

*Quick*  
SCRIPTURE  
REFERENCE  
for  
Counseling  
Youth

UPDATED *and* REVISED

KEITH R. MILLER *and*  
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To our parents Carl and Leona Miller and Hank and Clara Voss. You gave us a solid foundation in God's Word. What a blessing you have been!



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# Introduction

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## Purpose of This Book

This book was our hearts' desire many years ago, but being busy as a dad and mom, we were never able to put the time and energy into preparing it. Teenage years can be such a challenge. How we wish we could say we did everything right with our four children and were perfect examples of godly parents. What we discovered was that while logic, wisdom, and words were not always effective, the response to God's Word was dramatic. God couples with us through his Word to help guide the next generation.

In today's postmodern world, youth are quite aware of the issues of life and are constantly told there are no absolutes. More than ever, they need to have confidence in the things that will never change—God and his Word. As parents, youth leaders, and counselors, we often emphasize that God's Word is the answer for our needs. We are confident that our children and youth also must know it and its power. Why then are we so hesitant to use the Word? Is it because we are not familiar enough with Scripture ourselves to know where to find just the right text? It is our prayer that this book will assist you greatly in that need. As we grow in our love of God and his Word, the result will be a relaxed and natural sharing of Scripture.

Many times we say to the college students with whom we work that if they are daily in God's Word, we do not fear for them. They may make mistakes but they will not find themselves severely off target. They cannot be diligently in the Word and blatantly involved with sin. God's Word will keep them on the mark.

## How to Use This Book

We have made every effort to be true to context. For those texts for which the context does not totally fit, we believe the principle (timeless, universal truth) does apply to the topic at hand.

Many of the Old Testament passages refer, in context, to Israel. Yet the principles reflecting God's care for his people and interest in their welfare can clearly be seen.

Our use of passages from the Mosaic law reflects our conviction that the traditional moral, civil, and ceremonial distinctions for that code are correct. God's moral law, as summarized in the Ten Commandments, is applicable for all people, for all time. Though the civil and ceremonial laws are not our rule of life in this age of grace, they do reflect the mind of God on issues of right and wrong. Thus we have drawn principles from them for the topics.

To avoid constant repetition of biblical texts, many of the topics provide cross-references to other related topics. Because of space limitations, some of the verses are not printed. Within each topic, references are listed for further study and application. For this second edition, we have added an expanded Biblical Narratives section. We have also added Practical Steps (action ideas to help both counselor and the youth) and Resources (books and pamphlets relevant to the topic).

### *Suggestions for Youth Leaders and Counselors*

- See our emphasis on the first topic, the Gospel.
- Have your Bible open as you counsel, as an excellent nonverbal emphasis on the value you place on God's Word.
- Ask each young person to bring a Bible to the session. What God says to them is most important. Have them read, memorize, and underline.
- Cross-reference between topics to assist in finding the most applicable texts.
- Make sure the youth are having daily time in God's Word and in prayer!
- Use the Biblical Narratives at the end of many of the topics for further study.



- The Practical Steps are a jumping-off point for your sessions with the young person. Be creative—tweak and add your own ideas.
- Assign homework in the Word—something to study that week. Have the youth report back.
- For further research and understanding, consider the Resources listed. Understand that each book or pamphlet was carefully chosen, but we would not necessarily agree with every statement contained in each one. Internet sites are great for finding used books, and library loan systems are helpful as well.

While the Resources are helpful to youth, most of them are chosen with counselors in mind. Study of them will increase one's knowledge and ability to help others.

### *Suggestions for Parents*

- Use this book as a part of your family's conversations about God. Read and discuss topics and verses.
- Assign topics to your children and youth for study in areas in which they are struggling.
- Encourage them to memorize Scripture.
- Let your children see the importance of Scripture in your home. Let them see you having your quiet time, using the Word consistently.
- Let them know the Bible is the most important book in your home—and in the world!
- Keep thinking how you can naturally, and with ease, maintain a lifestyle consistently based on Scripture.
- Guard against becoming religion based (legalistic with man-made rules and convictions), and focus on the freedom the Gospel gives us to obey out of a grateful heart.

### *Suggestions for Youth*

- Take one topic a day to read and study.
- Memorize verses relevant to your needs.

- Seek wise counsel from more mature believers when you need it.
- Share the topics and verses with friends who are struggling.
- Prayerfully consider how you can help your friends with their problems.
- Write in your book—underline—mark it up. Study for yourself.

