



Holding It Together with  
Extraordinary Grace

LEA ANN GARFIAS



**Rocking Ordinary Leader Guide**  
**Holding It Together with Extraordinary Grace**

**Lea Ann Garfias**



**New Leaf Press**  
A Division of New Leaf Publishing Group  
[www.newleafpress.net](http://www.newleafpress.net)

First printing: August 2016

Copyright © 2016 by Lea Ann Garfias. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations in articles and reviews. For information write:

New Leaf Press, P.O. Box 726, Green Forest, AR 72638

New Leaf Press is a division of the New Leaf Publishing Group, Inc.

ISBN: 978-0-89221-748-9

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are from the New King James Version of the Bible.

Please consider requesting that a copy of this volume be purchased by your local library system.

**Printed in the United States of America**

Please visit our website for other great titles:  
[www.newleafpress.net](http://www.newleafpress.net)

For information regarding author interviews,  
please contact the publicity department at (870) 438-5288



**New Leaf Press**  
A Division of New Leaf Publishing Group  
[www.newleafpress.net](http://www.newleafpress.net)

# Introduction

## How to Meet the Needs of Your Group

You are about to start an extraordinary ministry: offering hope and healing to your group of friends. Each week of this study, you will face women who are hurting, women who are discouraged, women who are weary, and each lesson you will reach out to them with God's promise of strength and renewal and victory. You will watch God change their minds, change their spirits, and change their lives. You are doing Jesus' work.

Maybe you are in need of Jesus, yourself. Perhaps you, too, are tired and burdened and scarred and scared. I know I am right now, just while I'm writing to you. I'm exhausted and worried and hurting, pleading with God for healing and hope for myself and for those I love. But you know what God has been teaching me through the journey of *Rocking Ordinary*? God is showing me that *He does extraordinary work through ordinary women . . . every single day.*

This ministry of hope and healing requires great faith on our part — faith that God is powerful, faith that we will see Him face-to-face, faith that God is keeping us in His omnipotent power until then, faith that the struggles we face now are part of His purpose for our lives, faith that our endurance to the end will radiate His glory now and for eternity. That's a huge, heaping pile of faith that we are still working to stockpile. Yet it's the entire purpose of our salvation! Just read 1 Peter 1:3–9.

I wanted to take a minute right here before you get started with this study to remind you that yes, God will change you through His Word during this study. The entire purpose of *Rocking Ordinary* is to examine the ordinary of our lives, those places we try to hide or cover up because they are boring or broken and we think God isn't using them. But He is. So while you're leading this study, don't shy away from those uncomfortable parts. Lean into them. Let the Holy Spirit open up some of those scars and cleanse the impurities and untruths that have covered them over. Be brave enough to admit your own need to God, to yourself,

and to those you are teaching. Have the courage Paul displayed in Romans 7 to admit your struggles with the sin nature even while you're trying to teach these holy lessons. Then you can boldly rejoice with the Apostle in Romans chapter 8 at Christ's sanctifying power in our lives.

Remember, the women gathering with you in this study are bringing great burdens with them: the burdens of family, work, ministry, and relationships. The trials of illness, bills, death, and loneliness. The pain of abuse, neglect, addiction, and sin. You may know some of the issues that your friends are facing, but doubtless there will be hidden hurts in your group that these discussions will bring to light. As a facilitator, you will be the one they likely come to for help and counsel. And sometimes a situation may come up during discussion that catches you by surprise. To help you meet the needs of these women, here are some suggestions:

**Provide resources to get help.** Before beginning this study, identify experienced biblical counselors in your church and community that you can recommend. Gather names of women experienced in helping women overcome anxiety, addiction, marital problems, parenting difficulties, abuse, and other stresses. While you should absolutely pray and encourage your friends toward healing, don't attempt long-term counseling for major traumas without proper training, experience, and support.

**Prepare for each week's lesson.** I tried really hard to make this study easy for you, but you still should look at each lesson ahead of time. Spend some time reading *Rocking Ordinary* and highlight passages you think will be meaningful for your group. Look over the Scripture passages I suggest for discussion, and add verses that are meaningful to you and that meet your friends' specific needs. To help your group open up, share personal examples from your own life and ways that God is working in you.

**Provide copies of the book.** Each member of your group will get more out of this study if she personally reads *Rocking Ordinary*. Remind the group each week what chapters will be covered in the next lesson so they can each read ahead. Encourage them to think through the questions at the end of the chapter and to come prepared with thoughts on the topic. This way, your discussion will be rich and insightful with perspectives from a variety of members.

