

Healing The Wounded Heart



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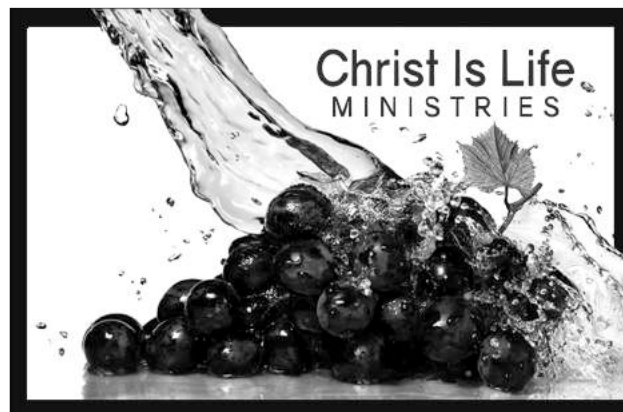
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The Layout of This Study

I want to thank you for choosing to study *Healing The Wounded Heart*. Before you begin, I believe it would be helpful to give you the layout of the study. The study contains six lessons, and each lesson has five daily readings (Day One, Day Two, etc.). If you are meeting weekly, this will give you seven days to complete the five daily readings. Throughout each lesson will be **Questions, Scriptures for Meditation**, and an **Engaging God** section.

Questions

The questions are primarily designed for you to compare what you believe with the truth that you have just read. It is very important for you to record what you truly believe about what you have just read and not just put down what you think is the “right” answer.

Meditation of Scripture

Some people struggle with the word “meditation” because of the New Age connotations. But “meditation” is a biblical word Christians need not fear. The key is what and Who we are meditating on. The focus of our meditation will be on God and His truth. My definition of the word “meditate” for purposes of this study is to stop and ponder the truths you are reading in scripture.

Engaging God

The “Engaging God” section in each lesson is the **most** important part of this study. This section is designed for you to ask the Holy Spirit to give you personal revelation, understanding, and application of what you have just read. This is especially crucial when you come to truths that contradict what you believe. If you don’t seek God to reveal His truth, then you will never move beyond your false beliefs.

I cannot stress strongly enough how critical it is for you to take the time to engage God as you go through this study. Without engaging God to bring these truths alive, you will receive only information; but, more importantly, you will fail to give God the opportunity to heal you, change you, and make His truth a living reality in your life. Therefore, when you reach an “Engaging God” section, talk to God about what you’ve just read and let Him, in return, give you personal revelation about His truth. Only God can heal you. Your part is to seek Him long enough to give Him the opportunity to do so and be persistent and patient enough to give him time to act.

Revelation

Since I will be using the word “revelation” throughout the study I want to define what I mean when I use this word. “Revelation” simply means that God **supernaturally** takes His truth and makes it personal to you and to your life situations. Revelation takes you from intellectual understanding to spiritual understanding and personal application of God’s truth.

Healing The Wounded Heart

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LESSON ONE

Key Truths About Woundedness

The Pathway To Woundedness

DAY ONE

PART ONE: Key Truths About Woundedness

Introduction

I would like to start by saying that the topic of woundedness is very personal to me. You will better understand why when you read the story of my woundedness. I must be honest with you; there was a time when I believed Psalm 147:3 above would never be an experiential reality in my life.

Even so, the reason I am writing this study is because I believe, and have experienced, God's power in healing my woundedness. I have also witnessed, in one-on-one ministry, God's healing hand in the lives of hundreds of wounded people. During the course of this study, I will be sharing many of their stories.

I have written this study specifically for hurting and wounded Christians. If you fall into this category, then my prayer for you as you go through this study is that God will use these truths to do one or more of the following:

- to begin your healing process.
- to show you your need for a personal counselor to work with you on a personal basis.
- to heal you of your woundedness.

I want to begin with this encouraging word:

***No matter how DEEPLY you have been wounded in the past, your God
who lives within you, ETERNALLY more than you can imagine,
WANTS TO heal and WILL heal you of your woundedness.***

At this point, you may, struggle with the truth of this statement. I know, however, you will learn God is able and willing to heal you as you go through these truths while seeking the Holy Spirit to give you divine insight and begin experiencing His healing for yourself. Before we start, I would like to encourage you with the words of Corrie ten Boom, who was a Christian imprisoned in a Nazi concentration camp during World War II.

She went through horrific abuse by the Nazis. You can only imagine the woundedness

that came from that horrible ordeal. Yet, in spite of what she went through, God brought her to a place where she made this proclamation:

“There is no pit so deep, that God's love is not deeper still.”

If you are deeply wounded, I pray that these words will be a source of hope for you.

How I Define Woundedness

Woundedness can be defined in many ways, but with regard to this study, I define woundedness as:

FALSE BELIEFS and NEGATIVE FEELINGS you have about yourself, about God, or about others caused by negative or wounding messages you received from others that have wounded you, or from wounding or traumatic events that took place in your life.

