



Untangled: *Let God Loosen the Knots of Insecurity in Your Life*

By Carey Scott

Small Group Study Guide 9-weeks (*includes intro session*)

Here's everything you need to facilitate an *Untangled* small group study:

- 1) Ask each group member to order their own physical copy of *Untangled* from their favorite retailer. *Please note: page numbers in the e-book format may be different than listed in this guide.*
- 2) Determine the specific day, time and place for the group to meet.
- 3) Ask them to read the chapter-to-be-discussed prior to each meeting.
- 4) Use the questions provided to facilitate group discussion.

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Introductory Session

Introductory Session: Let's Get Acquainted

What was it about this *Untangled* study that peaked your interest?

What are you hoping to get from this study?

What are you afraid you might discover?

If we were to look on your nightstand, what books would we find?

If you could write your own book, what would the title be and what would it be about?

Would you rather have more hours in a day or another you to get everything done?

If you could take one thing off your to-do list, what would it be and why?

What do you love the most about social media?

What do you like least about it?

Which one are you on the most, and how many hours each day do you spend there?

If you're married, what do you like the most about your husband? Why?

If you're not married, what is the most important quality you're looking for? Why?

If you have kids, what three words would they use to describe you and why?

If you don't have kids yet, what three words do you hope they'll use to describe you and why?

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Discussion Questions

Session 1: My Tangled Mess

In this chapter, Carey shares her story of abuse, citing it as the “*ground zero*” for her feelings of worthlessness. We can all remember times where someone or something has tangled our heart. But looking back, where did you begin to struggle with your self-worth?

We all have *ideals* about who we should be as women - from the way we look to the career we should have to the kind of mom we’re supposed to be. Some of these ideals were transferred by our parents. Some we adopted as we looked into the world. And others are the ones we decided we needed to be. What are some of the ideals you find yourself chasing after?

When we find that we’re falling behind in the race to be *good enough*... we all have our “*normal*” responses to feeling worthless or insignificant: We hide away, overeat, shop, become cynical, grab a glass of wine, cut others down so we feel better, etc. How do you quiet the voices that say you don’t matter? This may be a vulnerable question to answer, but revealing our messy is a step towards healing.

Share what your relationship with God has looked like throughout your life? Do you see Him as an involved God, concerned about the details of your heart? Or do you believe He has little time for the hurts you get from life. Are you important to God?

Why does God allow us to be tangled by insecurity? How does it make you feel to know that He doesn’t always save us from self-worth draining circumstances?

Read Jeremiah 29:11 out loud, and share how that verse speaks into the insecurities that tangle you the tightest.

What is your biggest take-away from today?

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Session 2: The First Tangle

Convincing us that change is within our ability alone is one of the biggest lies the Enemy whispers into our weary bones. He tells us we don't need anyone, especially not God. And plants the notion that it's up to us to find a way to fix ourselves. In what ways have you fallen prey to this ways of thinking?

On page 34, read the last two paragraphs out loud. How does that realization sit with you? Do you believe it? Do you think it's true for others and not you? Is it new information?

In Genesis 1, God creates the Heavens and the earth... and us. And verse 31 says, "*God looked over everything He had made; it was so good, so very good!*" This is the powerful reminder our souls need that we've always been good enough in His eyes. So, why do we struggle to believe it?

On page 37, we see how the Enemy planted the seed of doubt in Eve through one perfectly wordsmithed statement that made her think she was less than she could be. He knew just what to say to tangle her heart. What surprised you about her story? In what ways can you relate to her in this situation?

We meet several Bible characters who struggled with insecurity in this chapter. Rachel and Leah, Hannah, Elizabeth, Saul, Moses, Timothy, Gideon, David, Sarah, and Rahab. Was there one that you felt a special kinship with? Why?

Insecurities can be ugly, can't they? But we have to remember that God is never turned-off by them. While others may walk away, deciding we're too messy or require too much time and effort... He promises to never leave or forsake us (*Hebrews 13:5*). God has the ability to see the potential of who we will be, instead of focusing on the messy of who we are now. What does that truth do for your tangled heart?

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Session 3: The Tangled Expectations of Women

We've all made agreements that negatively affect how we feel about ourselves. They keep us so knotted up with insecurity that we even forget how valuable we are to God. Look at the list on pages 50-51 and share which ones you've accepted as your truth. How have they played a role in tangling your self-worth?

Read Psalm 103:11-12 out loud. How would your life be different if you allowed those words to sink into your black and blue heart, reminding you that God's love is bigger and wider and deeper than any insecurity you're facing right now?

