

Inspired by the true stories of trafficking survivors.

STILL HOPE



STILL HOPE-WORKBOOK

INTRODUCTION

This workbook was created for you at your pace, in your time, and with deep care.

If you are holding this workbook, it reflects a strength that has carried you through experiences no one should ever have had to endure. Healing from trauma is not linear, and God does not rush the work He is doing in you. This workbook is not meant to fix you or force you to revisit painful memories before you are ready. Instead, it offers a sacred and safe space where healing can unfold gently, guided by God's presence and grace.

Within these pages, you will find journaling prompts, reflection, guided meditation, prayer, scripture, grounding exercises, and practical tools for healing. Each element is designed to encourage depth without overwhelming, honoring both your courage and your emotional capacity. You are always invited, not required, to engage. You may pause, skip, return, or repeat any section as you listen to your body and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Trauma impacts the body, mind, heart, and spirit. This workbook approaches healing holistically, recognizing that restoration often happens slowly and tenderly. The prayers and Scriptures included are offered as companions, not commands. If prayer feels difficult or distant, God's nearness is not diminished. Scripture reminds us that the Lord is close to the brokenhearted and gentle with those who are still walking out their testimony.

Above all, this workbook affirms the truth of the Gospel: you are not broken beyond repair. You are deeply loved, seen, and valued by God. What happened to you was not your fault, and it does not define you. In Christ, your story is not over. Healing is possible, and there is still hope being written into your life's testimony.

May these pages become a place of rest, renewal, and encounter, a space where you are reminded that God walks with you, honors your boundaries, and delights in every step you take toward wholeness.

FOR SURVIVORS AT DIFFERENT STAGES OF HEALING

Every survivor's journey looks different. Some who use this workbook may still be in the process of exiting exploitation or stabilizing after recent trauma. Others may be further along with recovery, with more distance and support around their experiences. This workbook is designed to meet you where you are, without assuming your circumstances.

IF YOU ARE STILL IN EXIT, CRISIS, OR EARLY STABILIZATION:

Your primary focus right now may be safety, rest, and meeting immediate needs (safe shelter, resources, and your body and mind healing). That is not a failure; it is wisdom. You are encouraged to use this workbook gently and selectively. Short grounding exercises, brief prayers, or simply reading may feel more supportive than deep journaling. If reflection brings fear, urgency, or overwhelm, it is okay to stop and reset and come back later. Your safety comes first.

If you need immediate emotional or safety support:

• **CALL OR TEXT 988** — Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (U.S.)

Available 24/7, free and confidential

• **NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING HOTLINE (U.S.)**

Call **1-888-373-7888** or text **HELP** to **233733 (BEFREE)**

Available 24/7 for survivor support, resources, and local connections

• If you are in immediate danger, call **911** or your local emergency number.

If you are living in a safe house, shelter, or program, you may also reach out to a trusted staff member, advocate, counselor, or pastor for support.

IF YOU ARE IN LONGER-TERM RECOVERY:

You may find journaling, prayer, Scripture, and reflection helpful as you process emotions, rebuild trust, and continue healing. Even so, some days may feel harder than others. Healing is not linear, but rather divergent. Needing support again does not mean you are failing; it means you are human. These crisis and support resources remain available to you at any stage.

FOR ALL SURVIVORS, AT EVERY STAGE:

You are not required to be “ready” for healing in a certain way, but rather every person heals in their own way and timing. God’s presence and care are not dependent on how far along you are, how much you write, or how strong you feel. Whether your focus is survival, stabilization, or restoration, you are worthy of compassion, dignity, and support.

This workbook is here to serve you, not to pressure you. Take what helps. Leave what doesn’t. Return when you are ready. God walks with you in every season (Ecclesiastes 3).

