

fierce love

COLLECTIVE



What To Do With the Big Emotions of Motherhood

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My Quiet Cave




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WEEK 1

INTRODUCTION

AGENDA



- Introductions
- Group Expectations
- Facts About Mood & Anxiety Disorders
- Expectations
- Acceptance
- Expectations Versus Delight
- Discussion Questions
- Conclusion
- Putting It Into Practice

GROUP EXPECTATIONS

1. I will keep everything shared in this group confidential.
2. I will not judge other women in this group.
3. I will not compare myself to other women in this group.
4. I will respect myself and those around me.
5. I will not give advice or try to “counsel” other Members.
6. I will keep my phone turned off during group.
7. I will show my commitment to my group by attending every session and doing my homework.

Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

FACTS ABOUT MOOD & ANXIETY DISORDERS AMONG WOMEN

FAMOUS WOMEN WITH MOOD & ANXIETY DISORDERS

Brooke Shields - postpartum depression

Emma Stone - anxiety, panic disorder

Demi Lovato - bipolar disorder

Catherine Zeta Jones - bipolar disorder

Adele - anxiety

Oprah Winfrey - anxiety

Hayden Panettiere - postpartum depression

Gwyneth Paltrow - postpartum depression

Drew Barrymore - postpartum depression

Sheryl Crow - depression

- Approximately 12 million women in the United States experience clinical depression each year.**
- One in seven postpartum women suffer from postpartum depression.*
- Baby blues: 60-80% of new mothers experience brief temporary moodiness – crying spells, deep sadness, moments of despair or panic, or feelings of being overwhelmed. However, these experiences are broken up by periods of pleasure and serenity, and can usually be relieved by getting some sleep, getting out of the house or visiting with a friend.
- Anxiety disorders are the most common mental illness in the U.S., affecting 40 million adults ages 18 and older, or 18% of the population.**
- Women are 60% more likely than men to experience an anxiety disorder in their lifetime.**

*Kleinman, K. and Raskin, V.D. (2013) *This Isn't What I Expected*. Da Capo Press, Boston, MA.

**National Institute for Mental Health: [nimh.nih.gov](https://www.nimh.nih.gov)

EXPECTATIONS

What expectations did you have of what motherhood would be like?

What expectations do you have of what motherhood should be like?

CULTURAL EXPECTATIONS

CHILDHOOD EXPECTATIONS

ADULT EXPECTATIONS

EXODUS 2:1-10 (NIV)

¹ Now a man of the tribe of Levi married a Levite woman, ² and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. When she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him for three months. ³ But when she could hide him no longer, she got a papyrus basket for him and coated it with tar and pitch. Then she placed the child in it and put it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile. ⁴ His sister stood at a distance to see what would happen to him. ⁵ Then Pharaoh's daughter went down to the Nile to bathe, and her attendants were walking along the riverbank. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her female slave

to get it. ⁶ She opened it and saw the baby. He was crying, and she felt sorry for him. "This is one of the Hebrew babies," she said.

⁷ Then his sister asked Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?"

⁸ "Yes, go," she answered. So the girl went and got the baby's mother. ⁹ Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you." So the woman took the baby and nursed him. ¹⁰ When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. She named him Moses, saying, "I drew him out of the water."

How have you tried your best and had it look different than the "experts"?

ACCEPTANCE

"When there is a significant discrepancy between what you anticipate and what you actually experience, guilt, confusion and great unhappiness can result."
- Karen Kleinman

Acceptance isn't agreeing with or saying it's OK, rather it's acknowledging disappointment or pain. Because when we are unwilling to do so, it actually leads to more suffering.

EXPECTATIONS VERSUS DELIGHT

How can you delight in accepting your realities?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

KNOWN

PSALM 139 (NIV)

For the director of music. Of David. A psalm.

- | | |
|--|--|
| ¹ You have searched me, Lord,
and you know me. | wonderfully made; your works are wonderful,
I know that full well. |
| ² You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar. | ¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you
when I was made in the secret place, when I
was woven together in the depths of the
earth. |
| ³ You discern my going out and my lying
down; you are familiar with all my ways. | ¹⁶ Your eyes saw my unformed body;
all the days ordained for me were written in
your book before one of them came to be. |
| ⁴ Before a word is on my tongue
you, Lord, know it completely. | ¹⁷ How precious to me are your thoughts, God!
How vast is the sum of them! |
| ⁵ You hem me in behind and before,
and you lay your hand upon me. | ¹⁸ Were I to count them,
they would outnumber the grains of sand –
when I awake, I am still with you. |
| ⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
too lofty for me to attain. | ¹⁹ If only you, God, would slay the wicked!
Away from me, you who are bloodthirsty! |
| ⁷ Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence? | ²⁰ They speak of you with evil intent;
your adversaries misuse your name. |
| ⁸ If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. | ²¹ Do I not hate those who hate you, Lord,
and abhor those who are in rebellion against
you? |
| ⁹ If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
if I settle on the far side of the sea, | ²² I have nothing but hatred for them;
I count them my enemies. |
| ¹⁰ even there your hand will guide me,
your right hand will hold me fast. | ²³ Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts. |
| ¹¹ If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me
and the light become night around me," | ²⁴ See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting. |
| ¹² even the darkness will not be dark to you;
the night will shine like the day,
for darkness is as light to you. | |
| ¹³ For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb. | |
| ¹⁴ I praise you because I am fearfully and | |