There is a big difference between guilt and shame. *Guilt* makes us feel bad about something we've done, but shame makes us feel bad about who we are. It affects how we feel about ourselves at the deepest level, and is triggered three ways (pages 54-55): (1) not living up to your own standard, (2) not living up to the standards of another person, (3) or a circumstance. How has shame manifested in your life?

The pressure to be beautiful is one of the biggest knots in our self-esteem. From Hollywood to cosmetics to fashion, we're measured against an impossible yardstick all the time. But so often, we're the ones to bully ourselves the very most. We're the ones that convince ourselves that we are *less than*. Think about it for a minute. Can you recall the last negative thing you told yourself? Share.

"More than anything you guard, protect your mind, for life flows from it" (Proverbs 4:23). When you undermine your worth through your words and thoughts, it literally changes how you feel about yourself. What are some ways you can guard your heart/protect your mind?

Read 1 Samuel 16:7 out loud. How does this truth make you feel? Is it hard to believe? How do those words untangle your heart and change your thinking?

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Session 4: It Takes Two to Tangle

Since we spend so much time with our husband, opportunities to get tangled abound. It could be something he says or a look he gives that makes us feel like a horrible housekeeper, or an over-spender, or culinary catastrophe. Where do your insecurities get knotted up?

Marriage is an adventure in vulnerability. It can be scary to open our hearts and share because we remember times it didn't work out so well, and we were left feeling exposed and deeply hurt. Why is it important to keep the lines untangled between you and your husband, and what is the cost if you don't?

Mark 10:8 says that man and wife are united so they are no longer two but one. We know that everything God builds, the enemy tries to destroy. So it's no surprise that he's doing everything he can to create or trigger our insecurities. Discuss the 3 ways the enemy is trying to accomplish disunity in your marriage on pages 74-75. Where do you see yourself in them?

On page 91, read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 out loud. These may be a familiar verses, but what stands out as you read from The Living Bible translation? How could loving this way silence the not good enoughs in each of you?

Pages 85-86 outline godly commands for how a husband and wife should treat one another. Today, the role of women in marriage outlined in the Bible - especially the idea of surrendering to our husband - is considered archaic and oppressive. What do you think about it? Do you think God would ask His daughters to behave in a way that would make them feel worthless? Why can we trust His plan?

When we put God at the center of our marriage, it changes everything. We will love better, forgive faster and give grace easier. How does God use marriage to loosen knots of insecurity and create a healthy self-esteem?

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Session 5: Tangled Up in Our Kids

Carey shared the story of when her son was the victim of a bully at school, and how she struggled with guilt because she didn't see it sooner. Can you remember a time when you felt that pang of mommy-guilt?

Pages 97-98 unpack 5 areas we should let go of guilt: (1) Giving my kid's formula, (2) Bribing with anything that might work, (3) Not being class mom or going on field trips, (4) Throwing away artwork, (5) Saying, "*Because I said so!*" What would you add to this list?

Sometimes we tie our worth to the success or failure of our children. We measure our value as a parent by how they do in school or in sports, how full their social calendars are or the number of awards they've won. We want them to do good because it silences the failures we faced growing up. How have you seen that play out in your parenting?

Read Psalm 127:3 on page 110 out loud. What is the biggest take-away for you?

The messages from our own parents can't help but affect how we parent today. The confidence and insecurity we walked out of childhood with bleed into how we raise our kids. Think about life in your home growing up. What were the main messages you heard - good or bad? Are your kids hearing the same?

Few things can tangle us more than comparing how we parent to how she parents. Author Dillon Burroughs once said, "*The problem with comparison is that you always feel either better than someone else or worthless compared to someone else.*" Are you comparing parenting to someone else? Share the ways it's knotting up your confidence.

Of all the women on Planet Earth - past, present, future - God chose you to be mom to your kids. And He isn't expecting you to be perfect... just purposeful. How does that truth sit with you?

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Session 6: Friendship: Tried, True or Tangled?

Community can be so tangling, can't it? Most of us have been wounded by other women, and so opening our hearts to a new friendship (*or deepening the ones we already have*) feels super risky. Our insecurities of worthlessness or rejection or something else get triggered. And while our heart may ache for community, we're deathly afraid of it. Do you resonate with this, and what has your experience been?

Friendship was thought up by God. It's His gift to encourage and support us because friends have the unique ability to help us heal. Read Dietrich Bonhoeffer's quote about friendship on pages 132-133, and share the characteristics of your friends that you love the most. Or share what you most want in friends.

Jealousy, envy and comparison are big tangles in friendship that create an emotional distance that can be hard to bridge. So often, we measure ourselves against other women—wanting what *she* has or wishing we were more like *her*. Insecurity is at the very center of this knot. But the truth is we aren't equipped to handle the blessings or challenges in her life. God equipped us to handle the ones in our own life. How does that sit with you? How does that change your perspective?

