

Participant Guide for Session One

Jesus Knows You and Draws Near: Sexual Shame and the Gospel's Invitation

- Key Ideas:**
- What do women often experience as a result of struggling with sexual sin?
 - How does Jesus respond to broken women?
 - How can we respond to Jesus?

A Story of Jesus and a Hurting Woman (Luke 13:10–17)

1. Why this story?
 - A. She was suffering.
 - B. She probably had a broken heart.
 - C. She was most likely marginalized, judged, and shamed.
 - D. How do you relate?
3. Jesus's response to our suffering and sin:
 - A. He's present, teaches, takes the initiative, calls us to draw near, sets free, defends, and celebrates.
 - B. Luke 4:16–21
2. How we can respond to Jesus's invitation to draw near to him:
 - A. Don't stay put: move toward him by faith.
 - B. Cry out to God for help and take a step.

When we can't sort out our emotions, when the longtime friend lets us down, when a family member betrays us, when we feel deeply misunderstood, when we are laughed at by the impressive—in short, when the fallenness of the world closes in on us and makes us want to throw in the towel—there, right here, we have a Friend who knows exactly what such testing feels like, and sits close to us, embraces us.¹

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3. Reread the passage Ellen read (Luke 4:16–21), then read Isaiah 61:1–4.

Friend, have you believed these amazing things that the Bible says? Do you believe that we have a faithful—**100% faithful**—powerful, loving, heart-cleansing Savior? Maybe you’ve never really understood who Jesus is, but you’re curious and desperate to be set free of your sin struggles and shame. Perhaps you’ve been a church attender for years; maybe you grew up going to church because you had to and these ideas are familiar to you but seem cold, stale, and powerless.

Regardless of where you’re at, call out to God and ask him to open your heart to understand who Jesus really is and that he alone can bring the freedom and change you most desperately need: a new heart cleansed and transformed through his forgiveness of you. Here are some Bible passages to dig a bit deeper: John 1:9–18; 3:1–8; 4:1–26.

(Note: this is the gospel of John, not the letters he wrote which are titled 1, 2, and 3 John.)

4. What are one to two steps you can take this week to draw closer to God as you seek to grow into a sexually faithful woman? What holds you back? Pray about these things and ask Jesus to help you believe that he is near and will never back away.

¹ Dane Ortlund, *Gentle and Lowly*, 48.