

## Hope for Broken Hearts – The Gospel and Post-Abortion Syndrome Student Guide

Opening Prayer: Merciful and gracious Father, send Your Holy Spirit to guide our discussion so that we may all grow in knowledge, in faith, and in hope because of the Good News You bring to us all through Jesus Christ that binds up our broken hearts and frees us from the darkness of our sin. Through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

### Study and Discussion Questions

#### Introduction

1. Look up Isaiah 61:1. Who speaks in these verses? (Hint: Look up its fulfillment in Luke 4:16-21.)

Why would the people of Judah to whom Isaiah prophesied need to cling to these words of a future and freeing hope?

2. Dr. Lamb gives several examples of where Dante's sign does not hang. Can you think of others? Why is this the very "essence of the hope of the Gospel of Jesus Christ?"
3. Why do you think abortions are disproportionately high among Christians?
4. Review the "Slaughter of the Innocence" in Matthew 2:16-18. Look up the verse quoted from Jeremiah 31:15. Discuss the context.
5. Many people do not fully grasp the horrible tragedy of abortion in our country. Some figures:
  - a. 1.2 million abortions annually in the US.
  - b. 3,200/day (about the total number killed in the 9/11 attacks)
  - c. 133/hour
  - d. 1 every 30 seconds
  - e. 55,000,000 and counting since Roe v. Wade in 1973 (By comparison, the total number of US war deaths in all the wars in which we have ever fought is approximately 1.6 million.)
6. Post abortion syndrome is most often associated with women. But Dr. Lamb talks of men as well. How might they be affected?

#### The Need for Hope

##### 1. Abortion is Unnatural

The quotes from Dr. Reardon indicate that abortion is unnatural because it goes against the laws of nature. Look up the following verses and discuss how abortion also goes

against nature's God (Genesis 1:28; Genesis 3:15; Psalm 127:3; Luke 1:24-25 1 Timothy 2:15).

In the Julius Fogel quote, what words indicate he is pro-abortion?

## **2. Because of the Pressure**

Discuss the various sources of pressure upon women to have abortions.

Is this pressure, however, an excuse?

Because of this pressure, many women have abortions who really do not want them. They just feel they have no other choice. Recall some of the affects a past abortion has on women.

## **3. Because of Satan's Lies**

Who is Satan's favorite mouthpiece? (See 2 Corinthians 11:14)

Is refusing to deal with abortion and other life issues because they are politically charged and divisive a proper role for the Church?

### **“After the Choice” Video Clip**

Share something from the clip you learned that you never realized before.

### **Hope for Rachel**

#### **1. Because Jesus Hung in the Darkness**

Review the promise of hope for God's people from Jeremiah 31:16-17.

One baby, Jesus, escaped Herod's wrath that dark night in Bethlehem. He escaped to hang in the darkness. (See Matthew 27:45.) What is represented by this darkness?

#### **2. Because Jesus Rose from the Darkness**

Look up these “light” verses: Matthew 4:16; 5:14; John 12:46.

Why is the latter one particularly important for those dealing with Post Abortion Syndrome?

Read 1 Corinthians 15:56-57. The resurrected Jesus won the victory over sin and death. What does He do with this victory?

As a risen and living Savior, He comes to us in the darkness of our sin. How do Genesis 3:8-9 and Luke 15:20 relate to this?

## **Creating an Atmosphere of Hope**

### **1. Rachels are No Different than We Are**

Dr. Reardon is quoted in the DVD saying, “In times of great stress, people do even those things which they most abhor.” Look at the Biblical examples used and compare the verses below for each.

David – 1 Samuel 13:14 / 2 Samuel 11:4-14 / 2 Samuel 12:13

Peter – Matthew 16:18 / Luke 22:54-62 / John 21:15-19

Paul – Acts 9:15 / Romans 7:15-19 / 1 Timothy 1:15

### **2. Taking Aim in Preaching and Teaching**

Discuss how John the Baptist took aim in his preaching in Luke 3:7-14.

Why did John point people to their sins? (John 1:29)

## **Doing All We Can**

“Do what you can. Do all you can. The people must hear.” This was a quote in the DVD from a modern day Rachel. Discuss what you can do and what your congregation can do to better equip one another to understand and reach out to the Rachels.

## Hope for Broken Hearts – The Gospel and Post-Abortion Syndrome Leader’s Guide

Please feel free to be flexible in the use of this study guide. For example, you may view the entire DVD in one 45-minute session and then go over the study guide in another session or conduct one longer session in a seminar-like setting. You may choose to stop the DVD at various points referred to in the guide and discuss the questions there. Suggestions are given for this approach.