This workbook does not replace counseling, evidence-based care, or mental health support that many survivors of human trafficking need. Please consider and seek real medical, therapeutic, and spiritual care from a professional. This resource is not intended to treat or diagnose but rather is for educational purposes only. If you are a family member of a survivor, you can read this to supplement the support you are giving to your beloved friend or family member. There are resources for families effected by human trafficking in our resource document. Thanks so much for the healing of your friends or family members. We ask you to carefully consider the following guide.

THE TWO JOURNEYS: A WORKBOOK (RESOURCE 6)

• Two Journeys Workbook for Survivors of Trafficking

Journey One: Safety First

• Psalm 147:3

This portion focuses on one essential truth: **HEALING BEGINS WITH SAFETY.**

·For survivors of human trafficking, trauma is often long-term, relational, and repeated. Your body learned how to survive overwhelming danger. Even now, when you may be physically safe, your nervous system may still react as if danger is present. This is not a spiritual failure. It is not a weakness either. It is how the body protects itself.

·Before deep reflection, memory work, or spiritual growth can happen, your body must experience safety and stabilization. Trauma-informed care, and Scripture, both affirm this order.

·Jesus often met physical and emotional needs first before inviting deeper transformation. Matthew (14:13-21) Safety is not selfish. It is sacred.

WHAT TRAUMA DOES TO THE BODY

·Trauma is not just something that happened in the past. It can live on in the body as:

·Hypervigilance (always on alert)

·Panic or anxiety feelings or attacks

·Numbness or dissociation

·Sleep disturbances - Difficulty resting or sleeping

·Strong reactions to reminders or stress

These responses are signs that your body is adapted to survive, and we want to be moving towards healing where you can thrive. Healing does not require forcing these responses away. It begins by **helping your body recognize that it is safe now.**

ACTIVITY

PRACTICE 1: GROUNDING IN THE PRESENT MOMENT

PURPOSE:

Grounding helps calm the nervous system and bring awareness back to the present, where safety exists now.

INSTRUCTIONS:

·Take your time. You may stop at any point.

·Place both feet on the floor.

·Take a slow breath through your nose.

·Exhale slowly through your mouth, longer than you inhaled. 4 seconds in, 8 seconds out.

REPEAT 3 TIMES.

Now, gently notice:

- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can feel
- 3 things you can hear
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 thing you can taste or something you like about this moment

THE LORD IS NEAR TO THE BROKENHEARTED. PSALM 34:18

REFLECTION:

What did you notice in your body after slowing your breath?

PRACTICE 2: IDENTIFYING SAFE SIGNALS

PURPOSE:

Trauma disrupts the body's ability to recognize safety. This exercise helps rebuild that awareness.

READ SLOWLY:

Safety does not mean everything is perfect. Safety means nothing harmful is happening right now.

CHECK IN WITH YOURSELF:

- Am I physically safe at this moment?
- Is there anyone pressuring me right now?
- Can I choose to pause or stop?
- Circle any that feel true today:

- I AM INDOORS
- I HAVE ACCESS TO SUPPORT
- I CAN SAY NO
- I CAN REST
- I AM NOT ALONE

PRAYER:

God, help my body learn what my heart longs to believe that I am safe right now.

Psalm 46:1: God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

WHEN THIS FEELS LIKE TOO MUCH

If at any point during this portion you felt overwhelmed, numb, or disconnected:

- Pause
- Return to your breath

·Choose a grounding activity (take a walk barefoot in the grass, spend time outside, take a long shower, find somewhere cozy and get comfortable)

·Reach out to a trusted person or support resource

·Needing support does not mean you are failing. It means your body is asking for care.

·Guided Meditation

·Closing Truth

·Healing does not begin with remembering. It begins with **safety**.

·God is not asking you to push through pain to prove your faith. He is inviting you to rest, stabilize, and breathe, knowing He is near.

·You may return to this practice as often as needed. Safety is not a one-time step. It is something your body learns again and again.

·Lord, thank you for taking me on this journey and being by my side. As I dive into scripture, prayer, and healing practices, I ask for your presence and guiding hand to be with me every step of the way.