When it comes to woundedness, our tendency is to focus on the memory of the event or the messages and the associated pain. While those are very real issues, there is a far deeper issue with an even greater long-term negative impact on us: the **false beliefs** resulting from our woundedness. The two areas of resulting false beliefs that most negatively impact our lives are those we have about ourselves and about God. This is important because what you will learn in this study is that as the Holy Spirit renews your mind to believe the truth then the painful emotions and memories associated with these events will be healed. (We will explore these two areas of false beliefs more in depth in Lessons 3 and 4.)

Woundedness Can Be OVERT or COVERT



I compare our woundedness to an iceberg. The part above the water is what I call “overt” woundedness while the part below the water is what I call “covert” woundedness. I will explain this analogy more in depth as we look at both kinds of woundedness. Let’s first look at “overt” woundedness.

OVERT Woundedness

*“For I am **afflicted** and **needy**, and my heart is wounded within me.” Psalm 109:22.*

You may be reading this and know with certainty that you have been wounded. You may have clear memories of wounding events that took place in your life. This is called “overt” woundedness.

OVERT WOUNDEDNESS:

***CONSCIOUS remembrance and experience of wounding events
that resulted in woundedness.***

Like the exposed part of the iceberg, your wounding events and/or messages are very real and are consciously impacting you today.

COVERT Woundedness

The other form of woundedness is “covert” woundedness. This is how I define covert woundedness:

COVERT WOUNDEDNESS:

***Is woundedness that results from SUBMERGED and/or BURIED
messages and/or wounding events.***

Like the submerged part of the iceberg, covert woundedness means you are not able to consciously connect your false beliefs to specific wounding events or wounding messages. You may not even be aware that you are experiencing wounded feelings (i.e. feeling unloved, rejected, insecure, unworthy, etc.) that are associated with these wounding events or messages because they have been buried so deep in your heart.

I have spoken with a number of people over the years who don’t believe they are wounded. This is because they have buried these messages and events from their conscious thoughts. If you can’t recall any messages or wounding events in your life, you may conclude you are not wounded. Let me share with you a key truth.

Key Truth

***Just because you can’t recall wounding events DOESN’T MEAN they did
not happen and that they are not negatively impacting your life.***

Let me share a story to explain. I recently talked to a Christian lady who tried to commit suicide twice. She had very strong beliefs and feelings of rejection and unworthiness. However, when I asked her how she may have been wounded in the past, she could not tie any of her beliefs or feelings to past wounding events. Yet, she felt so rejected and unworthy she believed her only option was suicide. In later conversations, she was able to bring those buried wounding

events and resulting wounded thoughts and feelings to the surface for God's healing.

If you feel you have not been wounded, let me ask you a question: "Are you experiencing **ongoing** beliefs or negative feelings such as self-condemnation, rejection, shame, guilt, insecurity, being unloved, inadequate, or feeling unworthy?" If so, it is very likely some form of past woundedness is manifesting itself in your present day false beliefs and feelings.

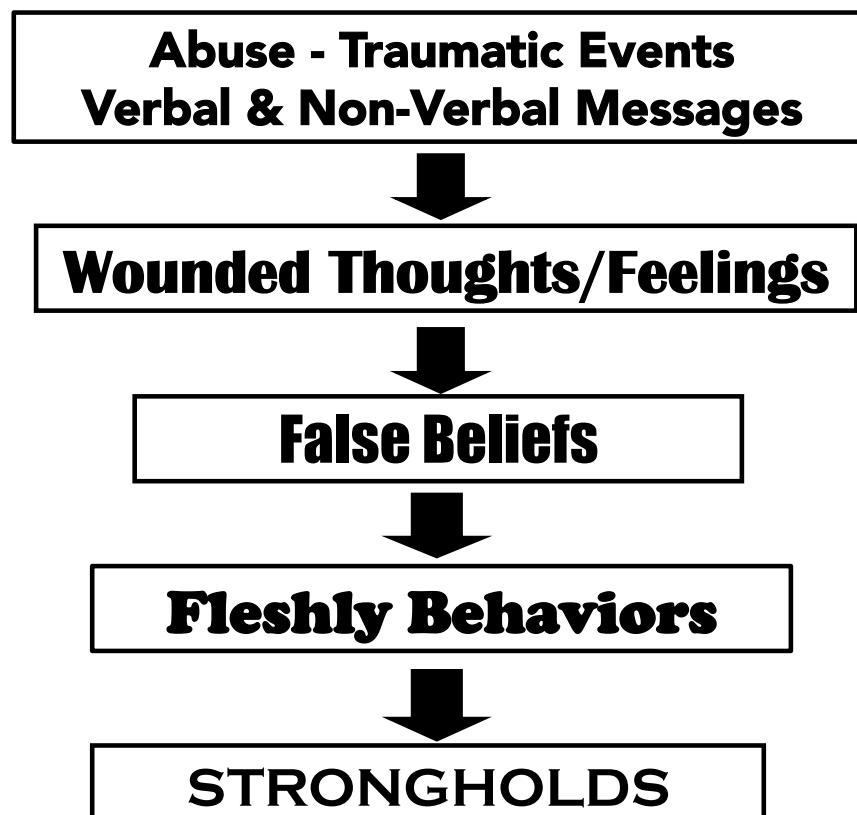
I hope this explanation of overt versus covert woundedness has been helpful. Here is a key reason why I believe we need to recognize our woundedness:

Part of God's process of healing is to EXPOSE those events, abuse, verbal and non-verbal messages that have resulted in OVERT or COVERT woundedness.
(Especially covert woundedness.)

