

LIVING IN THE

Shadow of Death

LEARNING TO THRIVE THROUGH
TRAGEDY & UNCERTAINTY

STUDY GUIDE

CARRIE DAWS



IMMEASURABLE
WORKS

RAEFORD, NORTH CAROLINA

Shadow of Death

STUDY GUIDE

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IMMEASURABLE WORKS

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What You Need to Know

WHETHER PICKING UP THE Study Guide was your idea or you were coerced into it by a friend or small group, welcome! I love it when someone wants to go deeper into a topic, looking for the nuggets that God wants to bring into the light. But, I am also a fan of keeping things as simple as possible. Emotions and other's responses can smother the message God wants to convey, and I've found that His message is often quite simple.

Look through the Bible and you'll see what I'm talking about. What did He tell Noah? Build a boat. What did He tell Abraham? Leave what you know. What did He tell Joseph? Prepare for a famine. On and on throughout Scripture, the pattern is repeated. He never tells His people it will be easy or popular, never that it won't include a thousand other details. But the big message, His main point—always simple.

And so my goal in this study guide is to cut through all the words written within the book *Living in the Shadow of Death* and help you focus in where it's important. I'll ask the same question over and over again: What is it God most wants you to hear within these pages? And, What is it God most wants you to do with that message?

NOTE: THIS IS THE STUDY GUIDE, NOT THE
BOOK

I tried to make it clear in the description for this Study Guide, but you need to understand that this is not the book. You will not find the full text of *Living in the Shadow of Death* within these pages, so yes, you'll need to invest in a copy of it. It will work best if you read the corresponding chapter in the book before attempting to wade through the questions in this Study Guide.

You may also find it helpful to tackle the questions in private before trusting a group with your responses. Some may take prayer and a time of reflection. Some will require more introspection than others. And some . . . well, you may not yet be ready to tackle some of the issues that God brings to mind.

Let me encourage you. If the Holy Spirit brings it to mind, you are able to deal with

it. It might be scary or painful. It might be easier to run or squelch it down and ignore it. But God is trying to bring you freedom from the hurt in your heart, soul, mind, and strength. That's never pleasant to face, but the end result is worth the effort you'll put forth.

The Pages Ahead

Living in the Shadow of Death contains ten chapters, and the Study Guide follows the same format. That means you can easily make this a five to twenty-two week study. Here are some options that I've found work great for small groups.

- One chapter per session, each week for ten weeks OR every other week for twenty weeks (five months).
- Two chapters per session, each week for five weeks OR every other week for ten weeks.
- Either of the above formats with an introductory and/or a concluding week (ideas included within this the Leader's Guide available for free on my website CarrieDaws.com).

A Note from the Author

MEMORY VERSE

Romans 8:37 – *We are more than conquerors through him who loved us.*

TIME TO TALK

1. What convinced you to buy this book?
2. How well do you relate to Carrie's description of the shadow of death inserting itself into your life?
3. What difficult circumstance in your life do you hope this book will help you handle in a godly way?

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CHAPTER ONE

The Shadow of Death

MEMORY VERSE

Romans 8:28 – *We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

TIME TO TALK

1. *A Closer Look at Psalm 23.* Have you ever thought like Carrie when it comes to the Twenty-third Psalm? Which parts, in particular, make you hesitate or question God?
2. *A Piece of Me.* What has the shadow of death looked like in your life?
3. *Physical, Mental, and Emotional.* Have you ever faced a circumstance where the cause was not clearly identifiable? It could be medical like an undiagnosed concern, a problem at work like being passed over for promotion, or perhaps relational like a friend who suddenly drops out of your life. How did this affect you mentally and emotionally?

4. *Troubles Body and Soul*. Ginger Harrington writes in *Holy in the Moment*, “Thoughts and feelings reveal what we believe in the moment, and many of those beliefs relate to getting our needs met—the really important ones like love, acceptance, value, worth, and security.” What are your emotions about a difficult situation revealing to you?

5. *We Are Different Shades of the Same Color*. What are your expectations of God, that is, what kind of life do you expect God to provide you?

6. Jesus is preparing a place for those who believe. He’s coming back to take us to this place—leaving no chance of us getting lost on the way. Do you think God would do or allow anything to endanger that goal without it somehow doing something for us or bring something out in us that is for our good? How does that make you feel?

7. *This Is for My Best*. If God knows everything, and if He loves you and wants what is best for you, can you trust God to know what He is doing?

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4. *Trust, but Also Act.* In your current situation, what has God asked you to do? How faithfully do you follow His instructions?

5. *Mary and Martha's Question.* How does it change your heart or thinking to know that Jesus rages at your pain and longs to restore this world to what it was originally meant to be?

6. *I Still Love God.* Will you embrace God's will for you even if it includes continued pain and suffering? Will you declare trust in Him even in your hard place?

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CHAPTER THREE

Thriving After Tragedy

MEMORY VERSE

Matthew 5:14 – *You are the light of the world.*

TIME TO TALK

1. *Grief Takes a Toll.* What is your normal response when you are overwhelmed with negative or difficult emotions?
2. *The Gift of Brokenness.* How do bumper lambs change your perspective on heartbreak and brokenness?
3. *Our Response is Everything.* How do you feel about this statement? “Whether I own a piece of the original problem or not, the moment I respond poorly, I am responsible for aiding, abetting, or furthering my own pain. Even if I did nothing else wrong.” Do you find hope in hearing that is good news because you can do something to make it better?

