

# shalom sistas

LIVING WHOLEHEARTEDLY IN A  
BROKENHEARTED WORLD

Osheta Moore  
STUDY GUIDE BY ABBY PERRY



Herald Press

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## NOTE TO LEADERS:

Pray before each session:

*Our good, shalom-Loving God, May each word read, thought, discussed, and dreamed as we work through this guide help us not only to understand the book more with our minds or feel it more in our hearts, but to do something because of it with our hands. Show us through pondering, meditating, and dialogue how we can live wholeheartedly in a brokenhearted world, according to your will. Amen.*

Ask yourself or your group as you reflect on each chapter of *Shalom Sistas*: “What stood out to you?”

## CHAPTER 1

# SHALOM AFTER THE STORM

1. Have you ever experienced the vanishing of a dream or a good thing in your life, like Osheta and T. C. Moore did during Hurricane Katrina? What was it? How did it feel?
2. How have changes in plans, big or small, influenced what you believe about God and yourself?
3. When you hear the word *peacemaker*, what comes to mind?
4. Are there parts of yourself and your personality that seem compatible with being a peacemaker? Parts that seem incompatible with a peacemaking identity? How might you expand your understanding of what it means to be a peacemaker?
5. Consider the season of life that you are currently in. What makes peacemaking feel unattainable? How might you think about those circumstances differently? How might you, in Osheta’s words, be “liberated from always getting this peacemaking thing right” (p. 34)?

## CHAPTER 2

# FORTY DAYS OF PEACE

1. What is your understanding of Jesus as the “Prince of Peace?” Where did that understanding come from? What parts of that understanding are good, and which may need to be released or matured?
2. What are the ways that you have been tempted to believe that peace is a thing “we obtain by control or manipulation” (p. 41)? How has that affected your perspective on your ability to be a peacemaker?
3. How might a deeper understanding of the kingdom of God empower you to believe that you can live as a peacemaker?
4. Osheta writes about carrying the culture of New Orleans with her through red beans and rice. What cultures do you carry with you? What are some ways those parts of you could be channeled into peacemaking?

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CHAPTER 5

WOO-WOO CHURCH: WE ARE BELOVED

- 1. Are there any childhood events that affect your perspective of yourself as a peacemaker? What are they? How do they align or conflict with the idea of bringing about true shalom?
- 2. Reflect on Osheta's question on page 78: "What words have you attached to your soul that try to limit your identity and force you to live with shame?"
- 3. What are some of the ways you try to cover all your bases, running from the possibility of mistakes?
- 4. How might you begin to let go of the need to appear lovable, recognizing that you are already, irrevocably loved by a perfect God?

CHAPTER 6

COFFEE SHOP ALIAS: WE ARE ENOUGH

- 1. What are your go-to "if only" phrases? How have they hindered you? How can you begin to reject them?
- 2. What are the settings or circumstances in which you feel like an imposter? How can you choose a confident posture in those specific moments?
- 3. Think of a moment in which you *did* feel like enough. What made you feel that way? Was your sense of enoughness and safety rooted in a fleeting reality (like your physical beauty, or a skill, or an achievement) or who God says you are?
- 4. How can you remind yourself that you are enough because God says you are? How can you embody your belovedness today or this week?

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## CHAPTER 7

### THIS BROWN SKIN: WE WILL SEE THE BEAUTY

1. Is it challenging for you to call beauty—in yourself or others—when you see it? If so, what feels difficult about it? If not, why do you think it’s simple for you?
2. Are you able to receive the message that you are beautiful? If not, what stands in your way? If so, have you always felt that way, or are there practices or people who have helped you accept?
3. What stood out to you as Osheta talked about her wishes to be white, and her experiences in her brown skin?
4. How do you think of your physical body relating to your practice of shalom?
5. What step can you take this week to begin to see and name the beauty around you?

## CHAPTER 8

### TREAT YO SELF? WE WILL REST

1. How do you think about Sabbath? Is it something you currently practice in your own life? If so, how? If not, why?
2. What are some distinctions between self-care and Sabbath?
3. How might you go about observing Sabbath in such a way that you reclaim your identity as a child of God? How can you leave behind the understanding that Sabbath is about “activities we can’t or shouldn’t do,” and view Sabbath instead as “a practice of participating in God’s reign of goodness and mercy” (p. 122)?
4. What might it practically look like for you to bring about Sabbath rest in the lives of others?
5. Osheta tells the story of her friend Michelle, who served her by doing her family’s laundry for a time. Has anyone ever served you like that? How did it make you feel?
6. Who in your life might you serve in a simple yet profound way? How?

