



# BACK FROM CAPTIVITY



*Rebuilding Your Identity  
in Christ*

JENNIFER JOHNSON

**LEADER'S GUIDE**

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# BACK FROM CAPTIVITY

## *Leader's Guide*

Dear Leader,

Thank you for your willingness and desire to lead others through *Back From Captivity*. You are significant in the lives of those participating in this timely Bible study, and I believe you are the honored one God has chosen. Actually, as I wrote *Back From Captivity*, I had you on my mind. You were a huge inspiration in the completion of this study. Someone experiencing life after a time of being in captivity needs someone like yourself, a guide to help make sense of all they have experienced. What a rich blessing you will receive as you get to be an eyewitness to the rebuilding of a person's relationship with their heavenly Father. During the next 6 weeks your personal integrity and walk with the Lord will in itself be a huge part of the participants' own rebuilding. Please know that whether or not you have ever been a prodigal inwardly or outwardly, the participants will gain hope and healing just by the simple fact that you are daily and actively striving to be a true disciple of Christ. As the participants hear from you and you listen to them, healing and restoration will soon follow.

Some of the material in the study will be extremely personal. By no means is anyone required to share such intimacies nor should they in a group setting. If someone in the group shares too much, causing you or the group to become uncomfortable, I suggest you kindly let the person understand that you are available after class to discuss personal issues. Confidentiality will play a vital role during class time. Your example will lead them in this area.

This is your group. Please put your personality and knowledge and wisdom and insight into leading those God has brought to you. As you spend time in God's Word and in prayer for each participant, God will be faithful and give you the words to say through the power of the Holy Spirit. As you provide a safe, non-judgmental, non-condemning, loving atmosphere, the participants individually and as a whole will be strengthened and encouraged to go on in their relationship with God.

Thanks, again, for your time, energy, wisdom, and encouragement to those needing a "Nehemiah" as they rebuild what they once had. Please feel free to email any questions or testimonies to: [Jennifer@royalbyblood.com](mailto:Jennifer@royalbyblood.com).

To God be the glory,

*Jennifer Johnson*

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## *Practical Insights for Group Discussion*

- Have a plan how best to utilize your time. Whether you have 1-2 hours of group time, designate and organize all you want to accomplish within your time frame.
  - Open and close with prayer. Be creative as to how you do prayer requests, but know that your prayer time should consist mainly of God ministering to each participant during your time together. Limiting prayer requests is necessary; to convey the short time together as a group is dedicated to the material in the study.
  - Class time is not the time to introduce a new topic or to “chase a rabbit.” Each participant has sacrificed time to be a part of the group and has spent quality time on the material in the study. Reinforce what they are learning and studying.
  - Expect each participant to complete the daily assignments, but also keep in mind that this may be difficult for some. Let each know he/she is always welcome to come to class whether or not the assignments were completed.
  - Be prepared by reviewing the week’s lessons after you have completed it.
  - In the study, there are numerous fill-in-the blanks to specific verses. The verses are all taken from the NIV Bible. You may need to go over those verses if one does not have access to an NIV.
  - Pray for the filling of the Holy Spirit in your life.
  - Provide name tags. Provide an attendance sheet so you can collect names, addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses.
  - Have music playing as participants enter.
  - Arrange chairs around tables.
  - Begin and end on time.
  - Be available before and after class for individuals to talk or pray with you.
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## *Introductory Group Session*

This session will be the first time you meet as a group. You will give each participant a book at this time.

Note to Leader: It is a big deal for someone to admit he/she needs the class and to actually show up. Welcome each one personally, look them in the eye, and let them know you are glad he/she is here. Someone may come because he/she genuinely wants to help a friend or loved one who has recently “returned home.” Great! This class is for him/her as well.

1. Allow time for each person to sign-in, pay for the book, and skim through it.
  2. Introduce yourself by sharing about your family, interests, and specifically why you decided to lead this small group study. (Your interest in the participants will speak volumes to each one. Let them know you are leading for the spiritual and emotional health of their lives and look forward to seeing what God does for each one.)
  3. Open with prayer, thanking God for each person and asking God to speak to each one through the study of *Back From Captivity*.
  4. Invite participants to introduce him/herself by sharing about his/her family and what he/she hopes to gain from the study.
  5. Explain the structure of your time together and what you hope to accomplish. Include:
    - A. Keeping prayer requests limited to praying for the class time and individual study time.
    - B. Expectations of doing the daily assignments.
    - C. Your availability for individuals.
    - D. Importance of confidentiality.
    - E. Importance of accountability.
  6. View the Table of Contents and draw attention to the three parts of the study.
  7. Read aloud the Introduction. After reading, reassure the class of how you can relate to someone “needing the Specialist” from personal experience.
  8. Invite someone to share how they too can relate to the person described in the Introduction.
  9. Ask for questions.
  10. Skim through a few days’ assignments focusing on the questions they will need to have answered before you meet again.
  11. Close in prayer.
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## Session 1: Who Am I?

