

## GROUP GUIDE

# WEEK 5 | THERE IS AN ENEMY

### **OPENING PRAYER & INTRODUCE THIS WEEK'S TOPIC (5 MINUTES).**

Welcome to Week 5! As you enter the fifth week of your Rooted experience, open with prayer, acknowledging God's presence.

Next, briefly introduce the topic for tonight's discussion: "There is an Enemy"

### **EXPLANATION OF FLOW OF MEETING (5 MINUTES).**

- Group will meet together for discussion together then will break off into separate groups for deeper sharing and prayer. Men will meet with men and women will meet with women.
- Remind the group that the confidentiality of the covenant extends to time of sharing when men and women are separated.
- Explain that the groups will utilize the "STRONG HOLDS SHARING GUIDE" guide.
- To allow enough time for everyone to share their experience with strongholds in their life, you will not be sharing stories this week. Before moving on, ask for two more people to share their 3-5 minute story the following week using the "WEEKLY STORY: Sharing & Listening" Guide as an outline.
- Two people for next week: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_
- Remind group of details of Serve Experience and handle any lingering logistical needs or questions.

### **REFLECT ON PRAYER EXPERIENCE (10 MINUTES).**

- Since our prayer experience, how have you seen or heard God? Has he revealed anything to you?

### **DISCUSS ROOTED WEEK 5 DEVOTIONS (20 MINUTES).**

- How did this week's readings and reflection questions impact your understanding of spiritual warfare?
- What are some lies you've believed about yourself because of sin?
- How has the Holy Spirit brought your attention to other examples of spiritual warfare?

In a moment, we are going to break out into groups of men and women, to share our "strongholds" – those places where we "allow our adversary to have authority or position in our lives" (p104). Let's prepare ourselves by reflecting on what God's Word tells us about His power over anything the Enemy can do.

Have someone read each of these verses: John 16:33; James 4:7-8; Ephesians 6:12.

- How do these verses put our spiritual struggles in context?

Remember that we approach spiritual warfare from a position of authority. Tonight is an opportunity to share your struggle in a safe place. You may be afraid, but shame is a weapon of the enemy. Satan wants us to feel isolated and alone. Confessing our struggles and inviting others to walk with us builds connection and strengthens us spiritually.

Before separating, **pray** for the experience that is about to happen.

### **SHARING OF STRONGHOLDS & PRAYER OF REPENTANCE (60-75 MINUTES).**

Everyone is encouraged to refer to your work from day 5 of their devotionals. You may also want to have your Rooted books handy to reference pages 107-109.

When someone shares, we will follow this format (Leaders will go first to model the process and set the tone for vulnerability):

**Setting it up** - Leaders ask who will share next and who will pray for them when they are done sharing.

**Silence** - "Let's hold \_\_\_\_\_ in silence before the Lord. \_\_\_\_\_ may break the silence when he/she is ready to share". Hold silence.

**Sharing** - When ready, the person sharing will break the silence and has 5 minutes to respond to the following questions in any way they feel invited.

- What types of strongholds do you struggle with that you identified on Day 5?
- What truth do you need to embrace in order to fight the lie you have believed?
- Would you be willing to read your prayer out loud and replace the lie with your true identity in Christ?

**Silence** - When the person finishes sharing, or the timer chimes the group will hold silence for 30-60 seconds.

**Prayer** - Facilitator affirms the person for sharing and invites them to be prayed over. Example: "Thank you \_\_\_\_\_ for allowing us to hold your confession." \_\_\_\_\_ will pray for you now.

### **FINISH WITH PRAYER (5 MINUTES)**

Read Ephesians 6:10-18 over your group and close in prayer.

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# STRONGHOLDS BEST PRACTICES

The experience that is about to take place is a crucial moment in the life of your group. Some people may share things they've never shared with anyone before. Before the sharing begins, it's important to share some guidelines:

- This time is a space of confession, repentance, and vulnerability. It can be tempting to suggest solutions, to “fix” someone’s problem, or to follow someone’s sharing with our own similar stories. Our time today is not the space for that. We are here to listen and receive and leave space for the Holy Spirit to work.
- Confidentiality extends to this time. (explanation here) difference between keeping secrets from spouse and holding confidence
- It’s a good idea for the facilitator to share first. Be vulnerable and set the tone. Consider sharing a past stronghold that you have experienced freedom from AND a current stronghold.
- Decide ahead of time if you need to set a time limit. This may be necessary based on the size of your group, especially if your time is limited. Set a gentle timer for one minute less than the time you wish to allow and ask the sharer to wrap up sharing when the timer goes off.
- Some may not come prepared to share a stronghold or say they don’t struggle with any strongholds. If this happens, invite them to take a moment to review the areas of strongholds on pages 107-109 in their Rooted book and see if there’s anything that stands out to them - a stronghold past or present.
- If the individual is struggling to identify an area of stronghold in their life, invite them to ask a friend or someone close in their lives to help them see what they are not able to see. Encourage them to still read aloud the Prayer of Repentance without filling in the blanks.
- If an individual says they identify with many of the strongholds listed, encourage them to focus on one or two for this exercise.
- Remind the group that the practice of confessing strongholds and praying for repentance is a rhythm carried into life groups, so there will be opportunities in the future to share more.
- Prayerfully consider what follow-up steps may be wise after this group session. People often experience “vulnerability hangovers” – shame and embarrassment over having been so transparent with others. Consider sending a text the next day to each person celebrating their courage in opening up. If someone shares something more serious (an addiction, thoughts of self-harm, etc.), please reach out to your Rooted coach. You may also privately suggest that anyone struggling with a heavier issue schedule a Care Appointment at [thecreek.org/get-help](http://thecreek.org/get-help).