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Knowing God cares so much and knows everything about us gives us great significance!

How does it feel to know God knows you so intimately?

How do you need God to fight for you?

CONCLUSION

Where would you like to be at the end of this course?

What obstacles do you want to overcome?



PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Practice letting go of expectations and embracing delight. Answer the following question each day:
How did I choose delight over expectation today?

Day 1 _____

Day 2 _____

Day 3 _____

Day 4 _____

Day 5 _____

Day 6 _____

Day 7 _____

Day 8 _____

Day 9 _____

Day 10 _____

Day 11 _____

Day 12 _____

Day 13 _____


DRAW / DREAM / DOODLE



WEEK 2

ADVOCATING & COMMUNITY

AGENDA



- Week 1 Reflections
- Awareness
- Being Your Own Advocate
- Advocating for Yourself as a Mom
- Community
- Building a Wellness Team
- Resources
- Putting It Into Practice

AWARENESS

In order to advocate for ourselves, it is helpful to first take an inventory and then identify what it is we are experiencing so we know what kind of help we might need.

Warning light	Indicator

NEHEMIAH 2:1-9 (NIV)

¹ In the month of Nisan in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was brought for him, I took the wine and gave it to the king. I had not been sad in his presence before,² so the king asked me, “Why does your face look so sad when you are not ill? This can be nothing but sadness of heart.”

I was very much afraid,³ but I said to the king, “May the king live forever! Why should my face not look sad when the city where my ancestors are buried lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?”

⁴ The king said to me, “What is it you want?” Then I prayed to the God of heaven,⁵ and I answered the king, “If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my ancestors are buried so that I can rebuild it.”

⁶ Then the king, with the queen sitting beside him, asked me, “How long will your journey take, and when will you get back?” It pleased the king to send me; so I set a time.

⁷ I also said to him, “If it pleases the king, may I have letters to the governors of Trans-Euphrates, so that they will provide me safe-conduct until I arrive in Judah?”

⁸ And may I have a letter to Asaph, keeper of the royal park, so he will give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel by the temple and for the city wall and for the residence I will occupy?” And because the gracious hand of my God was on me, the king granted my requests.

⁹ So I went to the governors of Trans-Euphrates and gave them the king’s letters. The king had also sent army officers and cavalry with me.

BEING YOUR OWN ADVOCATE

COMMUNITY

How do you receive support?

When have you felt supported?

BUILDING A WELLNESS TEAM

List your needs and support person:

Needs	Support Person



PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Practice advocating for yourself. Answer the following question each day:

How did I advocate for myself today? Be specific.

Day 1 _____

Day 2 _____

Day 3 _____

Day 4 _____

Day 5 _____

Day 6 _____

Day 7 _____

Day 8 _____

Day 9 _____

Day 10 _____

Day 11 _____

Day 12 _____

Day 13 _____

DRAW / DREAM / DOODLE



WEEK 3

TOOLS & SKILLS FOR WELLNESS

AGENDA



Week 2 Reflections
Discussion Questions
Tools & Skills
HALTS Tool
Sleep Hygiene
Rest
Triggers
Boundaries & Setting Limits
Putting It Into Practice

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

How are you impacted by depression or anxiety?

What have you heard about how to get well?

TOOLS & SKILLS

Medication

Although some women can manage depression or anxiety through supplements and lifestyle, medication may be necessary. God does not have a problem with medication! A woman who takes medication for depression does not have any less faith than a woman who takes medication for diabetes.

Counseling

Counselors are trained to help us process the tough things in our lives. God does not have a problem with counselors and seeing one does not mean that you are not a strong woman.

HALTS* TOOL

H –

A –

L –

T –

S –

*HALTS is adapted from AA

SLEEP HYGIENE

- Mothers with young children are the most sleep-deprived people in the U.S.
- Women need seven to nine hours of sleep per night.
- Sleep deprivation affects the body physically, mentally and emotionally.

REST

MARK 6:30-32 (NIV)

³⁰ The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. ³¹ Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." ³² So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place.