Note to Leader: This could be a really tough road for some of the participants. Some may not be ready to answer questions in front of the group. Be patient; as they continue in the study they will become more comfortable to share. Thanks for being available to your group.

1. Welcome each by name, and ask about his/her week.
2. Thank the group for coming back, and open in prayer.
3. Before diving into the weeks study, ask if anyone has something he/she wants to share that happened that week. Maybe you have something to share as well.
4. Open books to **Week 1, Day 1: Desolate Waste**
5. Invite someone to share how he/she felt when Jennifer told them “Congratulations” in the opening paragraph.
6. Have someone explain the Old Testament example and New Testament comparison to our lives.
7. Read and interpret Romans 15:4.

### **Day 2: Worthy**

8. Ask for comments on the quote from Beth Moore, “Your injured heart will be protected by your *doing* what is right until you *feel* what is right.”
9. Invite someone to share how he/she responded to the question, “How does the retelling of the genealogy of Israel’s history speak to you in your search for identity?”

### **Day 3: Every Branch**

10. Use this time to talk about spiritual roots. Ask if someone had his/her own that wasn’t listed.

### **Day 4: Hopeful**

11. Give the answers to the fill-in-the blanks verses.
12. Discuss Lamentations 3:24 and how it applies to the prodigal son in Luke 15.

### **Day 5: You Died**

13. Read Romans 6:6-7. As a group, discuss its meaning.
  14. In closing, read Titus 2:14.
  15. Ask if anyone has questions pertaining to the week’s lesson.
  16. Close in prayer.
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## *Session 2: What Do I Do?*

Note to Leader: The participants are off to a good start and hopefully having some special moments with their heavenly Father as they complete the study on their own. Maybe this week would be a good time to ask how you can pray specifically for each participant. Provide index cards for them to write down specific prayer requests and collect them at the end of class time. Jesus' love shows through you, dear Leader.

1. Welcome each by name. Give each an index card for him/her to write a specific prayer request for you to pray over during the week.
2. Thank the group for their participation and open in prayer.
3. Allow time for testimonies of what God has done in their lives that week.
4. Open book to **Week 2, Day 1: Turn to the Lord.**
5. Have someone read Revelation 2:4-5 and answer the question, "What two things does God say to do?"
6. Review and discuss Matthew 7:24-27.

### **Day 2: Repentance**

7. Have someone write on the board the evidences of the 2 types of sorrow—godly and worldly. Emphasize the importance of godly sorrow.
8. **Day 3: Who Survived**
9. Remind them of what Nehemiah did for God's people in Nehemiah 2.
10. Emphasize the importance of the participants having someone like Nehemiah to guide them on this journey of rebuilding.

### **Day 4: Greater Glory**

11. Have someone read the quote from Henry Blackaby in the first paragraph. Discuss the meaning of integrity and help them to realize their coming home demonstrates true integrity. (Now is a good time to use words that build up each participant. Others and even themselves have probably done a good job of tearing them down with words over their mistakes.)
12. Go over the answers to the fill-in-the blank verses.

### **Day 5: Undivided Heart**

13. Have someone read Ezekiel 11:17-20 and answer the questions regarding those verses.
  14. Ask for questions pertaining to this week's study.
  15. Emphasize the power of crying out to Jesus in their time of desperation and need.
  16. Close in prayer.
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## *Session 3: Who Was I?*

Note to Leader: Thanks for being there for your small group. Don't be discouraged if it seems like some are taking one step forward and two steps backward. This is a normal part of the process. The enemy doesn't want them getting emotionally and spiritually healthy. Every little step in the right direction is HUGE. Don't give up!

1. Welcome each by name and congratulate them on their progress.
2. Open in prayer.
3. Open books to **Week 3: Day 1: In the Beginning.**
4. Inform the group of the history of the Israelites, God's promises to Abraham, and the Promised Land.
5. Allow time if someone wants to share something he/she recorded of his/her early years of life or if anyone remembered something interesting in their past they had forgotten.

### **Day 2: Your Wound**

(This day could be painful for some. Be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit.)

6. Invite someone to share his/her salvation experience.
7. Read the account of the hemorrhaging woman in Mark 5:21-34. Let the words of Jesus' healing of the woman's deep wound be the testimony of the freedom possible in Christ.

### **Day 3: Someone to Devour**

8. Write John 10:10 on the board and discuss ways Satan kills, steals, and destroys God's people in today's culture.
9. Invite someone to share what he/she learned from Mark 9:14-27.