CHAPTER FOUR

Fear

The Lord is *Jehovah Jireh*—The Lord Will Provide

MEMORY VERSE

2 Samuel 22:2–3 – *The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation.*

TIME TO TALK

1. Can you think of a time when fear surprised you? What fears regularly hold you back from things you want to do?
2. *Facing Goliath.* David's brother and King Saul may have believed they were giving David sound advice when they told him that he couldn't fight Goliath. How would you determine that God is leading you to proceed even when others around you are telling you to stop?
3. *Fighting Methods.* God's training for David included being a shepherd where he had to guard sheep against lions and bears. Identify some unusual training circumstances in your life that later allowed you to defeat your enemy.

4. *Fear is Personal. But so Is the Solution.* Write down times where you witnessed God provide for you or your loved ones.

5. *God and His Purposes.* How does picturing God as a roaring lion with a fierce love for you make you feel?

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CHAPTER FIVE

Insecurity

God is *Yahweh-Shalom*—God is my peace

MEMORY VERSE

Ephesians 6:14–15 – *Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.*

TIME TO TALK

1. Can you think of something kind that someone said about you that surprised you when you heard it? How did you respond?
2. *A Sense of Worthlessness.* Think of different opportunities to serve others that have come up in your life over the last few years. When are you willing to help? When are you quick to let insecurity rule over you?
3. *Loss Stays, but Insecurity Can Be Uninvited.* What discontent do you currently carry that you need to put down and kick out?

4. *Peace Is a Weapon*. In your present circumstances, can you imagine having Shalom peace in the midst of commotion and confusion? What steps can you take to move toward Shalom peace?

5. What comes to mind when you hear about peace being the weapon that crushes your enemy until he is utterly crushed beyond recognition?

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CHAPTER SIX

Dependence

God is *Yahweh Rohi*—my Shepherd

MEMORY VERSE

John 15:4 – *Remain in me, as I also remain in you.*

TIME TO TALK

1. Most of us fill multiple roles within our homes, careers, and churches. Which ones have been your favorites? What was it about those roles that made them special to you?
2. *My Husband, My Home.* What is *home* to you? Is it a dwelling place you grew up, where your parents or siblings are, or where your spouse is? What defines *home* for you?
3. *A Queen of a Woman.* Think of a time when circumstances took something from you that you didn't want to give up. How was your attitude? Has God's grace grown in your life so that your attitude would be different today if you faced that situation again?

4. *Home in Christ.* When are you least likely to take God at His word?

5. In whatever circumstances surround you right now, are you more rock that resists God or sponge that allows Him to permeate every part of your heart, mind, soul, and strength? What is one thing you can do to be more sponge?

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CHAPTER SEVEN

Loneliness

God is *Yahweh-Nissi*—The Lord Our Banner

MEMORY VERSE

Zephaniah 3:17 – *The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves.*

TIME TO TALK

1. What part of your life are you most likely to hide from others?
2. *God's Waiting Room*. Do you truly believe that God is at work even while you seem to be doing nothing but waiting?
3. How big of an issue is loneliness for you right now?

4. *The God Who Sees*. God is *El Roi*—The God Who Sees. Think of a time when it seems God was tossing out the CDs of your life. How does that make you feel?

5. *An Example from Genesis*. Looking back to that time in question number four, can you now see God working around you?

6. *An Impossible Battle in Exodus*. When God was lifted high, the Israelites gained victory. What are some ways you can lift God high in your daily life?

7. *The Banner Over You*. Who in your life is trustworthy and faithful? Who could be your Aaron or Hur?

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CHAPTER EIGHT

Death Reigns

God is *Yahweh-Rapha*—The Lord Who Heals

MEMORY VERSE

John 10:10 – *The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.*

TIME TO TALK

1. Where do you see God's abundance in your life today? Where in your life do you not see it?
2. *Tricked into the Wrong Stronghold.* Do you see any area of your life that is trapped by an enemy's stronghold?
3. *Demolishing Prison Strongholds.* Think about the stronghold you mentioned above. Do you believe that God gives you the power and love and self-discipline to wage war against it? Will you persevere?

4. *God's Promise in the Desert.* Take time to consider Psalm 103:2–3, 2 Chronicles 7:14, Hosea 14:4, and Isaiah 53:5. Record your thoughts about these verses.

5. *Co-Heirs with Christ.* What thoughts come to mind as you read the full message of Romans 8:28-39?

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CHAPTER TEN
Final Thoughts

MEMORY VERSE

Philippians 1:6 – *He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.*

TIME TO TALK

1. Can you say with confidence that God is good all the time? What makes you hesitate or hold back?
2. *Hope to Endure*. Consider Isaiah 61:1–3. What thoughts come to mind as you read these verses?
3. Often, the healing process involves more pain, much like Carrie described in her tooth extraction. But removing the infection and binding a bleeding wound is for our best. How does that change your perspective on the difficult times in your life?

4. *Overflowing Hope*. Have you ever considered that waiting on the Lord is a discipline that requires a sustained effort on your part? How can you be more purposeful about growing in this?

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