MARK 4:35-41 (NIV)

³⁵ That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." ³⁶ Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. ³⁷ A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. ³⁸ Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

³⁹ He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

⁴⁰ He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

⁴¹ They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

What does rest mean for you?

TRIGGERS

List some personal triggers and identify a way to minimize each one.

BOUNDARIES & SETTING LIMITS

*"Having clear boundaries is essential to a healthy, balanced lifestyle.
A boundary is a personal property line that marks those things for which we are responsible.
In other words, boundaries define who we are and who we are not."
- Townsend and Cloud, *Boundaries**

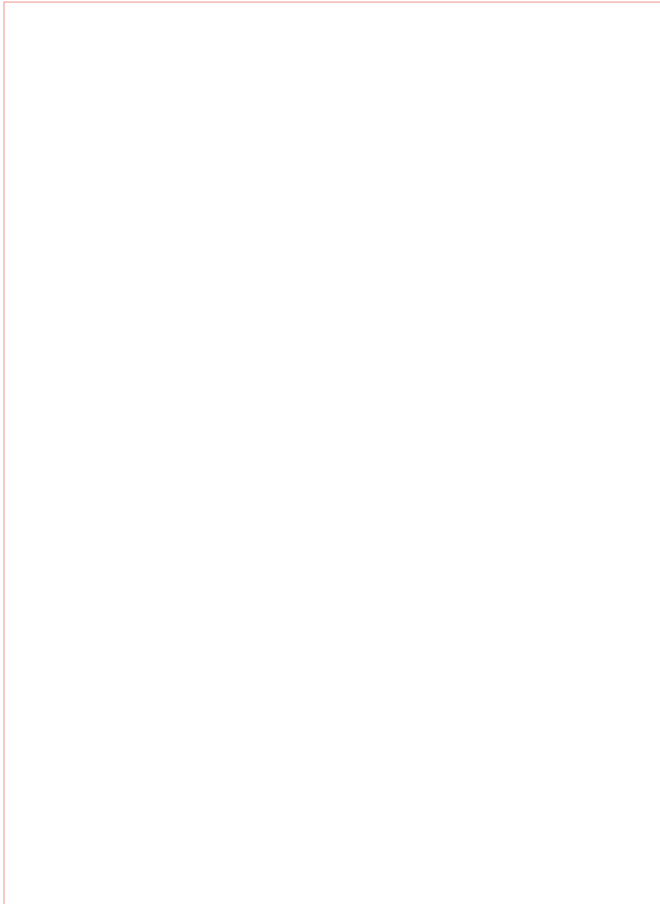
- Can I set limits and still be a loving person?
- What are legitimate boundaries?
- What if someone is upset or hurt by my boundaries?
- How do I answer someone who wants my time, love, energy or money?
- Are boundaries selfish?
- Why do I feel guilty or afraid when I consider setting boundaries?

What boundaries do I need to set for myself?

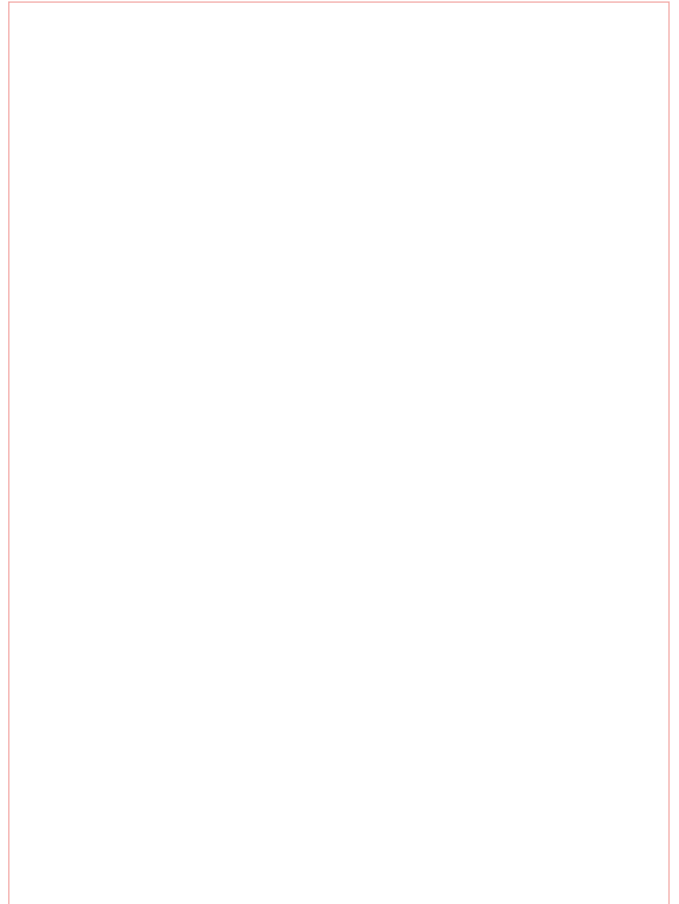


Sometimes, setting boundaries means distancing ourselves from situations or limiting our time around certain people. These types of boundaries could mean taking a break from a friend who mom-shames or even ending a toxic friendship. It could also mean limiting our time on social media.