**Protect your friends' privacy.** During discussion time and prayer time, you may have a couple of “over-sharers.” You know them — the ones who air their laundry and confess their sins publicly with sackcloth and ashes. While we want to encourage transparency and genuine encouragement, we don't want to set up a situation for gossip, slander, or humiliation. So help keep the conversation positive by bringing the discussion back to *God's working in our lives* and *the timeless truths of Scripture*. Keep the talkative friends from accidentally monopolizing the lesson by drawing out the quieter ladies. And if a hurting woman bears her soul, gently remind the group to keep the prayer request confidential and help the hurting one find a safe person to confide in.

**Pray for change.** God wants to use you — and every member of your study group — to make an extraordinary difference in the lives of others. That means God will change your life, the lives of your friends, and then the lives of those around you. It's an amazing ripple of glory spreading forth God's grace and love, and it all starts when He touches us personally. Depend on that relationship, that most important intimacy in your life, then magnify the power of prayer as you come together as a group.

# How to Use This Study

This study is designed for a variety of uses — Sunday school class, ladies' fellowship studies, book clubs, discipleship groups, or just a group of friends around the kitchen table. Use the lessons however your group best benefits.

The lessons are broken into 4 large lessons or 8 mini-lessons. If you are using the mini-lessons, you may want to spend 30–60 minutes together on the material.

- Members read the chapter(s) ahead of time.
- At the meeting, watch the DVD presentation together.
- The facilitator guides the discussion with the given questions and/or Scriptures.
- The group discusses the point and encourages one another in the Lord.
- Take some prayer requests and pray together.
- Close with some ideas how to implement what you've learned.

For longer lessons of 90 minutes or more, combine two mini lessons (example, 1A and 1B).

- Give the group the reading assignments for both mini lessons.
- Come together and watch the first DVD presentation and follow the discussion for that section.
- Move on to the next mini lesson DVD presentation and continue with that discussion.
- Take prayer requests and pray together.
- Close with ideas on how to implement what you've learned.

With the discussion questions, allow your group to spend time sharing personal testimonies, observances from the reading, or Scripture verses that encourage their walk with the Lord. I have provided some *truths* to help you guide the group toward right thinking and new awareness of their influence, in case it's not immediately apparent to the group. Also, don't feel obligated to hash out every question given. Be sensitive toward how the Holy Spirit is guiding your group's conversation and meeting the needs of your friends through the study.

Encourage your group to come prepared to minister with one another. They may want to bring their Bible, their copy of *Rocking Ordinary*, a journal and pen, and a warm beverage. Most of all, pray for willing hearts. I'm praying with you that God touches each one, encouraging women toward extraordinary service in the midst of ordinary lives.

—Lea Ann

## Part 1

# Success and Failure



1A. Intro, Run with Patience (introduction and ch. 1)

---



After welcoming everyone, begin video 1A Intro, Run with Patience (introduction and ch. 1).

---



Bible passage — Hebrews 12:1–3:

Read the following biblical passage prior to the group discussion.

*Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.*

---

---

**Discussion Questions** Use these questions or any others relevant to your group to stimulate discussion:

1. Are you succeeding, or merely surviving?

**From the book:**

How do we shine forth the image of God, powerfully reflecting His presence and His purpose in our lives? How does this ordinary, everyday life create extraordinary changes in our homes, our churches, our communities?

This is true success. And that's what I want to achieve for myself, for my daughter, for my neighbor, and for you, friend. I believe that God who called us to glorify Himself will do it through us (1 Thessalonians 5:24). We can, indeed, rock our ordinary lives when we reach out and change our world, one ordinary day at a time.

**1 Thessalonians 5:24** — *He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.*

**Truth** — What we may feel like is failure is, in reality, the evidence of God's working through us.

Notes:

---

---

2. What is success? How do you know you are being successful or failing?

**From the book:**

We can be successful. We can be influential. We can change our world if we do just that — live and say His truths no matter the consequences, no matter the obstacles. We can see God use our ordinary lives in extraordinary ways if we have the courage and the faith to simply obey wherever we are.

**Truth** — We need God's perspective on our lives. He is not interested in our performance or appearance. He wants a personal relationship with each of us.

Notes:

---

---

3. How does redefining success help you keep running your race?

**Truth** — When we look to Jesus (not at the circumstances around us or our failures or our friend's achievements), we can continue running with patience . . . and maybe even joy.

Notes:

---

---

4. How does redefining success help you reach out to those around you?

**From the book:**

We have so many differences in our races. Where we live, whether we work, our finances, our health, our family size, our ministries, our extended community — so many factors make the race completely altered for each one of us.