*Psalm 78:1–8*

My people, hear my teaching; listen to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth with a parable; I will utter hidden things, things from of old—things we have heard and known, things our ancestors have told us. We will not hide them from their descendants; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power, and the wonders he has done. He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our ancestors to teach their children, so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands. They would not be like their ancestors—a stubborn and rebellious generation, whose hearts were not loyal to God, whose spirits were not faithful to him. (NIV)

# The Gospel

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The message of the Gospel breathes true life into our lives. This is the beginning point for you and for those you help. The Gospel story is old, rich, and personal. When an individual truly believes and begins a personal relationship with the heavenly Father through repentance and faith in Christ, the Holy Spirit has taken up residence in that person's life. Salvation is granted; sin is forgiven. New life has begun.

Though much of Scripture is applicable and wise counsel will help the nonbeliever, those with a personal relationship with God through Christ will have the greatest benefit.

Essential to any counseling situation is the need to determine if the young person has trusted in Jesus as the only way to heaven. If not, that is the counselor's first task. Only then will the Scripture, with the power of the Holy Spirit, be able to truly do its work.

## Steps in Guiding an Individual to Christ

If possible, have youth read the passages themselves from a Bible.

1. **Each person is separated from God because of sin and sinful behavior.**

**Romans 3:23** For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (NIV)

**Isaiah 53:6** We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. (NIV)

2. **Sin must be punished—separation from God, hell.**

**Romans 6:23** For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (NIV)

3. **There is nothing a person can do to gain favor with God or to earn merit toward salvation.**

**Ephesians 2:8–9** For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. (NIV)

**Isaiah 64:6** All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away. (NIV)

**Titus 3:5**

4. **Recognizing this dilemma, God had in place from creation a way for an individual to have a personal relationship with himself. The way was through the death of his Son, Jesus Christ.**

**Romans 5:8** But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. (NLT)

**John 3:16** For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. (NLT)

**Acts 4:12** There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved. (NLT)

**Romans 10:9**

5. **Each person must repent of his or her sin and personally believe (trust) in Jesus Christ as the only way to receive God’s forgiveness and gain entrance into heaven.**

**John 1:12** But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. (NLT)

**John 3:36** And anyone who believes in God’s Son has eternal life. Anyone who doesn’t obey the Son will never experience eternal life but remains under God’s angry judgment. (NLT)

**Luke 15:7, 10; John 3:18; 14:6**

6. **Salvation is assured.**

**1 John 5:13** I have written this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know you have eternal life. (NLT)

**John 5:24** I tell you the truth, those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life. They will never be condemned for their sins, but they have already passed from death into life. (NLT)

## Biblical Narratives

- Nicodemus, John 3
- Serpent in the wilderness, Numbers 21 with John 3:14 (provides the best view as to what our salvation looks like)
- Woman at the well, John 4
- Philippian jailer, Acts 16

## Practical Steps

For the counselor:

- Ask the counselee: If you were to die soon, why would you expect God to allow you to join him in heaven?

For the youth:

- Choose one verse from each of the numbered sections above. Rewrite that verse in your own words to think through the Gospel.
- Explain what you learned from this first practical step to another believer or youth leader.
- Memorize John 20:31. Then take the next few weeks reading through the Gospel of John as you think about that verse.
- Security/assurance as a believer: Memorize 1 John 5:13. Then take time to read through 1 John, keeping that verse in mind.

## Resources

- *Assurance* (booklet), Susan Heck. Focus.
- *Crazy Love*, Francis Chan. David C. Cook.

## THE GOSPEL

- *The Gospel for Children*, John B. Leuzarder. Shepherd.
- *A Gospel Primer for Christians*, Milton Vincent. Focus.
- *Leading Your Child to Christ* (booklet), Marty Machowski. New Growth.

# Abortion

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*See also* Decision Making, Fear, Hope, Selfishness, Unwed Pregnancy

## Choosing Life

1. **God is actively and personally involved in the life of every unborn person, even regarding plans for each day of his or her life.**

**Psalm 139:13–16** You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it. You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed. (NLT)

2. **The prophets recognized that God knew them as persons before they were born.**

**Jeremiah 1:5** Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.

**Isaiah 49:1** Listen to me, O coastlands, and give attention, you peoples from afar. The LORD called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name.