Life-Giving People & Things



Life-Taking People & Things





PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Practice using HALTS. As you feel triggers, do a HALTS inventory. *What do you notice today?*

Day 1 _____

Day 2 _____

Day 3 _____

Day 4 _____

Day 5 _____

Day 6 _____

Day 7 _____

Day 8 _____

Day 9 _____

Day 10 _____

Day 11 _____

Day 12 _____

Day 13 _____


DRAW / DREAM / DOODLE



WEEK 4

GRIEF & CONTROL

AGENDA



- Week 3 Reflections
- Acknowledging & Grieving Your Losses
- Celebrating Your Scars
- Control
- Thankfulness
- Preparing to Share Your Story
- Why Share Your Story?
- Putting It Into Practice

ACKNOWLEDGING & GRIEVING YOUR LOSSES

What have you given up by being a mother?

What have you gained by being a mother?

celebrating our scars

Celebrating your scars means being thankful for what they represent! Stretch marks represent the ability to get pregnant and to give birth. A messy home represents the blessing of raising a child. Instead of worrying about the changes, focus on the strengths and gains of motherhood and celebrate what those changes represent. Our bodies may be different. Our house may not be as clean or organized as it used to be. But our house and our stretch marks are the costs of bringing someone amazing into the world. It is important not to just focus on the good things, but to celebrate the scars. They represent what we have brought into the world.

CONTROL

When do you feel a loss of control?

What do you do to regain control?

What do you have control over?

What are you trying to control that you don't need to?

Serenity Prayer

*"God grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change,
the courage to change the things I can,
and the wisdom to know the difference."
- Reinhold Niebuhr*

LETTING GO OF CONTROL

MATTHEW 6:25-26 (NIV)

²⁵ "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?"

This passage can be interpreted as a command, but it is an invitation. If you are so much more valuable, how will God look after you? What can you let go of and how can you let it go?

THANKFULNESS

PHILIPPIANS 4:4-7 (NIV)

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵ Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.

⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

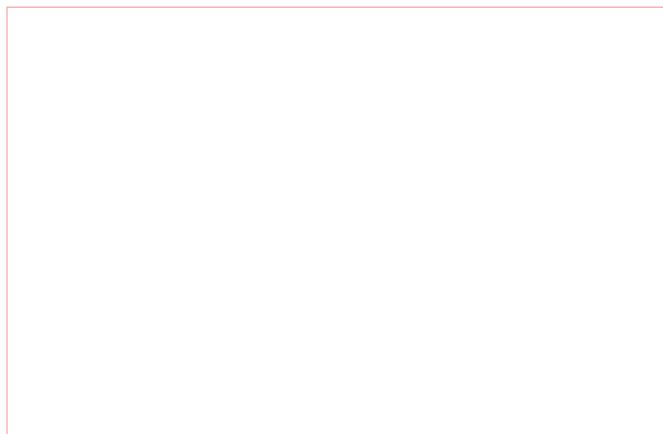
What do you have to be thankful for?

1. What is one thing about your child that makes you smile?
2. What are you looking forward to in the future?
3. What is a quality that others say they like about you?
4. What is one way you have seen God show up in the last week/month/year?
5. What is one answer to prayer you've seen in the last year?

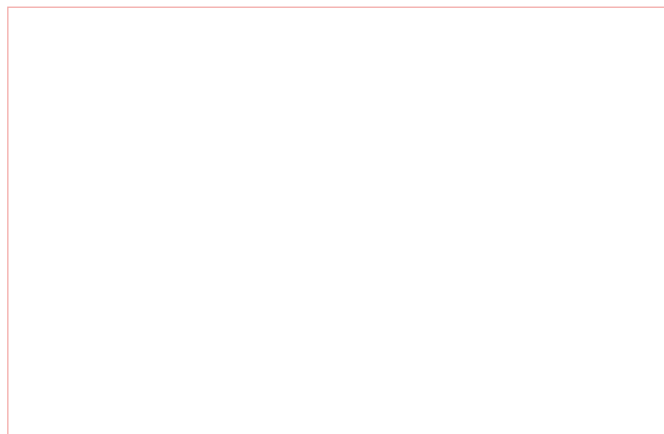
PREPARING TO SHARE YOUR STORY

Write your story. Think of your life in two sections: pre-motherhood and post-motherhood.

Pre-motherhood



Post-motherhood



PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE



1. Prepare to tell your story and be ready to share it.
2. Write your story. To help get started, fill in the pre-motherhood and post-motherhood boxes on the previous page.