The truth is, though, that we are all in it, we are all running it at the same time, and we are all commanded to continue moving forward with patience.

We aren't looking at each other, except for encouragement. Never comparison. We are looking to the finish line, to Christ who started it all and will hand out our finisher medal at the end. He ran it ahead of us, and we will enjoy the celebration with Him at the end.

**Truth** — Our purpose and meaning and significance are realized in our relationship with Christ, and that enables us to demonstrate hope and healing toward those around us.

*God is using each of us in His own plan for His own glory.*

Notes:

---

---

If this study is being done in four sessions, skip page 11 and begin at page 12. Otherwise, continue to page 11.

**Prayer Time:** Take prayer requests from the group, then lead in prayer. The following is a sample prayer outline, if helpful.

- Thank God for His salvation, His omnipotence, His love, and His grace.
- Pray that the message of the book, the hope and healing of Christ, becomes personal to each one there.
- Pray for personal surrender to God's perfect plan for each life represented in the group.
- Pray for some of the specific needs mentioned.
- Give a moment of silent time for private prayer.
- Praise God for His provisions and for His Word.
- Ask for God's presence and power to be real to each one as she serves God throughout the week.
- Amen!

### How to Rock it This Week

Read for the next lesson chapters 2 and 3 of *Rocking Ordinary*.

Ask your group for ideas how they will put the lesson into practice this week. Be specific!

Additional ideas:

- Memorize Hebrews 12:1–3 and meditate on this truth daily.
- Keep a list of ways God is blessing your work — evidence of answered prayers, renewed relationships, spiritual growth, unexpected blessings.
- Write a thank-you note to a woman who encourages your spiritual walk.



1B. Do Not Be Afraid, Reach Out (ch. 2, 3)

---



Let's move on and watch video 1B now, Do Not Be Afraid, Reach Out (chs. 2, 3).

---



Bible Passage — John 15:11–14:

Read the following biblical passage prior to the group discussion.

*These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.*

---

---

**Discussion Questions** Use these questions or any others relevant to your group to stimulate discussion:

1. How does criticizing ourselves inwardly contribute to a critical attitude toward others?

**Truth** — When we live in the light of God's grace and love, we are better equipped to extend the same toward those around us.

Notes:

---

---

2. Why do we assume others are criticizing us more than we are? How can we avoid being overly-sensitive?

**From the book:**

It is far too easy to deny those around us the grace we ourselves desperately need. . . . Criticism comes naturally to most people; it's an outgrowth of our own prideful sin nature. It takes conscious effort to be graceful, truly loving, and forgiving to those around us.

**Truth** — Christ-like love is forgiving, kind, and inclusive. It's the love that led Jesus to the Cross for us. It's the love that compels us to reach out toward others.

Notes:

---

3. How can we reach out in love toward the unkind, critical, or cruel people around us?

**From the book:**

The meaner and more vicious the friend appears, the more convinced I am of the severity of her wounds. Trapped between a rock and a hard place, she lashes out in fear and desperation.

**Truth** — Those around us need to be willing to change and receptive of our love for genuine healing. When they are, we can have a tremendous ministry of hope toward them.

Notes:

---

4. How big a priority should we make friendships? Is it really that important? Why?

**From the book:**

God works His love into my life, through my life, out of my life. He reaches out of Himself to love me, shape me, grace me with His likeness, and I reflect Him by doing the same, reaching outside my four walls toward others. God's love sees through my eyes the needs, reaches through my hands toward the needy.

Thus, the shining badge of faith becomes loving friendship. "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:34-35).

**Truth** — We are commanded to love one another, and that love must include active friendships.

Notes:

---

---

Part 1 – Success and Failure wrap up.

## Prayer Time

Take prayer requests from the group, then lead in prayer. The following is a sample prayer outline, if helpful.

- Thank God for His love toward us on the Cross and through our daily lives.
- Pray that the message of the book, Christ's unconditional love toward us, becomes personal to each one there.
- Pray for renewed dedication toward nurturing, healing friendships.
- Pray for some of the specific needs mentioned.
- Give a moment of silent time for private prayer.
- Ask for God's love and grace to be real to each one as she serves God throughout the week.
- Amen!

## How to Rock it This Week

Read for the next lesson chapter 4 of *Rocking Ordinary* (if completing 2A and 2B together, read chapters 4–6).

Ask your group for ideas on how they will put the lesson into practice this week. Be specific!

Additional ideas:

- Memorize John 15:11–14, and meditate on this truth daily
- Compile a list of “in real life” friends, and schedule dates to spend time with each one.
- Find an acquaintance at church or in your community and intentionally develop a deeper relationship.