On pages 141-145, Carey unpacks the 4 types of friends that are confidence-killers and tangle-makers: (1) Negative Nellies, (2) Backstabbers, (3) Look-at-Mes, and (4) Unavailables. These kinds of women are careless with our heart and reinforce the message of worthlessness already tangling us. Since we are called to love and forgive, what are some ways to create healthy boundaries so our insecurities don't get knotted up?

Proverbs 17:17 says, "*Friends always show their love.*" And when we do, it speaks worthiness and value into those secret places of insecurity in others. For the next 7 days (longer if you choose), be intentional to show love to a different friend each day. Share ideas on ways to bless others in unique and new ways. Be creative!

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Session 7: The Tangled Web of Social Media

Carey shares the story of how she would gauge her worth for the day before her feet even hit the floor. Her alarm would wake her, she would grab her phone, and then spend the next several minutes looking at the number of shares or retweets... followers or likes... comments or pins... and she used those numbers to negatively or positively measure her worth. How can you relate to this?

We've become a world of over-sharers, haven't we? There seems to be no limit to self-promotion on social media. Why do you think we are doing this? What is the payoff? How is it tangling us? And why are we so interested in knowing the details of everyone's life?

On pages 160-161, we learn there are 3 ways that social media is exposing our insecurities: (1) You'll be good enough when (2) You're good enough because and (3) You'll be good enough if. How have you fallen victim to these?

A recent study showed that 1 in 4 women admitted to lying or enhancing their updates between 1 and 3 times per month. Almost 1 in 10 said they lied several times a week. Why are we so busy trying to impress our online community? What might this be doing to silence the "I'm not good enough" messages inside?

Here is truth:

- You are not the sum of your social media stats
- Because of Jesus, your worth can't be measured by comments, followers or likes.
- God made you on purpose, so don't try to look different online.
- If someone's online life looks too good to be true, it probably is.
- You don't have to exaggerate your online life to make others like you.

Read Matthew 5:13-16 from page 166 out loud. How does this encourage you and your social media habits?

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Session 8: The Divine Untangling

When God thought us up, He handpicked our unique skills and talents. The plan was for us to use them for His glory. Instead, we use them as measurements of our worth. We use them for our own glory. Psalm 46:10 in the NASB says, “*Cease striving and know that I am God.*” What does this verse say to you personally? What does it encourage you to do next?

Jeremiah 29:13 reads, “*When you search for me, yes, search for me with all your heart, you will find me.*” God wants us to pursue Him because He is the only One who can untangle our insecurities and anchor our identity in Christ. And He doesn’t hide from us. In fact, God reveals Himself in many ways: through nature, a song, a scripture, a consistent message, or a million other ways. How do you hear God best? And what has He been speaking into your tangled heart through this study?

The Enemy of your soul wants to keep you knotted up with insecurity and unable to love who God created you to be. His language is very recognizable, and he whispers phrases like: (1) you can’t, (2) you won’t, (3) you’ll never be, (4) you’ll always be, (5) you shouldn’t have, (6) you should have. There is so much shame attached to those statements, isn’t there? How have they played a role in your life?

Only God can untangle the knots inside that make us feel worthless or unlovable. Truth is we’ve spent our lives trying to fix ourselves. We’ve turned to cookies, church, community, counseling and the like. While those things are good and helpful, they cross the line when we replace God with them. He is our hope and our healer, not anything this world has to offer. In what ways does this resonate with you, and what needs to change?

Look over the scriptures listed on pages 198-199. Which one(s) connects to your heart the most and why?

Together, read the prayer on pages 209-210 out loud. What part(s) stirred your spirit and why?

Untangled has been my journey and heart's cry for not only me... but for you too! Why stay knotted up with insecurity when we can be free to live and love the way God intended?!

My prayer is that this study has encouraged your heart and created sweet community together. Thank you for participating!



Find Carey's corner of the Internet:

Have you visited ***UntangledWomen.com*** yet? There you'll find:

- An online quiz to find out what your tangle is
- Free graphics, screensavers and cell phone backgrounds to download
- Printables (some free and others affordable!)
- Links to join the Untangled Women Facebook community
- Links to the Untangled playlist on Spotify

To learn more about Carey and to subscribe to her blog and ministry updates, visit her website at CareyScottTalks.com.

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Are you ready for some coaching?

"*Real Life*" Coaching is a great way to get help implementing the changes prompted by *Untangled*. Look for the coaching tab at the top of CareyScottTalks.com for more information. She'd love the opportunity to work with you!

Book Carey for your next event!

Interested in having Carey speak at your next women's event? Topics, testimonials, and video/audio feeds can be found at CareyScottTalks.com. You can also email her directly at Carey@CareyScottTalks.com