Use the following questions to prompt you:

- What are the most important events?
- How do you view yourself and God?
- How did those views change due to critical events in your life?
- What did you give up to be here?

3. Practice thankfulness. Answer the following question each day: *What am I thankful for today?*

Day 1 _____

Day 2 _____

Day 3 _____

Day 4 _____

Day 5 _____

Day 6 _____

Day 7 _____

Day 8 _____

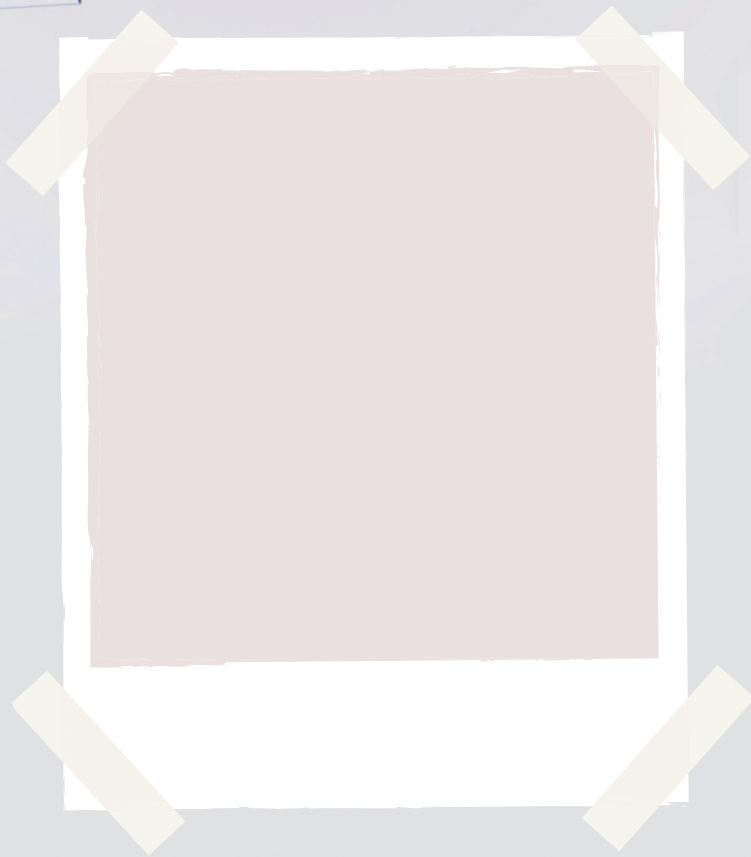
Day 9 _____

Day 10 _____

Day 11 _____

Day 12 _____

Day 13 _____



WEEK 5

SHARING YOUR STORY

AGENDA



Week 4 Reflections
Sharing Your Story
Reflection Questions
Putting It Into Practice

SHARING YOUR STORY

This is a very personal week. Here are some key things to keep in mind while others are sharing: ensure confidentiality, respect time limit and reserve Q&A for later.

INTRODUCTION QUESTIONS

What part of sharing your story most excites you?

What part of sharing your story most concerns you?

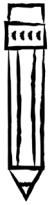
share your story

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

How did telling your story give your life context?

How did telling your story give validity to your struggles?

How has telling your story broken down stigmas of shame, judgement and pain?



PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Reflect on the experience of sharing your story and hearing the stories of the women around you. Answer the following questions:

1. *How did it feel to tell your story?*
2. *How were you received?*
3. *How did it feel to hear someone else's story?*
4. *What did you learn about the women around you?*
5. *What story resonated with you and why?*


DRAW / DREAM / DOODLE



WEEK 6

IDENTITY

AGENDA



- Week 5 Reflections
- Discussion Question
- How We See Ourselves
- Identity in Motherhood
- Roles Versus Identity
- Image of God
- How God Identifies as Mother
- Putting It Into Practice

DISCUSSION QUESTION

What labels did you give yourself while sharing your story?

HOW WE SEE OURSELVES

Who are you?

What does your answer communicate about you?

IDENTITY IN MOTHERHOOD

How would you describe yourself before becoming a mother?

What has changed about you since becoming a mother?

ROLES VERSUS IDENTITY

Being a mom is one of the most important jobs you will ever have. But it is something you get to do, not the core of who you are. It is one of your most important roles, but it is a role. Just like being a wife, having a career, being a friend or a family member.

What about you never changes?

IMAGE OF GOD

GENESIS 1:26-28 (NIV)

²⁶ 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." ²⁷ So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. ²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

Regardless of where you are in your own faith journey, you are valuable and worthy of love because that is how you were made.

How would knowing you are made in the image of God impact your identity as a mother?

