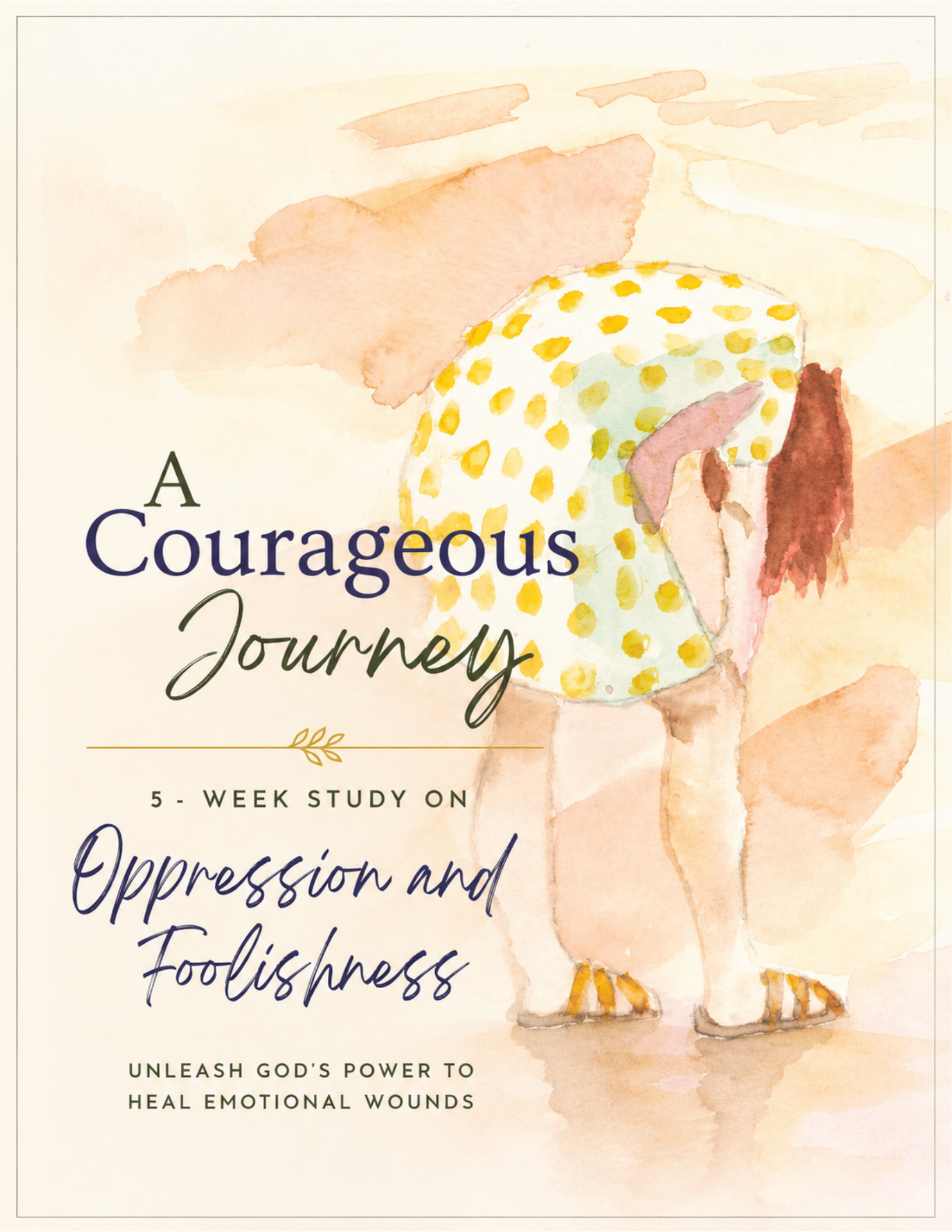




A Courageous Journey

5 - WEEK STUDY ON

Oppression and
Foolishness

UNLEASH GOD'S POWER TO
HEAL EMOTIONAL WOUNDS

Topic Four: Oppression and Foolishness Five-Week Small Group Guide (Weeks 17-21)

Five-Week Small Group Guide

Welcome to the *A Courageous Journey* Study Guide!

I'm so glad you've chosen to begin this journey with others. My prayer is that God will use your time together to bring encouragement, healing, wisdom, and deeper relationships with Him and one another.

Feel free to adapt the suggestions in this guide to fit the unique dynamics of your group. Create an environment where everyone feels safe and respected, free to share deeply, answer briefly, or simply listen. Some weeks, God may be doing a quiet work in someone's heart that isn't ready to be spoken aloud, and that's okay.

As you meet together, remember that every person's story matters. Listen with compassion, avoid the urge to fix one another, and keep what is shared within the group confidential. Both spoken words and quiet moments can become meaningful ways that God teaches and transforms us.

One of the greatest gifts of studying together is learning from one another's experiences. As we share how God is working in our lives, He often uses those stories to encourage others and to reveal what He may be speaking to them as well.

May this journey draw each of you closer to Christ, and to one another.

Week 1: God's Heart for the Hurting

Personal study recap: This week you examined the heart of God and how He both defends and acts on behalf of those who are hurting.

Opening question:

- Where have you seen God at work on behalf of the wounded and broken? What did it look like?

Discussion Questions:

1. When have you experienced God's protective heart and capable hands working on your behalf?
2. What Bible passages from this week's study comforted or encouraged you?
3. How has this week changed the way you see God's heart toward those who are hurting?
4. Who has God used in your life to remind you of His heart for the hurting?