Psalms 119:133

ORDER MY STEPS in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.

·Guided Prayer

God, thank You for meeting me here. Help my body learn what my spirit longs to trust. Teach me that rest is allowed. That safety is holy. And that You are gentle with me. Amen.

JOURNALING:

·REFLECTION:

What does your body notice as you read this?

CREATING A PERSONAL SAFETY LIST

PURPOSE:

Trauma-informed care emphasizes choice and predictability. This exercise helps you identify what supports your sense of safety.

LIST 3 THINGS THAT HELP YOU FEEL CALMER OR SAFER:

(Examples: a blanket, worship music, stepping outside, sitting near a trusted person)

LIST 3 THINGS THAT INCREASE STRESS OR OVERWHELM:

(No judgment, this is information, not failure.) You may return to this list anytime

Healing Exercise

PRACTICE: Scripture as Shelter

PURPOSE:

Scripture is offered as a place of refuge, not a demand.

VERSES: (WRITE IT THREE TIMES)

- You are with me. (Psalm 23:4)
- Be still and know that I am God. (Psalm 46:10)
- Come to Me, all who are weary. (Matthew 11:28)

WRITE IT HERE:

READ IT SLOWLY.

You do not need to understand it.
You do not need to feel anything.
Let the words simply be present.

STEPS OF HEALING (NON-LINEAR)

ESTABLISH SAFETY AND STABILIZATION

- “Before healing can deepen, the body must feel safe.”** Kristi Noem
- For survivors of human trafficking, trauma is often prolonged, interpersonal, and complex. The nervous system may remain in a state of survival long after exploitation has ended. This is not disobedience or lack of faith; it is a biological response to repeated harm.
- Trauma-informed care recognizes safety as the foundation of healing. This includes:
 - Physical safety
 - Emotional and relational safety
 - Predictability, choice, and control
 - Gentle nervous-system regulation

•Jesus consistently prioritized safety and care before teaching or calling people forward (Mark 5; John 21). Stabilization is not selfish; it is sacred.

•**Trauma-informed practices may include:** grounding, breathwork, body awareness, predictable routines, and supportive relationships.

RECONNECTION

•“Scripture is a shelter, not a test of faith.” Kristi Noem

•Survivors may struggle with Scripture, prayer, or spiritual language; especially if faith was used to manipulate or control them in the past. Trauma-informed Christian care honors this reality without shame.

•Rather than requiring spiritual performance, healing invites gentle re-attachment:

•One verse at a time

•Short, grounding prayers (or arrow prayers)

•Silence when words feel unsafe

•Evidence-based trauma care shows that felt safety precedes meaning-making. Spiritually, this reflects the truth that God is near before we understand Him (Psalm 34:18).

NAMING PAIN AND TELLING YOUR STORY

•“**Lament is not a lack of faith; it is faithful honesty**” is attributed to Ernest Hemingway

•Survivors of trafficking often carry grief, anger, confusion, and shame, especially when harm was repeated or involved betrayal by trusted people.

•Trauma-informed care emphasizes narrative control: (ethical storytelling)

•Survivors choose **what** to share

•Survivors choose **when** to share

•Survivors are never required to disclose details

•Biblically, lament is a sanctioned spiritual practice. Jesus Himself cried out in distress (Matthew 27:46). Naming pain, without minimizing or spiritualizing it, is a step toward integration and healing. Cry out!

BODY BASED HEALING

•“**The body remembers, so healing must include the body.**” Kristi Noem

•Human trafficking trauma is stored not only in memory but in the nervous system. Survivors may experience hypervigilance, dissociation, panic, or numbness even when they are now safe.

- Mind-Body awareness
- Grounding exercises
- Gentle movement
- Breath regulation

•These practices do not replace prayer or Scripture; they **create the conditions for them to be received safely**. Healing the body allows spiritual truth to land without overwhelming the system.

