

Known & Loved

52 DEVOTIONS FROM THE PSALMS

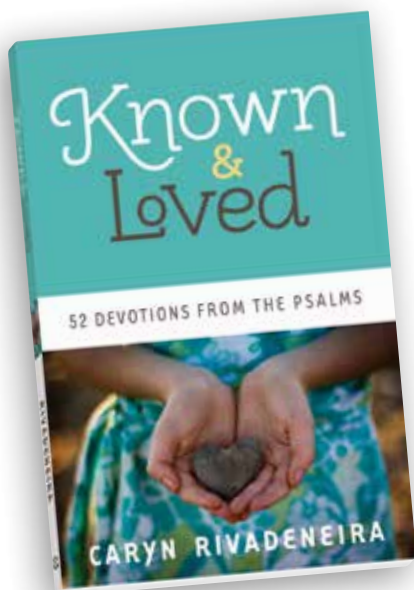
STUDY GUIDE

Known & Loved

Known and Loved is designed to be used either for personal spiritual growth or with a group. However you use the book, the time you invest in reading God's Word and reflecting on who you are in relationship to God is valuable.

If you are reading through individually, you can read the selections at your own pace and use these questions for reflections and journaling. Since there are fifty-two selections, you might decide to read one a day or one a week, but don't feel guilty if you miss a day or week. Just pick it up and start again!

While individual study is important, there is great value in exploring these topics with a group of women who are also seeking after God. You can learn together and encourage each other in your growth. Because the fifty-two devotions have been divided into ten sections, you can use this guide for a ten-session group study. Use it as a starting point and adapt it for your own needs. The questions will highlight a few devotions within each section. Feel free to emphasize different selections to meet the needs of your group. Keep your big-picture goal in mind as you spend time together in your group—to know God and yourself better by spending time in the psalms. See the special notes for group leaders.



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Ground Rules for Group Study

Make your group a safe place for women to take risks and share their thoughts and questions as they explore their own identity and their understanding of God. Agree to confidentiality within the group so there is a safe atmosphere for sharing.

It may also be helpful to encourage women to stick to the Scriptures listed in the devotional for your discussion. Otherwise, women in your group with little knowledge of the Bible might be intimidated by participants who are citing lots of different verses. This focus will also help you keep discussions on track. Also encourage those who are more verbal to listen well and those who are quieter to feel free to share.

Format for Each Session

- Pray for the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to yourself, God, and others through the discussion.
- Start each session by reading aloud the theme psalm for that session.
- Open the conversation by asking participants which devotion in the section was most impactful for them and why.
- Use the specific questions provided.
- Apply the truth of each section by looking up the “What does God say?” verse or verses at the end and discussing how it applies to your personal journeys.
- Spend time praying for one another.

session 1: You Are wonderfully Made

YOU ARE MADE JUST RIGHT

- Share about ways you felt “just right” and ways that you felt “not right” as a child or adolescent.
- Do you carry some of your “not right” feelings into adulthood? Describe how this affects you now.
- How can Psalm 139 reshape your thinking about yourself?

YOU ARE GIVEN UNIQUE DESIRES

- What are some of the unique desires God has placed on your heart?
- What would it look like for you to take a risk and move in the direction of the desires of your heart?

session 2: You Are Held by God

YOU ARE SUSTAINED

- Caryn talks about the exhaustion of motherhood. Share about areas where you need physical or emotional strength for each day.
- What evidence do you see of God sustaining you? If this is hard for you to see, may others in the group encourage you by sharing some of God’s basic daily sustenance?

YOU ARE HEARD

- Share some ways you feel silenced or invisible as a mom.
- Have you had experiences of sharing your voice and being heard? Share how that felt.
- How does the truth of God hearing you and caring for you increase your confidence?

session 3: you are part of god's story

YOU ARE A STORYTELLER

- Think about your own life. Are there certain turning points or key story elements where you can see God's action in your life? Take some time to share a key life story with others in your group.
- Is there a part of your story that you don't like telling?

(Group Leader: If the group is becoming a safe place, encourage these stories as well. Otherwise, encourage women to take personal time this week to acknowledge the hard parts of their stories. You may want to have access to counseling referrals if they are needed from this exercise.)