HOW GOD IDENTIFIES AS MOTHER

ISAIAH 66:13 (NIV)

¹³ As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you; and you will be comforted over Jerusalem.



PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

As the image bearer of God, you are valuable! Answer the following question each day: *How did I feel valued today?*

Day 1 _____

Day 2 _____

Day 3 _____

Day 4 _____

Day 5 _____

Day 6 _____

Day 7 _____

Day 8 _____

Day 9 _____

Day 10 _____

Day 11 _____

Day 12 _____

Day 13 _____

DRAW / DREAM / DOODLE



WEEK 7

ABIDING

AGENDA



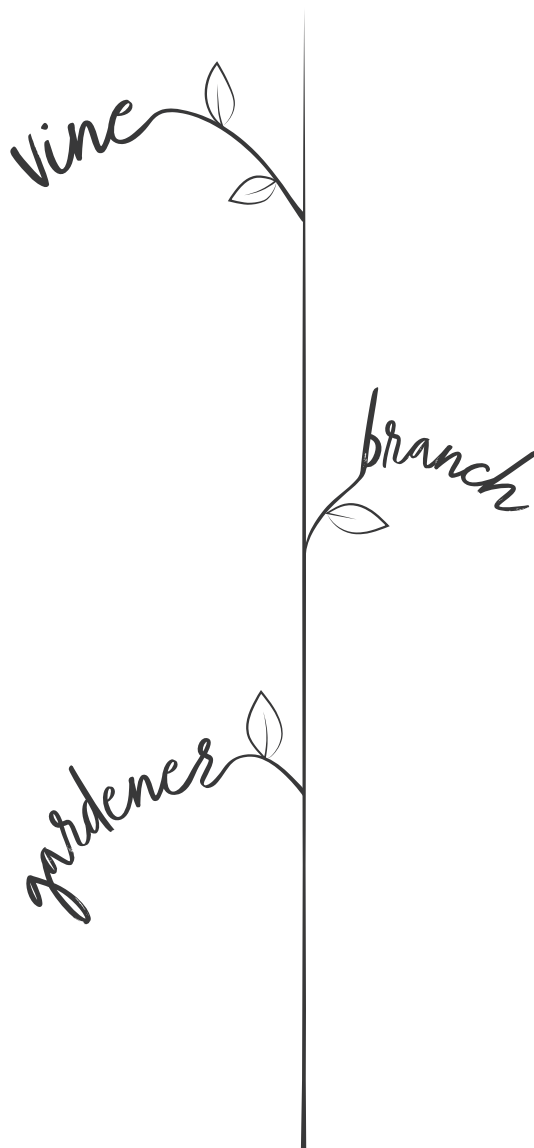
Week 6 Reflections
Abiding
Discussion Questions
Abiding in Action
The Fruit in Our Lives
Plastic Fruit Versus Real Fruit
Putting It Into Practice

What do you think it looks like to interact with God?

ABIDING

JOHN 15:1-4 (NIV)

¹ "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ² He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. ³ You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me."



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What does a vine do?

What does a branch do?

What does a gardener do?

How do we stay connected?

How can you keep your hands open to receive from God?

ABIDING IN ACTION

What does “abiding” mean?

What are you afraid of?

JOHN 8:31-32 (ESV)

³¹ So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples,³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

THE FRUIT IN OUR LIVES

GALATIANS 5:22-26 (NIV)

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.²⁵ Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.²⁶ Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

What do you expect God to do with you?

PLASTIC FRUIT VERSUS REAL FRUIT

What do you want your relationship with God to look like?



PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Practice abiding. Answer the following question each day: *How did I connect with God today?*

Day 1 _____

Day 2 _____

Day 3 _____

Day 4 _____

Day 5 _____

Day 6 _____

Day 7 _____

Day 8 _____

Day 9 _____

Day 10 _____

Day 11 _____

Day 12 _____

Day 13 _____

DRAW / DREAM / DOODLE


set free



WEEK 8

FREEDOM

AGENDA



- Week 7 Reflections
- Review Psalm 139
- Discussion Questions
- Review Expectations
- How Have You Seen Others Grow?
- Follow Up Meeting

REVIEW PSALM 139

For the director of music. Of David. A psalm.