### **Day 4: Rid of All**

10. Invite someone to share a testimony of how he/she got rid of resentment or bitterness.

### **Day 5: Forgiven**

11. Read Jeremiah 6:16 and encourage the group that even though it could be easier to go back to their waywardness, God's path is right in front of them and it leads to rest.
  12. Discuss the statement, "The path from victim to survivor is called forgiveness." Encourage them to forgive even if they the person never asks for forgiveness.
  13. Ask for questions pertaining to the week's study.
  14. Close in prayer.
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## *Session 4: What Did I Do?*

Note to Leader: Halfway finished! Great job! Weeks 3 and 4 are the most difficult weeks to accomplish. But at the same time, these two weeks are the most vital for they hold the keys to keep from going back into captivity. If a participant did not complete the assignments in Weeks 3 and 4, gently encourage him/her to do so. You are an inspiration to each member of your group.

1. Greet each one by name and ask what was his/her favorite thing about the week.
2. Share your favorite happening of the week.
3. Open in prayer.
4. Open books to **Week 4, Day 1: My Way**.
5. Discuss the warnings God gave the Israelites as recorded in the Jeremiah passages.
6. Invite someone to share a warning he/she received from God.

### **Day 2: Enticed**

7. Examine the story of the prodigal by reading Luke 15:11-16. Hear the participants insights of this parable.
8. Read and discuss James 1:13-15 and how it relates to the prodigal.

### **Day 3: Deceived**

9. Discuss the dangers of deception.
10. Discuss the similarities of the Israelites going into captivity (Jer. 12:7; 22:25; 32:28) to the inheritance money of the younger son (Luke 15:12).

### **Day 4: Obstinate**

11. Discuss the significance of Jeremiah purchasing land (Jeremiah 32:10).
12. Invite someone to share who his/her Jeremiah is in his/her life.

### **Day 5: Foothold**

13. Summarize the events of 2 Kings 20:12-18. Emphasize Hezekiah's poor decisions.
  14. Read Ephesians 4:27 and give insights into the meaning of "foothold."
  15. Ask for questions pertaining to this week's study.
  16. Close in prayer.
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## *Session 5: Who Will I Be?*

Note to Leader: Now for the fun part—the future. Everyone is curious as to what the future holds. Well, God's Word is the best place to find the blessed promises of hope fulfilled. Be excited for the future of your members. Your enthusiasm is contagious.

1. Greet each member by name and ask what is one thing he/she expects to find in his/her future.
2. Share what you hope to find.
3. Open in prayer.
4. Open book to **Week 5, Day 1: Redeemed.**
5. Read Psalm 126.
6. Invite someone to share what he/she wrote about as he/she recalled what God had done for him/her as he/she journeyed home.

### **Day 2: For His Name's Sake**

7. Ask, According to Psalm 106:8 what two reasons does God save us?
8. Read and discuss Ezekiel 36: 16-23.

### **Day 3: Inherit a Blessing**

9. Ask what the group learned about big brother from Luke 15:25-31.
10. Ask how the Pharisees resemble big brother.

### **Day 4: Wise**

11. Invite comments concerning Proverbs 9.
12. Invite someone to read "An Autobiography in five Short Chapters."

### **Day 5: Vindicated**

13. Invite someone to share the description he/she wrote about him/herself at rest.
  14. Ask what it meant for them to read that God summoned them by name.
  15. Ask for questions pertaining to the week's study.
  16. Close in prayer.
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## *Session 6: What Will I Do?*

Note to Leaders: You've made it to the last week! I pray the friendships formed will continue even after the study ends. I pray you have been strengthened as you've seen miracles displayed through the members of your group. I pray God has been glorified in your times together. Enjoy your last session together.

1. Greet each member by name and ask what his/her favorite attribute of God is doing this particular season of life.
2. Share your favorite attribute of God.
3. Open in prayer.
4. Open book to **Week 6, Day 1: Worked With All Their Heart.**
5. Remind participants of the Old Testament example of physical captivity, which led to external work. Also, of the New Testament example of spiritual captivity, which led to internal work.
6. Discuss the symbolic meaning of a "wall" from the Scriptures in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Zechariah.

### **Day 2: Struggle**

7. Ask, "What are the weapons the world uses to fight against someone or something?"
8. Read Ephesians 6:13-18 and discuss the spiritual weapons and armor.

### **Day 3: Again**

9. Give answers to fill-in-the blank verses.
10. Invite someone to share what it is God wants to do again in his/her life based on Jeremiah 33:6-9, Isaiah 61:7, and Zechariah 1:17.

### **Day 4: Free**

11. Write the word Freedom on the board or poster board, then have each person write what God has set him/her free from.
12. Have members finish the sentence—"You know you are free when..."

### **Day 5: Everything We Need**

13. Have members finish the sentence—"In Christ I have..."
14. Allow time for testimonies of what God spoke to them during the study and how they will apply it in their lives.
15. Close in prayer.

I would enjoy hearing from you. I'd like to hear what God did for you and your small group. Feel free to email me: [jennifer@royalbyblood.com](mailto:jennifer@royalbyblood.com).

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