YOU ARE A CONDUIT OF FAITHFULNESS

- Share places on your family tree where you can see God's faithfulness. If this is a hard exercise for you, think about how you are building your family now. Where can you see God's faithfulness in your family today?
- Dream about what your children will say about your family when they grow up. What sort of legacy do you want them to talk about? What are some small steps you can take to become this kind of family now?

session 4: you are a work in progress

YOU ARE REFINED BY MOTHERHOOD

- Share about ways you have changed since becoming a mom.
- Caryn uses a remodeling analogy. What areas of your life have been "torn out" for you as a person?
- Have some parts of who you are been rebuilt through being a mom? Share about those areas.

YOU ARE AFFECTED BY CHOICES

- What is the difference between consequences and forgiveness?
- Do you feel stuck in some bad choices you have made in the past? How can you experience redemption in those areas?
- As a mom, how do you respond to poor choices your children make?

session 5: You Are Made in God's Image

YOU ARE CREATIVE

- Do you think of yourself as the “creative type”? Why or why not?
- What does it mean to you to be made in God's image, as a person who has the ability to be creative?
- Are there areas of creativity that you would like to explore and develop?

YOU ARE COMPLEX

(Group Leader: Caryn refers to human resources interview questions on page 77. Use these questions in your group.)

- What descriptors can you use about yourself that go beyond your “mom” identity? “I am a mom and a _____.”
- Is there an area of gifting or passion that you want to explore? What is holding you back from risking in this area?

session 6: You Are Made for Many Things

YOU ARE MADE TO BE NEAR GOD

- Describe a time when you have felt cozy and safe as a family.
- Caryn talks about how God wants his family (us) near to him too. What picture do you get when you imagine being close to God?
- What might be preventing you from drawing close to God?

YOU ARE MADE TO MAKE LIFE COUNT

- Caryn describes her feelings of boredom during part of her season of being a mom at home. Do you share some of her feelings? Why or why not?
- Make a list of all the ways that what you do as a mom matters for your family, in both the long and short term.

(Group Leader: If this exercise is hard for some, encourage each other in your group and add to each other's lists so that together you can see how much your lives do matter.)

session 7: you are given fresh starts

YOU ARE HEALED FROM WOUNDS

- Are there areas of brokenheartedness that you have experienced or are experiencing?

(Group Leader: If some are still in the midst of brokenheartedness, take some time in your group to pray together. Resist the urge to offer advice or want to “fix” another’s heart. Just having a friend who will sit with us in brokenness is important.)

YOU ARE GIVEN A SECOND CHANCE

- Think about a past experience of a fresh start, such as a move or a new school year. Describe your feelings about this fresh and new time.
- Are there areas of mistakes or guilt that you feel stuck in? How can you make a conscious choice to move past guilt and know God’s forgiveness?

(Group Leader: Spend time encouraging each other regarding God’s healing and forgiveness.)

session 8: you are worthy

YOU ARE WORTHY OF MAINTAINING BOUNDARIES

- Caryn talks about the lack of defined time and space causing stress. On a scale of 1-10, how good are you at defining boundaries in your life? Discuss why you answered the way you did and describe your boundaries or areas that lack boundaries.
- How do you feel about setting boundaries in difficult areas?
- In what one area can you establish a boundary this week to value your worth in that area?

YOU ARE WORTHY OF BEING STILL

- Have you experienced any “being still” time in the past week?
- What prevents you from finding space for your soul to be still?
- What is a practical way you can build time for stillness into your rhythm of life?

session 9: You Are Loved by God

YOU ARE CHOSEN

- Share a time of rejection or not being chosen from your childhood. What emotions and feelings does that experience bring up?
- Remember an experience of being chosen—in a relationship, in a job—and share how that experience made you feel.
- How does the truth of being chosen by God change your perspective on your daily life?

YOU ARE PROVIDED FOR

- When you think of “daily bread,” what are the daily aspects of life that you are laying before God?
- How does your perspective of God change when you realize he cares about the “dailies” in your life?
- Share ways you have seen God’s provision in the past. Consider keeping a journal of these experiences to build trust in God for the future.

session 10: You Are Called and Equipped

YOU ARE MIGHTY

- What animal would you pick to describe yourself and why?
- In what ways have you seen your protective love grow since having children?
- Share some areas where you feel less than mighty. Pray for each other in these areas.

YOU ARE CALLED TO TAKE BOLD STEPS

- Share about a time when you were learning a new skill. How did it feel? How did you grow in confidence?
- Is there currently an area where you are feeling called by God to step forward boldly? How does this psalm help you to be bold?

(Group Leader: Take time to affirm and encourage each other in the ways God is causing growth and celebrate together.)