

Hiding from Love

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When you experience emotional injury, fear, shame, or pride your first impulse is to hide the hurting parts of yourself from God, others, even yourself. Often you've learned these hiding patterns during childhood to protect yourself in a threatening environment. The problem is that when you hide your injuries and frailties, you isolate yourself from the very things you need in order to heal and mature. What served as protection for a child becomes a prison to an adult. In *Hiding from Love*, Dr. John Townsend helps you to explore thoroughly the hiding patterns you've developed and guides you toward the healing grace and truth that God has built into safe, connected relationships with himself and others. You'll discover: The difference between "good" and "bad" hiding, Why you hide the broken parts of your soul from the God who can heal them, How to be free to make mistakes without fear of exposing your failures and imperfections, How to obtain the joy and wholeness God intends you to have through healthy bonding with others. *Hiding from Love* will take you on a journey of discovery toward healing, connected relationships, and a new freedom and joy in living.

Dr. John Townsend is a nationally-known leadership consultant, psychologist, and New York Times bestselling author. John is the founder of the Townsend Institute for Leadership and Counseling, and the Townsend Leadership Program, which is a nationwide system of leadership training groups. He developed the online digital platform TownsendNOW, and the online assessment tool TPRAT. Dr. Townsend travels extensively for corporate consulting, speaking, and helping develop leaders, their teams and their families. He and his wife, Barbi, live in Newport Beach, California, and have two sons, Ricky and Benny. Visit DrTownsend.com.

Discussion Guide In my years of counseling hurting people, I've seen all too often that we tend to hide from the very relationships and truths we need to flourish. Why do we do this? And how can we stop? Those are the questions that this guide gives you the opportunity to discuss, pray about, and practice.

Other than reading the designated material before your discussion session, you don't need to prepare anything in advance. Each session does, however, include some ideas for taking home what you've learned and putting it into practice. Leading a Discussion Group

Here are a few guidelines for leaders of discussion sessions:

At the first meeting, take time to get to know one another. By way of introduction, have each person give their name, describe what they do, and share what they would do if they were given four hours of free time. Before moving into the discussion time, welcome the members, tell why you are interested in the material and excited about the group, clarify any housekeeping details, and set forth basic guidelines regarding starting time, ending time, keeping what is shared confidential, feeling free to be quiet, and limiting contributions so others can participate.

Make the group safe. At your first meeting-and occasionally thereafter-remind people that everything shared is strictly confidential and that no one will ever be forced to answer a question aloud.

Monitor the discussion. Be sensitive to the quiet people who want to speak as well as to

those louder ones who want to talk the entire time. Often sitting across from quieter people encourages them to speak and sitting next to the talkative ones can limit their contributions. Also remind people that you have a limited time together and to be courteous of fellow members by allowing everyone the opportunity to participate.

Set a tone of acceptance. People respond in different ways to the sensitive issues addressed in *Hiding from Love*. Model for the group complete acceptance of whatever emotions arise.

Close your group time with prayer. Don't forget to pray for the specific issues that arise during your discussion.

Pray for your group during the week. Pray for each individual and pray for the time that you will be meeting together. Ask God to bless the time with his healing presence. Leading a Thirteen-Week Study

The questions for seventeen chapters can be adapted to a thirteen-week curriculum by pairing up chapters 4 and 5, 6 and 7, and 8 and 9, and omitting group discussion of chapter 12 (do assign the questions for individuals to work on alone or perhaps with another member of the group).

After clearly defining the developmental need addressed in each of the four chapters (4 through 7), use the following questions in your discussion of chapters 4 and 5 and then of chapters 6 and 7: 1. Explain how you can tell whether either of these two needs is injured in you personally. 2. How do you think that part of you became injured? 3. What have you done to hide from or protect that part of you? 4. What do you think it will take for that part of you to be restored to health? What is God's role? What is your role? (Refer specifically to suggested skills where they're provided.) What is the role of God's people? 5. In the closing prayer, tell God where you feel you are injured. Ask him to heal you and to enable you to take the steps you need to take to stop hiding.

For your single-session discussion of helpful hiding (chapters 8-9), focus on the first three questions from chapter 8 and the second and third questions from chapter 9. In closing, combine appropriate elements of the two prayers. Chapter One: Jenny's Story 1. When you read Jenny's story, were you reminded of anyone you know? What about that person—words, behaviors, mannerisms—gives you the sense that he or she is hiding from love? 2. When you read Jenny's story, which of her experiences, feelings, and thoughts could you identify with? 3. What hurtful experience led you into hiding? What places, behaviors, and habits have become your haven? What rules have you developed to give yourself a sense of control over your life? What changes in your perspective on the past and in your emotions have you noticed since going into hiding? 4. Write a brief letter to your own child just as Jenny spoke to "Little Jenny." In it, acknowledge your child's fears and their roots, the hiding places he or she has gone to, and the time, effort, and risk involved in learning to trust again. If you are able to at this point, offer your child words of hope and encouragement and the hand of an older, safe person (an "Officer Josef") to hold. 5. Spend a few minutes talking to God about how you, like Jenny, are hiding. This may be

difficult if you are hiding from God. If that's the case, be honest about your struggle to pray and about how distant he feels. Ask God to be with you as you continue this study and to enable you to come out from hiding.

Other Books

Samantha's Secret Hiding Place. Samantha's Secret Hiding Place is a thrilling adventure for children between the ages of four and eight. The story captures the hearts of children who love to have fun and enjoy spending family time together. It engages the imagination and natural curiosity of youngsters. The main character, Samantha, exhibits initiative, originality and cleverness. The book features positive family dynamics. It is a delightful mystery that appeals to a child's creative spirit. Samantha's Secret Hiding Place is the perfect book to read with the entire family all cuddled up in bed, underneath huge covers, with a flashlight. Sheila did a fantastic job infusing excitement, adventure, love, and courage on every page. The entire family will love this book. Pete Saunders, Author Happy's Best Day Ever
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