3. **Elizabeth's unborn baby was aware of the unborn child Mary carried. Through a unique situation (the God-man in the womb), evidence is provided for personhood in the womb.**

**Luke 1:44** As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. (NIV)

**4. Children are a reward—a gift—from God, no matter the circumstances of their conception.**

**Psalm 127:3–4** Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth.

**5. Following what self wants, rather than what God wants, is sin and leads to problems. Choose life!**

**Proverbs 14:12** There is a path before each person that seems right, but it ends in death. (NLT)

**Proverbs 16:2** People may be pure in their own eyes, but the LORD examines their motives. (NLT)

**Philippians 2:3–4** Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. (NLT)

**Romans 8:5–6; 2 Timothy 3:1–2**

**6. Our actions are not hidden from God.**

**Hebrews 4:13** And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

**7. Our bodies are not ours—they belong to God.**

**1 Corinthians 6:19–20** Don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and who was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourselves but to God; he bought you for a price. So use your bodies for God's glory. (GNT)

**Romans 12:1–2; 2 Corinthians 6:16**

## Biblical Narratives

- Mary and Elizabeth, joyful mothers, Luke 1:26–45
- Job, how God's hands fashioned him, Job 10:8–12
- Proverbs 24:11–12 on the need to rescue from death



## Practical Steps

- Both the mother and father should study their baby's development. An ultrasound would be helpful.
- Consider adoption; visit a pregnancy center.
- Memorize and review daily Psalm 139:16, and apply Isaiah 43:1–2 to this need.

## Resource

- *Pro-life Answers to Pro-choice Arguments*, Randy Alcorn. Multnomah.

## After an Abortion

*See also* Confession, Forgiveness from God, Grief, Past Memories

1. **When you ask God's forgiveness, he gives it freely without reservation.**

**Psalm 32:3–5** When I did not confess my sins, I was worn out from crying all day long. Day and night you punished me, LORD; my strength was completely drained, as moisture is dried up by the summer heat. Then I confessed my sins to you; I did not conceal my wrongdoings. I decided to confess them to you, and you forgave all my sins. (GNT)

2. **God can take our broken spirit and produce joy.**

**Psalm 51:12–17** Give me again the joy that comes from your salvation, and make me willing to obey you. Then I will teach sinners your commands, and they will turn back to you. Spare my life, O God, and save me, and I will gladly proclaim your righteousness. Help me to speak, Lord, and I will praise you. You do not want sacrifices, or I would offer them; you are not pleased with burnt offerings. My sacrifice is a humble spirit, O God; you will not reject a humble and repentant heart. (GNT)

**3. God offers restoration and freedom.**

**Psalm 40:1–3** I waited patiently for the LORD’s help; then he listened to me and heard my cry. He pulled me out of a dangerous pit, out of the deadly quicksand. He set me safely on a rock and made me secure. He taught me to sing a new song, a song of praise to our God. Many who see this will take warning and will put their trust in the LORD. (GNT)

**4. God understands the grief of the women of Israel for children they would never see again. He understands sorrow for the loss of children.**

**Jeremiah 31:15** Thus says the LORD: “A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more.”

**5. As those in Israel’s captivity were not to dwell on the awfulness of the captivity, so we also are not to dwell on the past once it is forgiven.**

**Isaiah 43:18–19** Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

**6. God is the only source of comfort when we have sorrow. He sends relief through Scripture, his Spirit, and godly people.**

**Psalm 18:1–6** I love you, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies. The cords of death encompassed me; the torrents of destruction assailed me; the cords of Sheol entangled me; the snares of death confronted me. In my distress I called upon the LORD; to my God I cried for help. From his temple he heard my voice, and my cry to him reached his ears.

**Isaiah 25:8**

## Practical Steps

- Purchase a special object or a piece of jewelry as a reminder of God's forgiveness and in memory of your baby.
- Write out your story to share with others.
- Volunteer at a crisis pregnancy center, and allow God to use your story to help others.
- Memorize Isaiah 43:1–2. When discouraged or sad, quote God's Word.
- Keep a journal; write a letter to the baby; name the baby; compose a song for the baby.

## Resources

- *Forgiven and Set Free: A Post-Abortion Bible Study for Women*, Linda Cochrane. Baker.
- *Healing after Abortion* (booklet), David Powlison. CCEF.
- *Living in His Forgiveness*, Sandy Day. Focus.
- *When the Pain Won't Go Away: Dealing with the Effects of Abortion* (booklet), RBC Ministries.