Now that we know the two forms of woundedness, let's look at the pathway to woundedness and the results if you don't allow God to heal it.

PART TWO: The PATHWAY To Woundedness and The RESULTS Of Unhealed Woundedness

The pathway to woundedness begins with abuse, traumatic events, and verbal and non-verbal messages. This leads to wounding thoughts and feelings which, if not dealt with, lead to false beliefs, fleshly behaviors and eventually sin strongholds. To gain a better understanding of this pathway, let's look at each of these areas in more depth.



DAY TWO

1. Abuse, Traumatic Events, Verbal and Non Verbal Messages

a. ABUSE

You may have experienced wounding events that resulted from one or more of the following:

Sexual abuse	Emotional Abuse
Physical abuse	Verbal Abuse
Spiritual abuse	Father Abuse
Mother Abuse	Stepparent Abuse

There are many other forms and sources of abuse but the most common are listed above. Here are some definitions of the above listed forms of abuse.

Sexual Abuse - is forcing undesired sexual behavior by one person upon another, and making threats, taking advantage of a victim's inability to give consent or ignoring the victim's protests against the actions. Sexual abuse is referred to as molestation when the victim is a young child.

Physical Abuse - can be defined as any intentional act causing injury or trauma to another person by way of bodily contact. Physical abuse is physical force or violence that results in bodily injury, pain, or impairment. It includes assault, battery, and inappropriate restraint. The frequent threat of physical abuse to yourself or others close to you may also result in emotional damage.

Emotional Abuse - Emotional abuse includes non-physical behaviors where another person plays on your fears, guilt, compassion, values, or other "hot buttons" to get what they want. This could include threatening to end the relationship, totally rejecting or abandoning you, emotionally abandoning you, giving you the "cold shoulder," or using other fear tactics to control you.

Verbal Abuse - is a nonphysical form of abuse that may involve insulting, criticizing and attempting to shame the victim.

Spiritual Abuse - abuse administered under the guise of religion, including harassment or humiliation, possibly resulting in psychological trauma. Religious abuse may also include misuse of religion for selfish, secular, or ideological ends such as the abuse by a person in the formal clergy or other lay positions with authority in a church.

Father, Mother, Stepparent Abuse – is the use of sexual, emotional, physical, verbal, and/or spiritual abuse by a father, mother, or stepparent towards children or stepchildren.

Exercise: If you have experienced any form of abuse in the past please write down the form(s) of abuse you experienced.

b. TRAUMATIC EVENTS

In addition to forms of abuse, traumatic events can cause woundedness. Here are a few examples:

Divorce

Premature death of a parent, sibling, or child.

Abandonment by parents or spouse

Chronic or disabling illnesses

I have ministered to a number of wounded Christians who, when they were younger, felt abandoned because of their parents' divorce or by the premature death of one or both parents or a sibling. These feelings of abandonment left many of them deeply scarred. For some, these events sent unspoken messages to them that they were too young to properly interpret causing many to feel they were in some way responsible for the divorce or the premature death, even though they were helpless to prevent these events.

Even as an adult, the premature death of a loved one—especially a child—can result in lasting emotional trauma. If you have personally gone through a divorce, you would likely agree that event can result in your being wounded on some level.

If trauma is severe enough, it may result in post traumatic stress disorder or PTSD. Psychiatrists have concluded this condition is not limited to soldiers involved in battle. PTSD can result from many forms of trauma, as well as severe sexual, physical and emotional abuse.

Exercise: Write down any traumatic events that you may have experienced or are now experiencing.

Engaging God: Ask the Lord to reveal to you any traumatic events that may have taken place that you don't remember.

c. Repeated NEGATIVE Verbal Messages

Woundedness can occur not only from abuse and traumatic events, but also from verbal negative messages you repeatedly heard from parents, siblings, friends, teachers, etc.

Examples of negative messages include: “You are a failure.” “You will never measure up.” “Is this the best that you can do?” “I don't love you.” “You could have done better.”

These are the kinds of negative messages I received from my dad that created great personal woundedness.

Exercise: Write down any repeated negative verbal messages that you can remember.

Engaging God: Ask the Lord to reveal to you any negative verbal messages you may not remember. Seek Him to bring to your mind negative messages that were repeated so often you began to believe them. This can also include a single negative message made by a very significant person in your life.

d. NON-VERBAL Messages

In addition to verbal messages that can result in woundedness, non-verbal messages can create woundedness as well. Many Christians I have discipled have shared they had parents who neglected or rejected them in non-verbal ways. This includes such things as a parent's not touching or hugging a child; preferring another sibling; giving a child the silent treatment when he/she fails to perform; or just not engaging with a child. Let me end this section with the following thought:

***UNSPOKEN words can have just as much or MORE impact
as spoken words in producing woundedness.***

Exercise: Write down any unspoken messages that you remember that may have adversely affected you.