Remember that abortion touches many lives in a variety of ways. There may very well be someone present whose life has been touched by an abortion decision in one way or another. This DVD may trigger a variety of emotions in them. The best way to approach this study is to assume such people are in attendance. Have Lutherans For Life’s post-abortion hotline *Word of Hope* brochures (Item LFL404T – available at [www.cph.org](http://www.cph.org)) available along with information on local resources. For example, many pregnancy centers have a post-abortion outreach associated with them. It is best to hand out such resources to everyone who comes. Those who really need them will probably not pick one up from a display table for fear of revealing their “secret.” Make it clear that the pastor’s or other church professionals’ doors are always open for confidential counsel.

Opening Prayer: Merciful and gracious Father, send Your Holy Spirit to guide our discussion so that we may all grow in knowledge, in faith, and in hope because of the Good News You bring to us all through Jesus Christ that binds up our broken hearts and frees us from the darkness of our sin. Through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

### Study and Discussion Questions

#### Introduction

1. Look up Isaiah 61:1. Who speaks in these verses? (Hint: Look up its fulfillment in Luke 4:16-21.)

Why would the people of Judah to whom Isaiah prophesied need to cling to these words of a future and freeing hope?

**[This is Jesus, the Suffering Servant who speaks. The people of Judah, because of their sin would experience all of these things as they would be taken captive by the Babylonians.]**

2. Dr. Lamb gives several examples of where Dante’s sign does not hang. Can you think of others? Why is this the very “essence of the hope of the Gospel of Jesus Christ?”

**[The examples given in the DVD were hospital rooms, surgery suites, cancer wards, Alzheimer’s units, nursing homes, funeral homes, abortion facilities. Other answers will vary. Through the forgiveness of sins, the promise of eternal life, and the presence of the Spirit of Christ in this life, nothing can ever be hopeless.]**

3. Why do you think abortions are disproportionately high among Christians?

**[The answer is covered a bit later, but often time people active in their church—Sunday School teachers, choir directors, elders, pastors—do not want to admit or deal with the shame of a son or daughter caught up in a crisis pregnancy. “No one need know” is the allure of abortion.]**

4. Review the “Slaughter of the Innocence” in Matthew 2:16-18. Look up the verse quoted from Jeremiah 31:15. Discuss the context.

**[In Jeremiah, Rachel personifies the sorrow of the Jewish people over being carried into exile in Babylon. Ramah, in the land given to Benjamin, may have been a “staging” area for the deportation. Rachel died giving birth to Benjamin along the road that leads from Bethlehem to Ramah. She named him Benomi, “son of my sorrow” before Jacob renamed him Benjamin. In Matthew 2, Rachel personifies the Jewish women in great sorrow over the death of their sons.]**

5. Many people do not fully grasp the horrible tragedy of abortion in our country. Some figures:

- a. 1.2 million abortions annually in the US.
- b. 3,200/day (about the total number killed in the 9/11 attacks)
- c. 133/hour
- d. 1 every 30 seconds
- e. 55,000,000 and counting since Roe v. Wade in 1973 (By comparison, the total number of US war deaths in all the wars in which we have ever fought is approximately 1.6 million.)

6. Post abortion syndrome is most often associated with women. But Dr. Lamb talks of men as well. How might they be affected?

**[Men are affected in two ways. Often they apply the pressure for their girlfriend or wife to have an abortion. They may pay for the abortion and drive them to have the abortion. When the reality of what they did sinks in—help in the destruction of their own child—it is devastating. On the other hand, men may want their baby and try to speak against the abortion, but they are helpless in that they have no legal say over the destiny of their own son or daughter prior to birth.]**

## The Need for Hope

### 1. Abortion is Unnatural

The quotes from Dr. Reardon indicate that abortion is unnatural because it goes against the laws of nature. Look up the following verses and discuss how abortion also goes against nature’s God (Genesis 1:28; Genesis 3:15; Psalm 127:3; Luke 1:24-25; 1 Timothy 2:15).

**[Genesis 1:28 – The very first blessings given to Adam and Eve is the ability to have children. Genesis 3:15 – The Savior would be the fruit of a woman’s womb.**

**Psalm 127:3 – Bearing children is a great honor and gift from God.**

**Luke 1:24-25 – An argument from the negative. Not having children was seen as unnatural, a reproach.**

**1 Timothy 2:15 – This may raise some discussion. The *Lutheran Study Bible* offers good commentary on this verse. The point is that child birth is a noble and grand vocation and part of God’s great blessing for women.**

In the Julius Fogel quote, what words indicate he is pro-abortion?

**[“[D]estroying a pregnancy.” This dehumanizes the baby and deceives the mother.]**

## **2. Because of the Pressure**

Discuss the various sources of pressure upon women to have abortions.

**[Husbands, boyfriends, parents, school counselors, doctors, pastors—abortion is so much a part of our culture that, as the one Rachel said, “They never offered any alternatives. All I could think of was abortion.”]**

**You may also want to point out that Christians are not immune to these pressures. According to the Alan Guttmacher Institute, around 65 percent of those having abortions say they are Christian ([www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb\\_induced\\_abortion.html](http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb_induced_abortion.html)) Indeed, there can be added pressure for the Christian as they may not want to deal with the shame of an unwed pregnancy in their family.]**

Is this pressure, however, an excuse?