Digging Deeper: This week's Digging Deeper invited you to reflect on a specific incident in your life during which you were oppressed or treated badly, asking God where He was when it happened, how His perspective on that situation might differ from yours, and what healing or restoration He is offering that you may have overlooked while focusing on the injury. Share as much or as little as you feel comfortable sharing.

You do not have to share the details of your experience. If you prefer to keep those private, consider sharing this with the group instead:

"One question I have had about where God was during a painful experience is _____, and what I sense His perspective on that situation might be is _____."

Closing prayer: Close your time together by having one person pray over the injuries and unanswered questions that were brought to mind this week, asking God to reveal His presence in those painful moments and to offer the healing and restoration that may have been overlooked.

Week 2: Abigail's Identity and Strength

Personal study recap: This week's story of Abigail showed you that another person's foolishness does not have to determine your response or your identity.

Opening question:

- Which character quality that Abigail displayed do you most want to grow in your own life?

Discussion Questions:

1. When have you let another person's actions dictate how you responded? What might you have done differently?
2. What from this week's study most challenged how you see your identity?
3. What other Bible story reminds you to let God develop character in you, rather than bitterness, in a difficult relationship?
4. How would you have responded if you were put in Abigail's place?

Digging Deeper: This week's Digging Deeper invited you to reflect on a specific incident when you let another's foolish behavior have power in your life, asking God how you might have responded with both wisdom and grace, what boundaries would have honored both yourself and the other person, and how you can apply that wisdom to similar situations in the future. Share as much or as little as you feel comfortable sharing.

You do not have to share the details of your experience. If you prefer to keep those private, consider sharing this with the group instead:

"One way I allowed another person's foolish behavior to have power in my life is _____, and what responding with both wisdom and grace might have looked like is _____."

Closing prayer: Close by having one person pray over each person's desire to respond with wisdom and grace, asking God to strengthen their sense of identity in Him so that no one else's foolishness has the power to diminish who He created them to be.

Week 3: A Wise Response

Personal study recap: You were challenged this week to choose wisdom over emotional reactions.

Opening question:

- What has helped you replace ineffective patterns in your life with Spirit-led ones?

Discussion Questions:

1. What Scripture from this week gave you the most clarity or conviction?
2. Where have you seen the value of discernment, self-control, or seeking godly counsel in your own life?
3. When has the wisest response been to remain silent? What happened?
4. Where do you most need God's wisdom rather than your own reaction right now?

Digging Deeper: This week's Digging Deeper invited you to reflect on a specific incident when you let another's foolish behavior have power over your response, asking God what motivated your reaction in that moment, how you might have responded with His wisdom rather than your own understanding, and what a response that honors both His truth and the relationship would have looked like. Share as much or as little as you feel comfortable sharing.

You do not have to share the details of your experience. If you prefer to keep those private, consider sharing this with the group instead:

"One thing that motivated my reaction in a situation where I let someone's foolishness have power over me is _____, and what responding with God's wisdom rather than my own understanding might have looked like is _____."

Closing prayer: Invite each person to silently bring to mind one relationship or situation where they need God's wisdom rather than their own understanding, then close together in prayer asking God to replace reactive patterns with responses rooted in His truth and grace.

Week 4: Guard Your Heart

Personal study recap: This week you explored the biblical balance between grace and healthy boundaries.

Opening question:

- In practice, what does it look like to protect your heart while extending grace?

Discussion Questions:

1. When have you experienced harmful behavior from someone else? How did you respond?
2. What area of your life did this week reveal needs better guarding or boundaries?
3. What challenges you the most when you think about loving others well and having healthy boundaries?
4. How can you remain tender and loving without becoming vulnerable to emotional harm?

Digging Deeper: This week's Digging Deeper invited you to reflect on a specific incident when your heart was not guarded, asking God how you were affected by not protecting your heart in that situation, what boundaries would have honored both His design for you and the relationship, and how you can better discern which influences to allow into your inner life. Share as much or as little as you feel comfortable sharing.

You do not have to share the details of your experience. If you prefer to keep those private, consider sharing this with the group instead:

"One way I was affected by not guarding my heart in a specific situation is _____, and what a boundary that honored both God's design for me and the relationship might have looked like is _____."

Closing prayer: Close by reading Proverbs 4:23 aloud together, then pray specifically over each person's inner life, asking God to give them discernment about what to allow in and the courage to establish boundaries that protect what He has placed within them.

Week 5: Guard Your Mind

Personal study recap: This final week you focused on renewing your mind through God's truth.

Opening question:

- What practices help you keep your mind on what is true, right, and pure?

Discussion Questions:

1. What lies can you identify in your life that need to be replaced by truth?
2. What Scriptures from this week helped you the most?
3. What thought patterns has this week revealed that can disrupt the peace God has for you?
4. When has the Holy Spirit changed your thinking in a way you couldn't have done on your own?

Digging Deeper: This week's Digging Deeper invited you to reflect on a specific incident when you allowed a difficult person to take away your joy and peace, asking God what thought patterns made you vulnerable in that situation, how your focus shifted away from His truth, and what practices would help you keep your mind set on the Spirit rather than on the flesh when facing similar challenges. Share as much or as little as you feel comfortable sharing.

You do not have to share the details of your experience. If you prefer to keep those private, consider sharing this with the group instead:

"One thought pattern that made me vulnerable to losing my joy and peace in a difficult situation is _____, and one practice I sense God calling me to in order to keep my mind set on the Spirit is _____."

Closing celebration: Take a few minutes to celebrate what God has done in your group over these five weeks. Acknowledge one thing you appreciated about someone else in the group. Close your final session in worship, gratitude, and prayer — and if your group is ready, choose your next topic together.
