**Chapter 1**

**When the Roots Run Deep**



The goal of this chapter is to help God’s hurting people understand the rooted systems in our tree of life and how they may be hindering our ability to thrive and live abundantly in Christ. The chapter explains the two types of emotionally hurting Christians – those that deal with wounds of the past by checking out through negative behaviors and those who choose to rise above by staying busy with seemingly good behaviors. Participants will generally fall within either group. It’s important to emphasize that many hurting people will often start out trying to compensate for the past by being “good” and staying busy. Sadly, when they cannot do it anymore because it is exhausting, they will often check out altogether with negative behaviors that hurt themselves and others. That’s why it is essential that one deals with the rooted systems of the past. Participants need to understand that if the past is not dealt with, they will often repeat it in their families and relationships.

The chapter also establishes the authority of God’s Word to not only expose those toxic rooted systems but heal, redeem, restore, and set free. How? By changing the heart. No human system can do that. This is not behavior modification but real change from the inside out. Only the TRUE COUNSELOR – THE HOLY SPIRIT is able to effect a heart transformation.

As a group leader, you will want to emphasize to your group that chapter 1 through chapter 6 is much like a diagnostic process. They will be exposing the corrupt roots system that they have been operating out of. It can be very overwhelming and very painful initially to face those things that they have been running away from all their lives, but they need to be reminded that they don’t go back alone. Their loving Savior is there with them comforting and wiping away every tear. They should never lose sight of the redemptive side of their pain. Chapters 7 through 10 offer the healing remedy. Always encourage them to hold on to the hope we have in Jesus.

**Group Note:**

Questions about medication and psychological diagnosis might be asked. As a Christian counselor, I personally feel medication should usually (with some exceptions) be used temporarily, with the long-term goal of complete abstinence. I also believe that the symptoms of mental disorders are real, but the difference between the Christian approach versus the secular approach is that we are seeking a spiritual remedy. With that said, the only person that should direct a person off medication should be a psychiatrist or doctor. Please use discretion in this area! Never shame a person who is taking medication and never advise someone to stop taking medication; it could put them in an extremely dangerous situation!

**Self- Evaluation Homework:**

At the end of each chapter is a self-evaluation section. It is essential that each participant take the time to answer each question. This is where the Holy Spirit will begin to cut deep and counsel each heart as they reflect on the questions being asked. This section will also be used as discussion points in your group.

**Morning Meditation Time:**

As a group leader, it is important to encourage participants to grow closer to Jesus. I suggest the following:

* Quiet Time- Time in the morning with Jesus is the most important part of this process. Set aside quiet time every morning for just you and Jesus and let Him speak to you through His word. Give Him your undivided attention with no distractions. Let Him minister to you.
* Prayer- Invite the Holy Spirit, the “True Counselor” to meet with you and reveal to you what He wants you to see in His word and in the counseling assignments that you will be working on.
* Good Place to Start –Reading Psalm and Proverbs every morning according to the day of the month. (Example if it’s December 25th –Read Psalm 25 & Proverb 25)

Additional Reading - Let Him lead you in His word to what He wants to speak to you.

**Spiritual Growth:**

As a group leader, you also want to encourage spiritual growth, especially during the process of healing. Use the guideline below to encourage participants.

* His Word- Throughout this whole journey, your assignments will be paired up with scripture readings varying from chapters, letters, and epistles that breathe life into you.
* Key to Growth- As you are uprooting all the damaging and negative experiences from your life that have left you believing many lies it is so important to replace them with the truth of who God says you are.
* Pearls of Wisdom- As you read through God’s Word, write down the scriptures that speak to you and a brief explanation as to why. This process has you repeating truth in many ways- reading, written, and then verbal as you share them with the group when you do this, God’s Word will take root in your heart.
* First Reading – “The Book of James”