AGENCY, CHOICE, VOICE

Lysander Spooner stated, “When you do nothing, you feel overwhelmed and powerless. But when you get involved, you feel the sense of hope and accomplishment that comes from knowing you are working to make things better.”

- Trafficking strips survivors of autonomy. Trauma-informed care intentionally restores:
 - Choice
 - Consent
 - Control over pace and participation
- Christian healing honors this restoration. God does not coerce healing. He invites it. Survivors are encouraged to engage only in what feels supportive and to pause when something feels too much. The Holy Spirit is a gentleman.
- Agency is not rebellion, it is recovery.

HEALING: SAFE RELATIONSHIPS AND COMMUNITY

- “Healing happens in connection, not isolation.” adapted from S. Kelley Harrell
- Trauma often occurs in relationships, and healing does too. This may look like:
 - One trusted advocate or counselor
 - A trauma-informed faith leader
 - A small, safe community
 - A therapeutic or spiritual mentor
- Scripture affirms this truth: “Carry one another’s burdens” (Galatians 6:2). Trauma-informed community offers presence without pressure and support without fixing.

HOPE RESTORATION

•“Healing is not erasing the past it is reclaiming the future.” Marcus Garvey

- Only after safety and stabilization are established can survivors begin to integrate their story in ways that feel empowering rather than retraumatizing.
- This step is **never rushed**. Meaning emerges slowly, through compassion, spiritual reflection, and ongoing support.
- The Christian hope of resurrection speaks directly to trauma: harm does not have the final word. Healing may be slow, but it is possible and it is held by God. (Phil. 3:10-11)

IN MY PRAYER CLOSET

- Lord, thank you for meeting me where I am and giving me the tools for the future. Thank you for walking with me and showing me a way to peace and safety on my healing journey. Thanks for holding space for me, Jesus, as you show me the way. God, you are my portion and my refuge. In Jesus' name, Amen.

JOURNEY TWO: Forgiveness

- Workbook: Guided questions (reflection, observation, interpretation)

ACTIVITY: IT TAKES TIME

- Make a list of the people you need to forgive. Carefully consider the different seasons in your life and write the names you need to forgive. This list may be added to or taken away as you move forward in this workbook. Below is a space where you can write their names down.
- When you are done, we will begin to pray for the Lord to draw near to you and ask Him to show you how to pray forgiveness to enter your heart for these individuals. Imagine Jesus with you, He is by your side through this all. Start with one person, declaring your prayer over this person. Lift them up to the throne of God and let Him carry this burden of wrongdoing. He will take it from your hand gladly, as his yoke is light. Perhaps you do one person, perhaps you do two, or even get through the whole list. Any amount you get through, in your own time is wonderful work. If you are not ready, put this list to the side and save it for when the Lord prompts you. It's okay to take one day at a time. (Psalm 99:8; Matthew 6:12-14). God the father is your avenger and He will be the one to judge rightly on your behalf. He is our strong refuge and tower, a presence of protection and a good and righteous defender. (Optional): in your prayer closet you can use post it notes or something similar to have a visual of your daily prayers.

GUIDED MEDITATION

- Find a comfortable spot in your prayer closet, your bed, a pillow on the floor, a grassy spot in a park or any place you can be safe and comfortable. I invite you to close your eyes and be in a rested position, fully supported. You get to choose a position that feels more comfortable, at any time you can take a break, or you can continue in meditation if you are able. Meditation in

this space with God, is not emptying your mind, but rather asking for the Lord to fill you with His Spirit, His Comfort, and to guide you in directing your steps of healing. Thank you, Jesus, for walking with me today in this meditation on your word and your plan for my life.

•Let's begin with thanksgiving! God has brought you to this moment where you can sit with your thoughts and enter His presence. Take three deep breaths counting eight seconds in and eight seconds out. You have breath in your lungs! Thank you, God for giving us life and breath.