- ¹ You have searched me, Lord,
and you know me.
- ² You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.
- ³ You discern my going out and my lying
down; you are familiar with all my ways.
- ⁴ Before a word is on my tongue
you, Lord, know it completely.
- ⁵ You hem me in behind and before,
and you lay your hand upon me.
- ⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
too lofty for me to attain.
- ⁷ Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?
- ⁸ If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.
- ⁹ If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
if I settle on the far side of the sea,
- ¹⁰ even there your hand will guide me,
your right hand will hold me fast.
- ¹¹ If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me
and the light become night around me,"
- ¹² even the darkness will not be dark to you;
the night will shine like the day,
for darkness is as light to you.
- ¹³ For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
- ¹⁴ I praise you because I am fearfully and
wonderfully made; your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.
- ¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you
when I was made in the secret place, when I
was woven together in the depths of the
earth.
- ¹⁶ Your eyes saw my unformed body;
all the days ordained for me were written in
your book before one of them came to be.
- ¹⁷ How precious to me are your thoughts, God!
How vast is the sum of them!
- ¹⁸ Were I to count them,
they would outnumber the grains of sand –
when I awake, I am still with you.
- ¹⁹ If only you, God, would slay the wicked!
Away from me, you who are bloodthirsty!
- ²⁰ They speak of you with evil intent;
your adversaries misuse your name.
- ²¹ Do I not hate those who hate you, Lord,
and abhor those who are in rebellion against
you?
- ²² I have nothing but hatred for them;
I count them my enemies.
- ²³ Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
- ²⁴ See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

How does God's intimate knowledge of you affect your identity?

How is God fighting for you?

REVIEW EXPECTATIONS

How would being beloved liberate you from expectations?

How have you experienced freedom during this group?

What obstacles do you still need to overcome to experience freedom?

What are my goals moving forward?

HOW HAVE YOU SEEN OTHERS GROW?

Make notes about others in your group below. Be sure to keep your cards and pull them out from time to time to read the positive things said about you.

FOLLOW UP MEETING

TIME / DATE / LOCATION

RESOURCES FOR POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION (PPD)*

POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION INVENTORY

It is recommended that you have a complete physical examination before you and/or a therapist decide that you have PPD. Here are common symptoms that most women suffering from PPD experience. Look over the list and check any statements that correspond to your feelings.

- I can't shake feeling depressed no matter what I do.
- I cry at least once a day.
- I feel sad most or all of the time.
- I can't concentrate.
- I don't enjoy the things I use to enjoy.
- I have no interest in making love at all, even though I am medically cleared to do so.
- I can't sleep, even when my baby sleeps.
- I feel like a failure all the time.
- I have no energy.
- I have no appetite or enjoyment of food (or I have sugar and carb cravings and am compulsively eating all the time).
- I can't remember the last time I laughed.
- Every little thing gets on my nerves. Sometimes, I am even furious at my baby. Often, I am angry at my partner.
- I feel that the future is hopeless.
- It seems I will feel this way forever.
- There are times I feel it would be better if I was dead, than to feel this way one more minute.

NOTES

- Many new mothers will relate to a couple of these statements above, but they will also have periods of good feelings and see their experience as a transition period that will get better.
- Women with PPD usually agree with many or even all of these statements, and feel this way to varying degrees every day.
- If you agreed with four or more of these statements and the symptoms have lasted for two or more weeks, you may be suffering from PPD.
- Adoptive mothers as well as new fathers can also get PPD!
- PPD typically occurs one to three months after childbirth, but can occur immediately or up to one year after birth.

COMMON FEELINGS ASSOCIATED WITH PPD OR THE BABY BLUES

- Helplessness – “I can’t _____.”
- Loss of humor – “That’s not funny.”
- Guilt – “I’m letting everyone down.”
- Self-hatred – “Everyone would be better off.”
- Anger – “I’m sick and tired of everyone around me.”
- Suicidal thoughts or feelings of wanting to hurt your baby warrant immediate intervention!

*Adapted from Kleinman, K. and Raskin, V.D. (2013) *This Isn’t What I Expected*. Da Capo Press, Boston, MA.

CAUSES OF POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION

- Genetic predisposition
- Chronic sleep deprivation
- Colicky or difficult to soothe baby
- Dramatic hormonal changes
- Medical complications of infant or mother
- Predisposition to self-criticism
- Previous PPD or other clinical depression
- Absence of support from family, partner, friends and/or isolation

IF YOU THINK YOU HAVE PPD

- Tell someone you trust who is a good listener and will support you in accessing the appropriate help.
- Ask your doctor or even the Facilitator of this group for a list of trusted therapists who specialize with postpartum depression or perinatal mood disorders.

POSTPARTUM EMERGENCIES THAT WARRANT GETTING PROFESSIONAL HELP **TODAY**

- I am afraid I might harm myself in order to escape this pain.
- I am afraid I might actually do something to hurt my baby.
- I hear sounds or voices when no one is around.
- I do not feel that my thoughts are my own or that they are totally in my control.
- I am being controlled by forces beyond myself.
- I have not slept at all in 48 hours or more.
- I do not feel loving toward my baby and can’t even go through the motions of taking care of him/her.
- I am rapidly losing weight without trying to do so.

*Adapted from Kleinman, K. and Raskin, V.D. (2013) *This Isn’t What I Expected*. Da Capo Press, Boston, MA.