Engaging God: Ask the Lord to reveal to you any unspoken messages that you may not remember.

e. BODY language

Over time, even body language can send wounding messages to children. I have heard some people share that a particular facial expression, body posture, or gesture by someone opened up old wounds because it reminded them of when their parents used the same body language as an expression of dissatisfaction or rejection.

Exercise: If there were any forms of body language used by your parents, siblings, or teachers that triggered something negative from your past, write those down.

Engaging God: Ask the Lord to reveal to you any unspoken messages that you may not remember. Seek Him to bring to mind things your parents, or some other significant authority figure, failed to give you, such as, affirmations that you longed to hear or the absence of which deeply hurt you.

2. WOUNDED Thoughts and Feelings

What flows from your abuse, verbal negative messages, non-verbal messages and body language? Wounded thoughts and feelings. I connect wounding thoughts and feelings because they go hand in hand. Generally, what we think about something or someone determines our emotional response. An example would be, “I think I am worthless,” therefore, “I feel worthless.” Feelings follow thoughts. Before I explain this further, let me share a few thoughts about our emotions.

From the beginning God created us with emotions as part of our human makeup. Emotions are a gift from God. Emotions serve many functions in our lives such as helping us relate to others, alerting us to danger, motivating us to act, and interpreting our past and what is happening now.

A noted author, Neil Anderson in *Victory Over the Darkness*, writes, “Emotions are God’s indicators of what is going on inside. They are neither good nor bad. They are amoral and are just part of your humanity. Just like you respond to the warnings of physical pain, you need to learn to respond to your emotional indicators.” p. 211.

When our thoughts and emotions are in line with God’s truth, we are functioning in them as God intended. However, when our thoughts and feelings flow out of our woundedness, they become wounding thoughts and feelings that do not line up with God’s truth.

***Wounded thoughts and feelings are **RECURRING** thoughts
or feelings that are tied to our woundedness.***

We can all have passing thoughts that make us feel insecure, inadequate, guilty, etc. That is normal as part of our human makeup. However, when those thoughts and feelings continue to reoccur the result is woundedness. Let me further clarify this truth by first looking at our Adamic DNA.

a. Understanding Our ADAMIC DNA

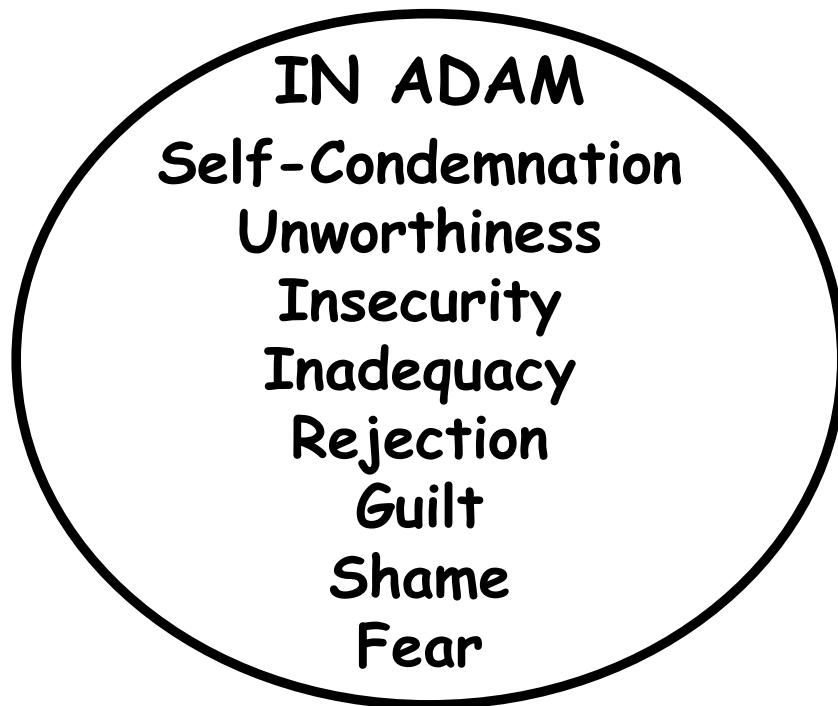
At birth, we were all born “in Adam.” As a result we all were born dead spiritually. We see this in this truth in the verses below.

“Therefore, just as through one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned.” Romans 5:12

***“For as **IN ADAM** all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.”
1Corinthians 15:22 (Emphasis mine)***

Not only does being born in Adam mean we were born spiritually dead, it also means we inherited Adam’s fallen DNA. What I mean by Adamic DNA is that we inherited such things as Adam’s shame, guilt, inadequacy, insecurity, unworthiness, fear, rejection, self-condemnation, etc. It is because of Adam’s DNA, that none of us is able to escape being wounded. Before I explain this further let me give you an illustration of Adam’s DNA on the following diagram:

Your DNA IN Adam



From the time you were born until you were saved, you had no choice but to interpret life through the filter of your Adamic DNA. Whether it was abuse, repeated negative verbal messages, non-verbal messages, body language or traumatic events, they all resulted in wounded thoughts and feelings. Here are some examples of wounded thoughts and feelings.

