

10 THINGS I WISH THE CHURCH HAD TOLD ME ABOUT HEALING

A Biblical & Honest Guide to Walking Through Emotional Pain

By Joshua McElhane

I'm not a therapist, but I've experienced pain, led while feeling broken, and prayed through more tears than I can count. The church saved me, but sometimes it overlooked the difficult parts.

We don't talk enough about trauma, loss, and what happens when someone lays hands on you, yet you still don't feel whole. This short guide is for Christians who are hurting but still holding on. If that's you, I see you. You're not alone, and healing is still possible.

1. Healing takes time, even for Spirit-filled people.

"For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;"

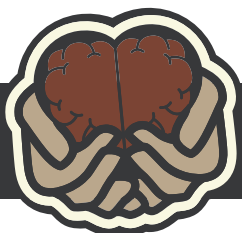
- Ecclesiastes 3:1-4 ESV

Salvation is instant, while healing is a process. The moment you are born-again, you are saved. That's the miracle of grace, immediate, undeserved, and complete in Christ.

However, healing takes time, and God isn't in a hurry. Even when Jesus heard that Lazarus was sick, He waited four days. It wasn't because He didn't care, but rather because He was teaching something deeper: **God enters our grief on purpose and with a purpose.**

He could have prevented the pain, but He chose to walk through it with them. Some wounds don't heal overnight. As Ecclesiastes says, there is a time to weep and a time to mourn. God honors that timeline and doesn't shame you for hurting.

He sits in the silence and weeps at the tomb. And then, when the time is right, He speaks resurrection. You don't have to rush your healing process; you simply need to stay close to the One who heals.



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2. You can love Jesus and still need help.

"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

- Matthew 11:28-30 ESV

You can love Jesus and still need help. Recognizing that you need assistance doesn't make you less spiritual; it shows your honesty.

Somewhere along the way, we've started to view struggle as a sign of weakness and needing help as a lack of faith. But that's not what the Gospel teaches. Jesus didn't say, *"Come to Me, all you who have it all together."* Instead, He said, *"Come to Me, all who are weary and burdened."* **This means that your weariness actually qualifies you to come closer to Him.**

In Matthew 11:28-30, Jesus offers rest, not to the perfect, but to the tired. He invites us to exchange our heavy burdens for His lighter yoke. However, that exchange can only happen when we admit we're carrying something we can't manage on our own.

There is no shame in asking for help. It's not unspiritual to seek support, counseling, prayer, or rest. In fact, pretending you're fine when you're not is what keeps people stuck.

Jesus is not impressed by our performance; He is moved by our humility. So if you're struggling, don't pretend everything is okay. Bring your burdens to Him.

And if you need someone to walk alongside you, reach out. Healing begins the moment we admit, "I can't do this by myself."

3. Forgiveness isn't the same as reconciliation.

"If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all."

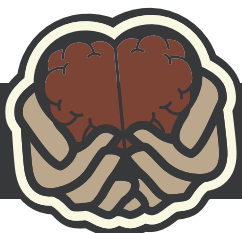
- Romans 12:18 ESV

Forgiveness isn't the same as reconciliation. You can forgive someone and still keep healthy boundaries.

- Forgiveness is something God commands, for your healing, not their comfort. It's about releasing the offense, not pretending it didn't happen.
- Reconciliation, on the other hand, requires mutual humility, accountability, and safety. It takes two people. Forgiveness only takes one.

Jesus forgave His enemies on the cross, but that didn't mean they were instantly restored to relationship with Him. **Letting go of the offense doesn't mean you ignore the damage. It means you're choosing to heal without waiting for them to say sorry.**

Forgiveness sets you free. Reconciliation, when possible, is a bonus. Not a requirement.



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4. Suppressing pain is not the same as spiritual maturity.

"The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit."

- Psalm 34:18 ESV

Suppressing pain is not the same as achieving spiritual maturity. Emotional numbness is not a fruit of the Spirit.

Too often, we confuse silence with strength. We believe that if we don't talk about, pray about, or feel our pain, it will simply go away. **However, buried pain does not disappear; it grows in the darkness.**

David was a man after God's own heart, yet he openly expressed his anguish in the Psalms. Jesus wept. Jeremiah lamented. Paul despaired of life itself. None of them hid their pain, and God met them in those moments.

Spiritual maturity isn't about pretending to be unshaken; it's about bringing your real, raw emotions to a God who can handle them. God doesn't heal what you're unwilling to reveal, and your tears are not a threat to your faith, they are often its evidence.

5. Church hurt is real, and Jesus cares about it.

"but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea."

- Matthew 18:6-7 ESV

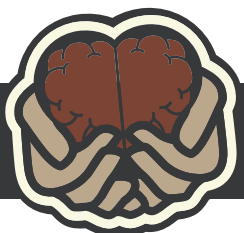
Church hurt is real, and Jesus cares about it. If someone has used God's name to wound you, that was not God.

Spiritual wounds can cut deep, especially when they come from people we trusted to represent Christ. When leaders act out of pride, control, or abuse, they are not reflecting the heart of Jesus; they are misusing His name.