FREE OR LOW-COST STRESS REDUCERS*

- Ask your partner to give night feedings on the weekends.
- Leave beds unmade and close bedroom door.
- Take a nap while the baby naps.
- Take a bath with scented oil.
- Get hooked on an absurd reality show.
- Wear sweatpants.
- Get a free makeover at a department store cosmetic counter.
- Take care of your physical self, including exercise and diet.
- Go for a walk with your baby to get fresh air, even if it is just around the block.
- If your doctor has cleared you to exercise, find a beginner or postnatal yoga class or exercise video on YouTube (do it in your pajamas, with your baby or while your baby naps). There are also YouTube mommy-and-me video exercises designed specifically to do with baby.
- Dance with your baby to music that lifts your spirits.
- Simplify dinner. Order in or defrost a frozen meal.
- Watch a fun movie during the day.
- Ask a family member, neighbor, friend or teen to be a mother's helper for a couple hours. (Note: this is not necessarily a babysitter, rather someone who helps run errands, brings baby to you to nurse, burps baby while you rest).
- Call an old friend you've lost touch with.
- Treat yourself to a grocery or meal delivery (many grocery stores offer first delivery for free).

STEPS TO LETTING GO OF YOUR EXPECTATIONS*

1. Identify the expectation – *"I expected breastfeeding to come naturally like it did for my best friend."*
2. Acknowledge the reality – *"Breastfeeding is painful and my baby is not getting enough milk."*
3. Identify how the discrepancy makes you feel – *"I feel inadequate and frustrated."*
4. Validate and accept your feelings – *"It makes sense that I feel inadequate and frustrated when I am in pain and my baby is upset because she is hungry."*
5. State what you have lost – *"I've lost the sense of competence in whatever I do."*
6. Reframe your new balanced perspective of the situation – *"I have a new appreciation for the differences of each baby and mom. Accepting that I need help with breastfeeding will not only make breastfeeding less painful and give my baby the nourishment she needs, but also reinforces that it is not admitting defeat to advocate for myself and my baby."*

*Adapted from Kleinman, K. and Raskin, V.D. (2013) *This Isn't What I Expected*. Da Capo Press, Boston, MA.

RESOURCES

In an emergency, go to your nearest emergency room or call 911.

NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION HOTLINE AND WEBSITE

- 1-800-273-8255
- **suicidepreventionlifeline.org** Call for yourself or someone you care about. Free and confidential with a network of more than 140 crisis centers nationwide, available 24/7.

LOCAL SUPPORT

	OB-GYNs	Therapists	Psychiatrists	Support Groups
Name				
Phone Number				
Address				
Name				
Phone Number				
Address				
Name				
Phone Number				
Address				

SUPPORT GROUPS

- Postpartum Support International
Find local support groups for postpartum depression and anxiety
postpartum.net/get-help/locations/united-states or call 1-800-944-4773
- Weekly online perinatal mood support meetings
postpartum.net/psi-online-support-meetings
- Resources for Husbands and Partners
postpartum.net/get-help/resources-for-fathers

BOOKS

Becoming Us: 8 Steps to Grow a Family That Thrives

by Elly Taylor

March 2014

This Isn't What I Expected: Overcoming Postpartum Depression

by Karen R. Kleiman and Valerie Davis Raskin, MD

2nd Edition — October 2013

Nobody Told Me: My Battle With Postpartum Depression and Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder

by Wendy Isnardi

2011

The Post-Adoption Blues: Overcoming the Unforeseen Challenges of Adoption

by Karen J. Foli and John R. Thompson

August 2004

The Pregnancy and Postpartum Anxiety Workbook: Practical Skills to Help You Overcome Anxiety, Worry, Panic Attacks, Obsessions, and Compulsions

by Pamela Wiegartz

June 2009

And Baby Makes Three: The Six-Step Plan for Preserving Marital Intimacy and Rekindling Romance After Baby Arrives

by John and Julie Gottman

January 2008

Boundaries: When to Say Yes, How to Say No to Take Control of Your Life

by Henry Cloud and John Townsend

Apr 1992

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THROUGH WHAT
YOU GO THROUGH

Thank you for going through *Fierce Love Collective*.

This is a cooperative effort between MomCo and My Quiet Cave.

My Quiet Cave exists to create spaces for faith and mental health. We believe people with mental health issues should be able to thrive, and participating in their faith should be an asset. We want churches to be a safe space for anyone struggling with mental illnesses or their families.

In addition to this curriculum, My Quiet Cave produces curriculum and training for people with mental illness and their families such as *Overcome: Finding Hope in the Midst of Mental Illness*.

If you would like more information about curriculum and training for your congregation, please visit **myquietcave.org**.



My Quiet Cave

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