Discouraged	Hopeless	Dejected	Unloved	Helpless	Worthless
Rejected	Miserable	Inadequate	Burdened	Frustrated	Condemned
Critical	Unhappy	Angry	Inadequate	Exploited	Vindictive
Confused	Depressed	Paralyzed	Troubled	Perplexed	Unworthy
Fearful	Empty	Anxious	Resentful	Lonely	Misunderstood
Guilty	Powerless	Defeated	Judged	Ashamed	Insignificant
Insecure	Incapable	Vulnerable	Humiliated	Overwhelmed	Unhappy

I want to revisit the previous categories of wounding events and add to those the wounded thoughts and feelings that usually flow from them.

DAY THREE

b. ABUSE

When I interpreted my physical, emotional and verbal abuse through my Adamic DNA, it left me thinking, "I am rejected," and feeling unlovable. How about you?

Exercise: From the list of wounded thoughts and feelings on the previous page, write down those you associate with your abuse.

c. TRAUMATIC EVENTS

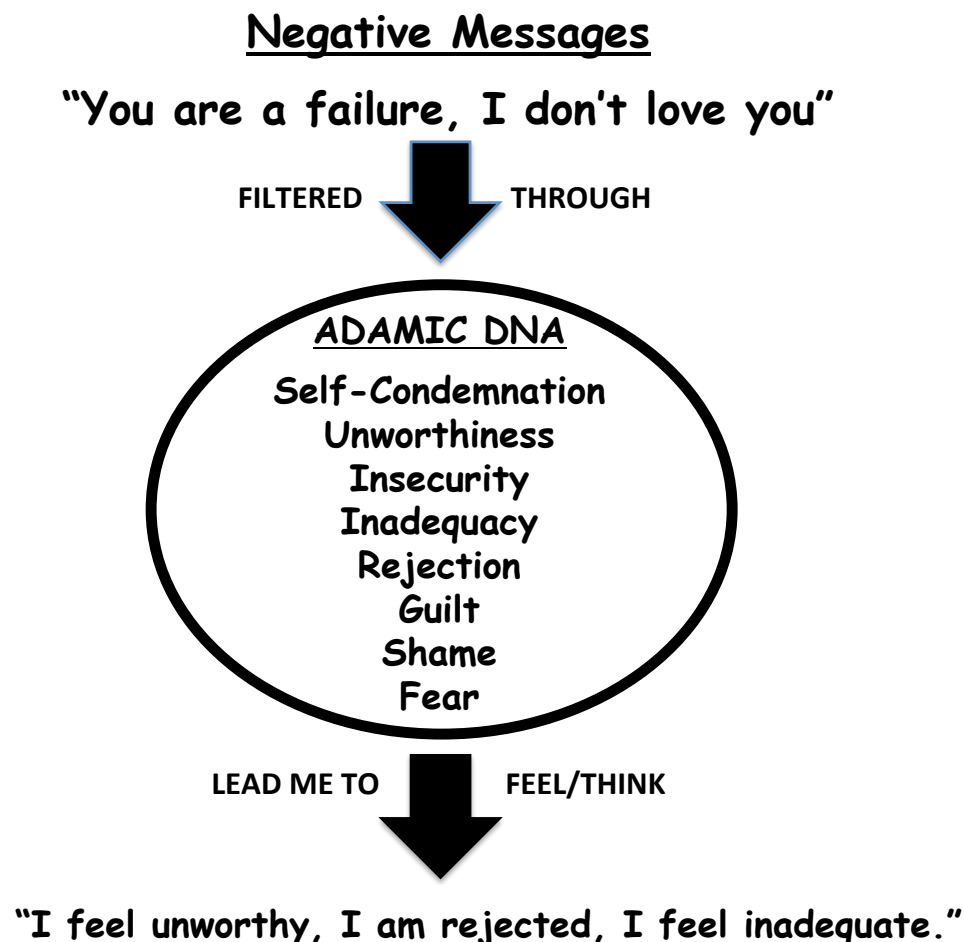
Traumatic events can also result in wounded thoughts and feelings. If you have gone through a divorce, it may have left you feeling rejected, unloved, or inadequate. If you lost a parent at an early age, it may have left you feeling abandoned or insecure.

Exercise: Write down your wounded thoughts and feelings that resulted from traumatic events you experienced. Refer to the list above.

d. VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL MESSAGES

1. Repeated NEGATIVE Verbal Messages

I can testify to the impact of repeated negative messages on me because when those negative messages filtered through my Adamic DNA, it left me feeling and thinking that I was inadequate, insecure, and unworthy. These repeated and reinforced negative messages led to a deep-seated woundedness. Look at the diagram below that illustrates this.