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## CHAPTER 9

# A STRANGE SONG: WE WILL CHOOSE SUBVERSIVE JOY

1. Reflect on Osheta’s story about the “Spalding Spinner” in this chapter (pp. 129–32). Can you think of a time when you were at first annoyed by someone’s behavior and then realized they were manifesting subversive joy? What can that memory teach you about being “present to the goodness” around you (p. 132)?
2. What events, circumstances, or issues cause you to feel as though life is “one big trigger warning” (p. 133)? What causes you to feel like “an ambassador of wholeness with a perpetually broken heart”?
3. Are you more inclined to be overwhelmed by sadness or avoid it altogether? How might you begin to work toward subversive joy that acknowledges sadness but does not sink into despair?
4. What are your joy triggers?

## CHAPTER 10

# CARPOOL TRIBUTE: WE WILL TELL BETTER STORIES

1. Think of a time when you had a negative experience with someone, like Osheta did in the carpool lane. What better story could you tell about the person’s behavior in that moment?
2. When are the times that it is especially difficult for you to tell a better story? When do you have difficulty seeing “the fear behind the violence, the sadness behind the anger, the person behind the behavior”?
3. Are there relationships in your life in which strong boundaries are necessary? How can you begin to think about those relationships and boundaries as an extension of enemy-love rather than mere self-protection?
4. Think about your week ahead. What opportunities might you have to tell a better story about someone else? How can you prepare for those moments?

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CHAPTER 11

# SHALOM WITH A SWIFFER: WE WILL SERVE BEFORE WE SPEAK

1. How does the idea of serving before you speak strike you?
2. Are you naturally inclined toward speaking or serving? Why do you think that is?
3. When you are serving or speaking to others, what are your pride triggers? How can you begin to embrace humility in your service so that it flows out into your speaking as well?
4. Who might you be able to serve this week? In what ways could you subversively and strategically humble yourself to that person and their needs before speaking into their life?

CHAPTER 12

# JESUS' PARTY PLANNERS: WE WILL BUILD BRIDGES, NOT WALLS

1. Is there a person or group of people you've built a wall to keep out? How might you begin to tear it down and build a bridge instead?
2. As you consider a bridge that you may need to build, what might it cost you? How might it hurt?
3. What could be your "Everybody come!" invitation? Whether an event for a group or a small gesture toward one person: how could you communicate and embody inclusion in a new way in the coming days?
4. Who in your life might be willing to join you in beginning to build a bridge? How could you invite them into dreaming and building with you?

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## CHAPTER 13

### LOVE BOMBS:

#### WE WILL CHOOSE ORDINARY ACTS OF PEACE

1. Can you identify “a point of brokenness” in your context (p. 186)? What might it look like for you to begin to ask God for “his dream of wholeness?”
2. Who can you invite to join you as you do some shalom scheming?
3. What moments in the peacemaking journey tempt you toward “the paralyzing trap of scarcity” (p. 186)? How can you look for abundance when that temptation rises up in you?
4. What small, ordinary act of peacemaking can you reclaim this week? How can you offer what Osheta calls “customer service shalom” (p. 191) as you go about daily tasks?

## CHAPTER 14

### LEMONADE: WE WILL SHOW UP, SAY SOMETHING, AND BE STILL

1. If you are a person of color, how have others shown up for you when racism has hit? Or how have you wished people would show up?
2. If you are white, who might you move toward when racially charged events occur? How can you “show up, say something, be still”?
3. What kind of Shalom Sista are you—Sista Shiva, Sista Shock and Awe, Sista Safekeeper, or Sista Shackle-Breaker? Don't worry if you don't see yourself in any of them yet. Who can you invite to pray with you as you seek to become more in touch with your peacemaking style?

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CHAPTER 15

KINGDOM STRONG: WE WILL BE PEACEMAKERS, NOT PEACEKEEPERS

1. What are your thoughts on the kingdom ethic of nonviolence?
2. How can you reject the violence and fear of this world in a practical way this week?
3. How would you define the difference between peace-keeping and peacemaking?
4. How can you embody peacemaking this week in a way that is “kingdom strong”?

EPILOGUE

1. Toward whom can you be a “walking benediction, giving blessings and pronouncing goodness wherever you go” this week?
2. Who can you invite to become a Shalom Sista alongside you? See the benediction on pp. 220–21. Who could speak the benediction over you—and you over them—as you seek to live wholeheartedly in a brokenhearted world?

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