. While we continue to pray for restoration, our ultimate hope rests in Christ alone. God remains faithful regardless of what tomorrow holds.

Some participants may feel anxious about finishing the study. Encourage them to remain connected to Christian friends, church family, small groups, and other sources of spiritual encouragement. Healing continues long after the final session concludes. Consider allowing time for participants to share prayer requests, testimonies, or lessons learned before ending the meeting.

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for Your unfailing love and faithfulness. Thank You for carrying us through seasons of grief, fear, shame, guilt, anger, and loss. Thank You for reminding us that our hope is secure in You.

Today we place our children, grandchildren, unanswered questions, and uncertain futures into Your hands once again. Help us live faithfully, love generously, pray persistently, and trust You completely. Teach us to embrace the life You have given us today while resting in the assurance that You hold tomorrow.

May we leave this study with renewed courage, deeper faith, and confidence in Your promises. And may we never forget that You are working even when we cannot see it. In the strong and loving name of Jesus, Amen.

Optional Closing Activity

Invite participants to complete the following sentence:

"One truth I am taking with me from this study is _____."

Allow each woman an opportunity to share if she wishes. Consider ending the session by praying together, exchanging contact information, or discussing ways participants can continue encouraging one another in the months ahead.

As You Prepare to Lead Week 8

The Purpose and Goal of Week 8

Week 8 serves as the culmination of the entire study and focuses on moving forward with hope while continuing to trust God with the future. Throughout the previous weeks, participants have explored grief, fear, shame, guilt, anger, loss, and the challenges of difficult seasons. Now they are invited to consider what it means to live faithfully in the present rather than placing life on hold while waiting for circumstances to change.

The purpose of this week's study is not to encourage mothers to stop loving their children, stop praying, or stop hoping for reconciliation. Rather, it is to help them understand that they can continue loving and praying while also embracing the life God has given them today. The goal is to help participants release the future into God's hands, trust His timing and purposes, and move forward with renewed faith, hope, and purpose.

How This Week Helps Participants

Week 8 helps participants recognize that healing does not depend upon reconciliation, restored relationships, or changed circumstances. While those outcomes may still be desired and prayed for, true hope rests in God's unchanging character rather than in any specific outcome. Through Scripture, reflection, prayer, and discussion, women are encouraged to stop measuring their lives by what has been lost and begin noticing the blessings, opportunities, relationships, and purposes God continues to place before them.

This week helps participants move from a posture of waiting to a posture of faithful living. It reminds them that God is still writing their story, still working in their lives, and still calling them to serve, love, grow, and experience joy. Participants leave the study with a deeper trust in God's sovereignty and a renewed determination to live fully while resting in His care.

Prayer for the Leader

Heavenly Father, as I prepare to lead this final session, thank You for every woman who has participated in this journey and for the work You have been doing in her heart. Thank You for the tears that have been shed, the burdens that have been released, the truths that have been discovered, and the hope that has been renewed. As we conclude this study, help me encourage participants to keep their eyes fixed on You

rather than on circumstances they cannot control. Give me wisdom to celebrate the progress You have made in their lives while reminding them that You will continue walking beside them long after this study ends. Fill our time together with gratitude, peace, and confidence in Your faithfulness. May each woman leave knowing that her future is secure in Your hands, her life still holds purpose, and Your plans for her are not yet finished. In Jesus' name, Amen.