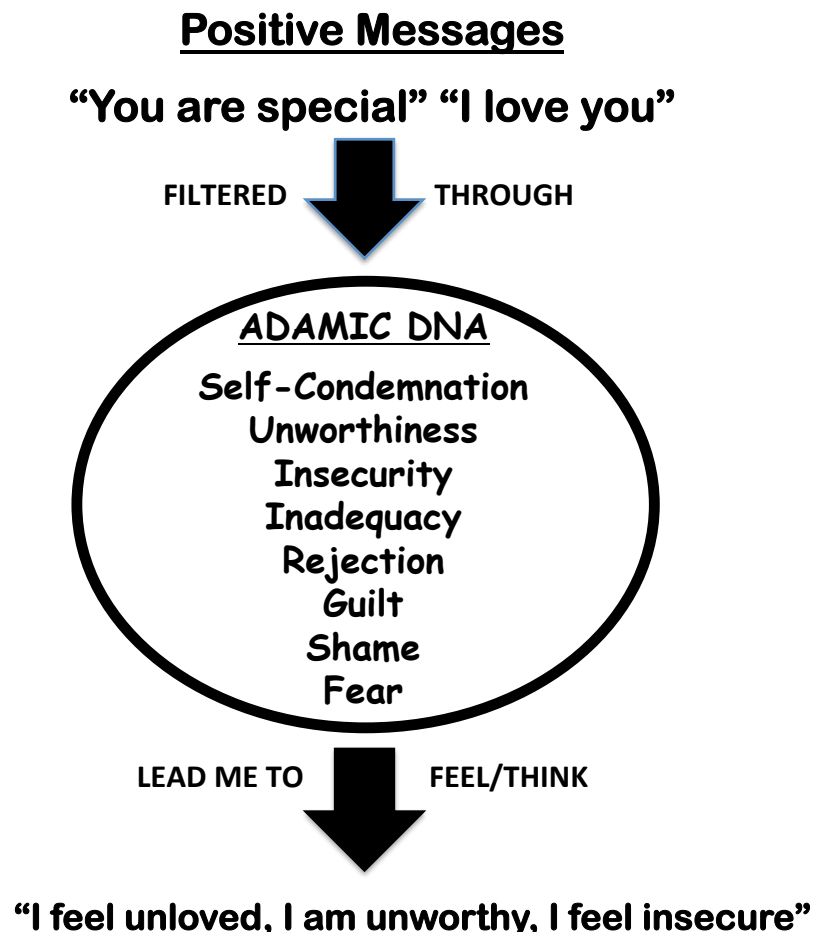
Exercise: Write down those wounded thoughts and feelings (that you wrote down in the previous section) that were caused by the repeated negative messages you heard. Refer to the list on page 12.

2. POSITIVE Messages and Woundedness

Before we move on to non-verbal messages, I want to talk about how positive messages can create “self-inflicted” woundedness. Let me begin by giving you some examples of positive messages.

Positive messages: “I am proud of you.” “You can do it.” “There is nothing you can’t accomplish.” “You are special.”

For those of us who primarily heard negative messages, these types of positive messages seem like ones we would have liked to have heard growing up. However, when a positive message is filtered through our Adamic DNA it, too, can create woundedness. Let me give you an example. Let’s assume you heard repeated positive messages such as “You are special” or “I love you.” When you filter those messages through your Adamic grid of such things as unworthiness, insecurity, or shame you can end up feeling unloved, unworthy, and insecure. The diagram below illustrates this.



Let me share with you a true story to illustrate. I met with a pastor a number of years ago who was addicted to pornography. I asked him to share his story. He told me that he was the first-born son in an Asian family. As such, his father was always affirming him that he was special and there was nothing he couldn't do if he set his mind to it. The problem was that even though his father constantly spoke positive messages to him, he interpreted them through his Adamic filter as "I could do better." This interpretation triggered his Adamic DNA of inadequacy and insecurity.

Because of all the positive messages that he received, he initially came across very self-confident and self-sufficient. However, these were just masks covering his thoughts and feelings of inadequacy and insecurity. He then revealed to me that after every sermon that he preached, he heard this message in his mind: "It could have been better." It was this recurring message that fueled his feelings and thoughts of inadequacy and insecurity which in turn led him into pornography every Sunday afternoon.

In light of this story, let me end this section with this truth:

***EVEN if you were raised in a home where you heard mostly positive messages,
those messages INTERPRETED through your Adamic filter
could leave you feeling WOUNDED.***

Exercise: Write down from the list on page 12 the words that most describe how you feel about yourself as a result of your repeated positive or negative messages.

Engaging God: Ask the Lord to reveal to you any verbal positive or negative messages that you may not remember.

3. Satan's Part In Helping You INTERPRET (MISINTERPRET) Negative and Positive Messages

Even though I am going to discuss Satan and his strategies more in Lesson Six, I want to introduce one of his strategies here because of the impact it has on negative and positive messages you heard growing up. I believe Satan starts the minute you are born to influence you to misinterpret the messages you heard from your parents, siblings, friends, etc. Why is this?