•Forgiveness is so important in our walk. When we carry our burdens of wrongdoings against us, it's hard to heal because the wounds have remained open and unhealed when we walk in unforgiveness. Unforgiveness takes up space in our body, our minds, and our spirits where something else could be growing instead, something beautiful and life-giving. Forgiving someone does not mean that you come into agreement with what they have done to you or forget what you walked through.

PRAYER

Father, thank you for holding my story in your hands and recognizing my pain and sorrow. Thank you for sending your Son to take on the sins of the world. Thank you for forgiving me, where I missed the mark. (1John 1:9) Lord, I confess I have sinned, and I bring my sin to the cross and lay it down before your feet. I ask that you remove my sin from the east to the west. Jesus, I thank you for helping me forgive others and that you are with me every step of the way. In Jesus' name, Amen.

•Let's hold space for your younger self and what you went through. That younger person was not able to protect herself/himself, but now you can and are able to hold space for your younger self and understand that you are walking into an understanding of being able to protect and help heal the wounds of that younger version of yourself alongside Jesus who does the work as you surrender your hurt and pain to Him, little by little or all at once, but always at the pace of your personal walk with Him. Your "little" self is seen, heard, and your testimony is ready to be spoken out loud when you are ready to share. What was done to you was not right. In God's mercy you can be free! Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom! (2 Corinthians 3:17)

•I want you to take three more breaths as above.

8 seconds **IN**
8 seconds **OUT**

•Do you see your younger self? She/He is precious in the eyes of the Lord. He has never left or forsaken you. He is advocating for you in the courts of heaven. He will fight for you and fight for you against your enemies. You can call upon Him when you need Him, and He is the name that is above any other name. (2 Samuel 22:4; Ephesians 5)

•When you are ready, it's time to armor up! Every day is a battle, and we cannot do it alone. We begin with the Helmet of Salvation, you are seen and cherished by God, and you are saved by grace, not by what you can do or have done, but because you are His. (Titus 2:11; 1 Peter 5:10; Hebrews 4:16; Ephesians 6:17)

•Find a comfortable spot in your prayer closet, your bed, a pillow on the floor, a grassy spot in a park or any place you can be safe and comfortable. I invite you to close your eyes and be in a rested position, fully supported. You get to choose a position that feels more comfortable, at any time you can take a break, or you can continue in meditation if you are able. Meditation in

•He will rescue you from every enemy, seen and unseen. You can do all things in Christ!
(Philippians 4:13)

•You can open your eyes now, resting in His presence. He sees you and will walk with you during this season. You can go to Him!

GUIDED PRAYER

Abba Father, thank you for showing me where I hold onto unforgiveness and walking with me in your good timing and ordering my steps for my healing. Thank you, Father, for holding my pain and suffering and unhealed parts. I lift my burden to you on your throne, at your feet. You can carry it, Lord. I thank you for going to you like this daily and letting you carry my heart and my burdens. Holy Spirit, thank you for your comfort and coming into my heart and in the places where the light needs to be touching the dark places of my past and my wounds. I know you are doing perfect work in my body, mind, and spiritual self, ordering my steps, and walking with me at your perfect time. In Jesus' name, Amen

JOURNALING SESSION

•Take some time to reflect on all the times where you felt safe, where you felt heard, who made you feel seen in your life. Who are the safe people in your life from the past you knew you could trust? These family members or friends who were accountable, who asked for forgiveness when they did wrong, the ones who showed up faithfully, who gave you advice even when it was hard to hear, the honest ones who stood up for you and their yes meant yes and their no meant no. If you can think of anyone in your life with these traits, let's write about these safe people in our lives. If you didn't have someone like this growing up or in your adult life, reflect on what a safe person in your life would look like. What qualities would they have? How would they treat you? How would they show up to you? What does that look like for you if you could imagine a safe person in your life?