**[No, we are all culpable for the sins we commit.]**

Because of this pressure, many women have abortions who really do not want them. They just feel they have no other choice. Recall some of the affects a past abortion has on women.

**[Drug abuse, sexual problems, relationship problems, divorce, poor health, suicide, disturbing thoughts, reaction to certain sounds, depression.]**

## **3. Because of Satan’s Lies**

Who is Satan’s favorite mouthpiece? (See 2 Corinthians 11:14)

**[The Church. Satan loves to disguise himself as good, an angel of light.]**

Is refusing to deal with abortion and other life issues because they are politically charged and divisive a proper role for the Church?

**[No. Silence is not neutral. Silence speaks Satan’s favorite line, “Did God really say? (Genesis 3:1)”]**

### **“After the Choice” Video Clip**

Share something from the clip you learned that you never realized before.

**[Guide the discussion and solicit other comments.]**

### **Hope for Rachel**

#### **1. Because Jesus Hung in the Darkness**

Review the promise of hope for God’s people from Jeremiah 31:16-17.

**[Point out how God’s promise of hope to His people, personified by Rachel, holds true for His people today, including the “Rachels” struggling with Post-Abortion Syndrome.]**

One baby, Jesus, escaped Herod’s wrath that dark night in Bethlehem. He escaped to hang in the darkness. (See Matthew 27:45.) What is represented by this darkness?

**[The darkness of sin. We all deserve to be abandoned to this darkness. But Jesus was in our place (See 27:46).]**

#### **2. Because Jesus Rose from the Darkness**

Look up these “light” verses: Matthew 4:16; 5:14; John 12:46.

Why is the latter one particularly important for those dealing with Post-Abortion Syndrome?

**[None of us, regardless of our sin, need remain in the darkness of guilt because of that sin. Jesus entered the darkness and rescued us. The darkness is gone!]**

Read 1 Corinthians 15:56-57. The resurrected Jesus won the victory over sin and death. What does He do with this victory?

**[He gives it to us! We need not win the victory or earn the victory. It is a free and freeing gift.]**

As a risen and living Savior, He comes to us in the darkness of our sin. How do Genesis 3:8-9 and Luke 15:20 relate to this?

**[Here we see God who comes to sinners. He seeks and saves the lost. He left His heavenly mansion in the person of Jesus to come to us, be one with us in the darkness to rescue us from that darkness. We need not “get our act together” before He will rescue us.]**

## Creating an Atmosphere of Hope

### 1. Rachels are No Different than We Are

Dr. Reardon is quoted in the DVD saying, “In times of great stress, people do even those things which they most abhor.” Look at the Biblical examples used and compare the verses below for each.

David – 1 Samuel 13:14 / 2 Samuel 11:4-14 / 2 Samuel 12:13

Peter – Matthew 16:18 / Luke 22:54-62 / John 21:15-19

Paul – Acts 9:15 / Romans 7:15-19 / 1 Timothy 1:15

**[You do not need to spend much time with any of these. Just point out that in each case they are special people of God who sin gravely and whom God restores through forgiveness. Who are we to think we would be any different!]**

### 2. Taking Aim in Preaching and Teaching

Discuss how John the Baptist took aim in his preaching in Luke 3:7-14.

**[He spoke to specific people about specific sins—greed, cheating, extortion.]**

Why did John point people to their sins? (John 1:29)

**[So he could point them to their Savior from sin! If we do not preach and teach about the sin of abortion, we will not be able to aim the Good News of the Gospel at this sin. Those struggling with this sin need to hear it talked about in the Church and hear it connected to the Gospel of forgiveness. This creates hope.]**

## Doing All We Can

“Do what you can. Do all you can. The people must hear.” This was a quote in the DVD from a modern day Rachel. Discuss what you can do and what your congregation can do to better equip one another to understand and reach out to the Rachels.

**[Guide the discussion and try to get specific action items. Some ideas: 1. How can this DVD be shared with more people? 2. Have a healed post-abortive woman speak to the congregation. 3. Show the DVD, *After the Choice*. 4. Make people aware of LFL’s Word of Hope ([www.word-of-hope.org](http://www.word-of-hope.org)) post-abortion ministry. 5. Place *Word of Hope* brochures in the men’s and women’s restrooms. 6. Support a local pregnancy center and their post-abortion outreach. 7. Make people aware of the same. 8. Have other post-abortion materials from LFL available to members.]**

**After the Choice DVD: available at [www.shopcwfa.org](http://www.shopcwfa.org)**

**Word of Hope brochures and other LFL post-abortion resources: available at [www.cph.org](http://www.cph.org) (Sanctity of Life/Topical Area/After the Abortion: LFL).**