Jesus fiercely confronted religious hypocrisy. He flipped tables, called out manipulation, and warned against those who *"strain at a gnat and swallow a camel"* (Matthew 23:24).

Experiencing hurt from the church doesn't mean you are bitter; it means you are human. **Jesus is not offended by your pain, He is the healer of it.**

If someone has told you to "get over it" or made you feel guilty for your grief, remember this: Jesus is still safe, even if some of His followers are not. He sees your pain, knows your struggles, and still wants you close.



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6. It's okay to feel before you fix.

"Jesus wept."

- John 11:35 ESV

It's okay to feel before you seek to fix.

We often rush to solve problems that God wants us to sit with instead. When Lazarus died, Mary and Martha didn't receive a sermon; they had a Savior who wept with them. Jesus knew He would eventually raise Lazarus, He already had the solution, but before performing the miracle, He paused to acknowledge their grief.

Sometimes, we are too quick to say, "God has a plan," when what's truly needed is, "That hurts. I'm here for you." **Healing begins when we stop suppressing our emotions and start inviting God into those feelings.**

You don't have to tidy up your emotions before coming to Him. He isn't afraid of your sadness, anger, or fear. Before God offers you an answer, He often gives you His presence.

Let that be enough for today.

7. You don't have to earn your healing.

"But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed."

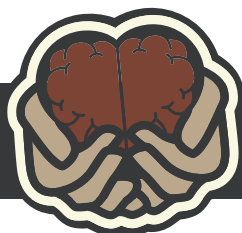
- Isaiah 53:5 ESV

You don't have to earn your healing. Your pain does not disqualify you; healing is not a reward for good behavior.

Often, we act as though healing is a prize we can obtain by praying more, serving more, or getting our lives in order. But healing isn't a transaction, it's a gift from a compassionate God.

Jesus healed the broken, the unclean, the doubting, and the desperate; not because they had everything figured out, but because they came to Him just as they were.

You don't have to be strong to be made whole; you only need to be willing. The cross has already paid for your healing. You don't have to prove your worthiness; you just have to receive it.



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8. What happened to you isn't your identity.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."

- 2 Corinthians 5:17 ESV

What happened to you does not define who you are. You are not your trauma, your divorce, or your diagnosis.

While pain may explain your past, it does not dictate your future. The enemy likes to attach negative labels to your experiences, calling you "broken," "damaged," or "unworthy." However, God sees you differently: He calls you redeemed, renewed, and restored.

Your identity is not found in your scars; it is found in Him. When you are in Christ, you become a new creation. This doesn't mean you forget what has happened; rather, it means that what happened no longer has the final say in your life.

Your story is being rewritten by grace.

9. Grief doesn't mean you've lost your faith.

"Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped. And he said, 'Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.'"

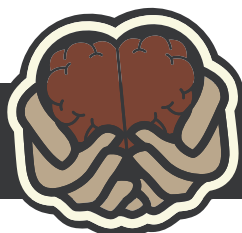
- Job 1:20-22 ESV

Grief doesn't mean you have lost your faith. Even Job expressed his grief openly, and God never rebuked him for it. Grieving is not a sign of weakness, a lack of belief, or a failure to trust God more. It is a natural human response to loss, and God acknowledges this.

The Bible is filled with examples of grieving individuals who still maintained their relationship with God: Job, David, Naomi, Jeremiah, and even Jesus. **Grief is not the absence of faith; in many cases, it is where faith is most raw and genuine.**

God is not uncomfortable with your sorrow. He does not require you to wear a smile or rush to find a resolution. Instead, He meets you in your mourning.

Your tears are not a threat to your belief; they are a part of your worship.



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10. You don't have to walk through this alone.

"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

- Galatians 6:2 ESV

You don't have to go through this alone. God heals in community, and you were not meant to fight this battle by yourself.

One of the enemy's greatest tactics is isolation. He convinces you that no one understands, that you're too broken, too far gone, or too complicated. However, Scripture teaches that healing often comes through others. As it says in James 5:16, *"Confess your faults one to another... that you may be healed."*

Even Jesus didn't walk alone. In His most vulnerable moments, He invited Peter, James, and John to be by His side. If the Son of God needed the support of others, then so do we.

You were never meant to carry your pain in secret. Let someone in. Allow someone to pray with you and remind you that you're not forgotten and you're not alone.

Ready to Heal Forward? Let's Talk Leadership.

If this resource stirred something in you, you're not alone.

Many leaders carry unprocessed pain into their roles, leading while tired, serving while unseen, or building while broken. That's why I created the FORMED Leadership Reset: a 6-week journey to realign your heart, head, and hands for sustainable, Spirit-led leadership.

Whether you're a pastor, team leader, or visionary who feels stuck, this program will help you:

- ✓ Identify burnout and hidden baggage
- ✓ Realign with your God-given calling
- ✓ Build healthy systems around your leadership
- ✓ Lead from identity, not insecurity

Let's rebuild your leadership from the inside out.

Because the leader God forms will always outlast the one who performs.

Let's Connect

If this spoke to your heart, I'd love to stay connected.

Follow along as I share more resources, videos, and thoughts about emotional wholeness and spiritual formation.



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