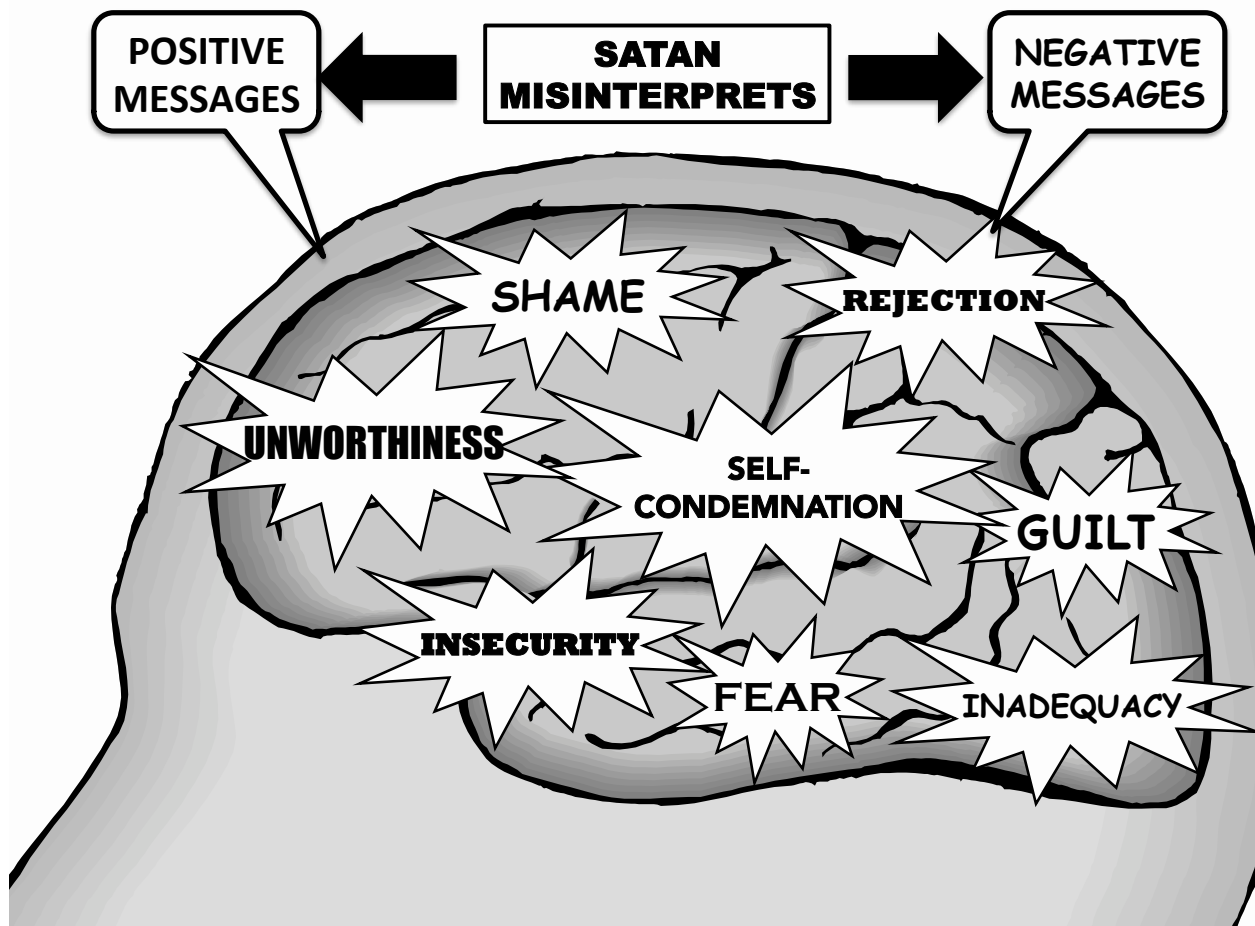
***Kids are the world's best RECORDERS but they are
NOT able to INTERPRET what they are recording.***

I believe Satan misinterprets for children both verbal and non-verbal messages. Part of His strategy includes attaching these distorted interpretations to your Adamic DNA. If you received mostly negative messages, then it was very easy for the enemy to attach those messages to your Adamic DNA of guilt, shame, self-condemnation, etc. Satan can also misinterpret the positive

messages given to you by distorting them in a way similar to what I shared earlier concerning the Asian pastor who received positive messages from his dad but misinterpreted them causing him to believe he was inadequate as a pastor.

Let me give you another example. Let's say your dad said to you when you were young, "You did a good job." Let's assume you have perfectionistic tendencies. Satan inserts such thoughts as, "I could have done better" or "I wanted him to say I did a 'great job.'" Since you are a child and you can't interpret where that message is coming from then you will believe the thoughts are yours with the result that they can leave you feeling "less than" or inadequate.

Here is an illustration of how Satan influences a child by misinterpreting positive and negative messages.



If these messages continue to be falsely interpreted, this is the result:

Over time these MISINTERPRETED messages can evolve into FALSE BELIEFS about yourself and CREATE woundedness.

This is why it is so critical that parents learn Biblical truths and convey them to their kids to counteract the work of the enemy in their children's minds.

Engaging God: Ask the Lord to reveal to you any misinterpreted messages from your childhood that may have created false beliefs about yourself.

4. Non-Verbal Messages and Body Language

Non-verbal messages or body language that says, “I don’t love you” can have the same impact on you as verbal messages. They can leave you thinking and/or feeling, “I am unlovable, or I am worthless.”