FORGIVENESS EXERCISE

Okay, it's time to get the list again (this can be something you revisit when you are ready). Do you feel ready to pray for someone and lift a person off your list to the Lord? If so, in your own time and always when you are ready, come back to this list. First, ask God to be with you. Next, ask Him to give you the words. If you have no words, hold space for yourself to grieve and release the feelings you have from this person and the event. Next, lift their name up to the Lord. He will show you what to say and what to do. He can handle all our emotions, Jesus is a perfect mediator, as He lived a life as a human feeling everything we have felt in a body of flesh. He has felt sorrow, hunger, loss, joy, peace, anger, love, betrayal, and every other emotion of human experience. (Hebrews 12:22-24)

BATTLE PLAN: JOURNEY OF FORGIVENESS (WORKFLOW IMAGE)

- Full Armor of God
 - Image of the full armor of God and verse at top (Ephesians 6)
- The Battle is the Lord's: Handing Them to the Throne
- Courts of Heaven – Interceding (praying for them and for yourself)

STEPS OF FORGIVENESS (NON-LINEAR)

- Share Your Story (with a trusted person or God)
- Recognize Forgiveness is For You, not the other person
- Reconciliation is not always possible; forgiving does not mean you have to be in a relationship with that person again. Your peace and safety are important.
- Recognize what is hurting you and why
- When you flight and fight is activated, use healthy stress management tools to soothe your body as you continue to heal (prayer, walking/exercise, trusted counseling session, breathing exercise)
- Recognize the unmet needs in your past, but that you can have all those things that you need and remain in hope for a future with all those needs being met. You are worthy to be loved, worthy to have peace, and have intrinsic value as a precious human life, held by God.
- When memories replay, take every thought captive to Christ. Call upon the Lord. These memories do not define you. You are in the driver's seat! Your mind is replaying these memories; you can use that to ask for healing in those moments. If you are in a safe place, say out loud: I am safe now! Take note of your surroundings. Say out loud: what the room looks like, what it smells like, what you are wearing, describe where you are now to yourself. You are planted in hope at this current moment.
- Take note of the beauty, love, safety, and wonderful things around you now in this moment of your life. Your pain does not define you and does not need to have power over you. Step out in faith that you are building a new life. You are renewed daily! One day at a time! Who are the helpers in your life?
- Your compassion, hope, peace, and self-confidence to forgive yourself and others is truly beautiful. Look how far you have come and how far you can go! You are not alone. Practicing forgiveness leads to a life full of health, peace, kindness, beauty, love, and hope. Of course, every person's journey is different, and the Lord will show you in His good timing what your next step is. Give yourself grace and kindness to take one day at a time, one hour at a time, one name on the list at a time. Your safety and healing are the number one priority. If you are

still not recovered from Trafficking, your first step is to seek help and find a place to heal. Take these steps of forgiveness with you for your future self.

IN MY PRAYER CLOSET

Take it to the Lord in Prayer and know at any time you can call upon him. The Lord says it's not just once we forgive but seventy times seven! This number is a big one. When your memories come up it's another opportunity to submit that experience to the Lord, pray on it, and release it to God. Make time every day to enter into his rest in prayer. He is with you!

•Prayer: Lord, thanks for being with me in this time of healing and forgiveness. Thanks for guiding me along the way to be able to put the full armor of God on, to know you are fighting my battles, to feel your presence with me Lord God. I thank you for holding space for my story and holding me during these times of great suffering that you were never far. Father, you are guiding me into deeper forgiveness for myself and for my traffickers and those who were not safe in my life. I praise you for giving me the opportunity to heal in these areas of my life. Thanks for sending your Son, on the cross to die for me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

This resource was created by Treasured Vessels Foundation in partnership with Still Hope.

TREASURED VESSELS FOUNDATION MISSION

We exist to provide Christ-centered safe communities that restore survivors of sexual exploitation to achieve their true potential.

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