Exercise: Write down those wounded thoughts and feelings that were caused by the by non-verbal messages and body language using the list you wrote down in the previous section. Refer to the list on page 12.

DAY FOUR

3. FALSE Beliefs

What is the result of ongoing and reinforced negative thoughts and wounded feelings?

***REINFORCED negative thoughts with the accompanying wounded feelings
will EVENTUALLY lead to FALSE BELIEFS.***

A FALSE belief is ANY belief that does not line up with God’s TRUTH.

When we think about our wounding events, we tend to focus on thoughts and feelings arising out of those wounding events. Depending on the severity and longevity of these wounding events, our recurring negative thoughts and wounded feelings will eventually result in false beliefs about ourselves, about God, and about others. Let’s look at some other examples of each.

False belief about ourselves: “I experienced thoughts and feelings of rejection from my father’s critical and abusive words and actions to a point that I now believe and feel I am rejected and/or rejectable.”

False belief about God: “I feel angry at God because He allowed my abuse to take place. As a result, I don’t believe He really loves me or that He is really in control.”

False belief about others: “This person can’t possibly love me because my thoughts and feelings of unworthiness from my mother’s abuse have led me to believe that I am unworthy of his/her love.”

The following is a key truth about false beliefs.

***When you have ADOPTED a false belief as being TRUE, you are believing
a LIE because it contradicts God’s truth.***

When you are living out of wounded feelings, and invested in believing lies as opposed to God's truth, then you are stuck in captivity. A big part of healing is learning to believe God's truth and question your own wounded thoughts and feelings as being poor barometers of truth. It's a healthy step to begin to question your own thoughts and feelings when they are based on a history of woundedness. We will talk more about this in Lesson Six.

What is the result of continuing to believe these false beliefs?

The key truth about wounding events is that it is NOT the wounded thoughts and feelings that keep us in bondage. Rather, it is the FALSE BELIEFS that come as a result of the wounding events that keep us in bondage to our woundedness.

This is a key truth because we tend to focus on the wounding events and related negative feelings rather than the false beliefs that result from those events. The problem doesn't just stop with false beliefs. Unfortunately, what flows out of these false beliefs are fleshly behaviors.

Exercise: Write down any false beliefs you may have that resulted from the abuse, traumatic event, or verbal or non-verbal messages you wrote down previously.

4. FLESHLY Behaviors

Let me begin this principle by defining the term "flesh."

*"For we know that the Law is spiritual; but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin."
Romans 7:14*

The biblical meaning of the word "flesh" is man's DESIRE to live life with HIMSELF as the source, INDEPENDENT or APART from God as the Source.

Prior to salvation, we learned we had no choice but to depend upon ourselves (our flesh) as the source for solving our problems, dealing with life, and becoming a success. After we became Christians, most of us continued to live life out of our own resources (such as education, IQ, personality, looks, talents, abilities, capabilities, self-discipline, and self-strength) **apart from** God as our Source. As we did this, it reinforced our desire to BE the source for life which resulted in our living from the flesh.

Now that we understand the biblical meaning of the word "flesh," then let's define fleshly behaviors.

***Fleshly behaviors are self-centered, sinful ATTITUDES
and BEHAVIORS caused by our living from the FLESH.***

Here are some examples of fleshly behaviors in Galatians 5:19-21

“Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these.....” Galatians 5:19-21a

How does this apply to our woundedness?

***Our false beliefs about ourselves, God, and others, born out
of woundedness produce FLESHLY BEHAVIORS.***

Let me share more of my story to illustrate this truth. Some of my false beliefs about myself as a result of my woundedness were that I was rejected/rejectable, inadequate, and unworthy. The overflow of these false beliefs triggered fleshly behaviors that negatively affected all my relationships.

I felt angry and bitter towards my father because of his abuse. In addition, I was angry and controlling towards my wife because she could not meet my needs. As a business owner, my false beliefs resulted in my being constantly frustrated with and critical towards my employees because they did not perform well enough for me to feel worthy and adequate. The overflow of my fleshly behaviors was like a poison both to me and to those around me.

***Our false beliefs from our woundedness are
not only TOXIC to us but to EVERYONE around us.***

Exercise: Write down the fleshly behaviors from the FLESHLY BEHAVIORS listed at this end of this lesson that are associated with the abuse, traumatic event, or verbal or non-verbal messages that you wrote down previously.

Exercise: List the ways in which you think your fleshly behaviors might be negatively impacting others.

Engaging God: Seek the Spirit to reveal any fleshly behaviors that you might have as a result of your woundedness and how they may be poisoning you and your relationships.

5. STRONGHOLDS

From wounded feelings flow false beliefs that produce fleshly behaviors and over time may result in strongholds. Let me define what I mean by a stronghold.

A STRONGHOLD

is any REINFORCED fleshly behavior that has such a grip on you that, apart from the POWER of Christ, you CANNOT be set free from it.

Every one of my fleshly behaviors I shared in the previous section became reinforced over time with the result that they became strongholds. They had such a grip on my life I never thought I would be set free from them. Can you identify? Having strongholds is dangerous because as you continue live in bondage to them, they can eventually produce a sense of helplessness, hopelessness and despair.

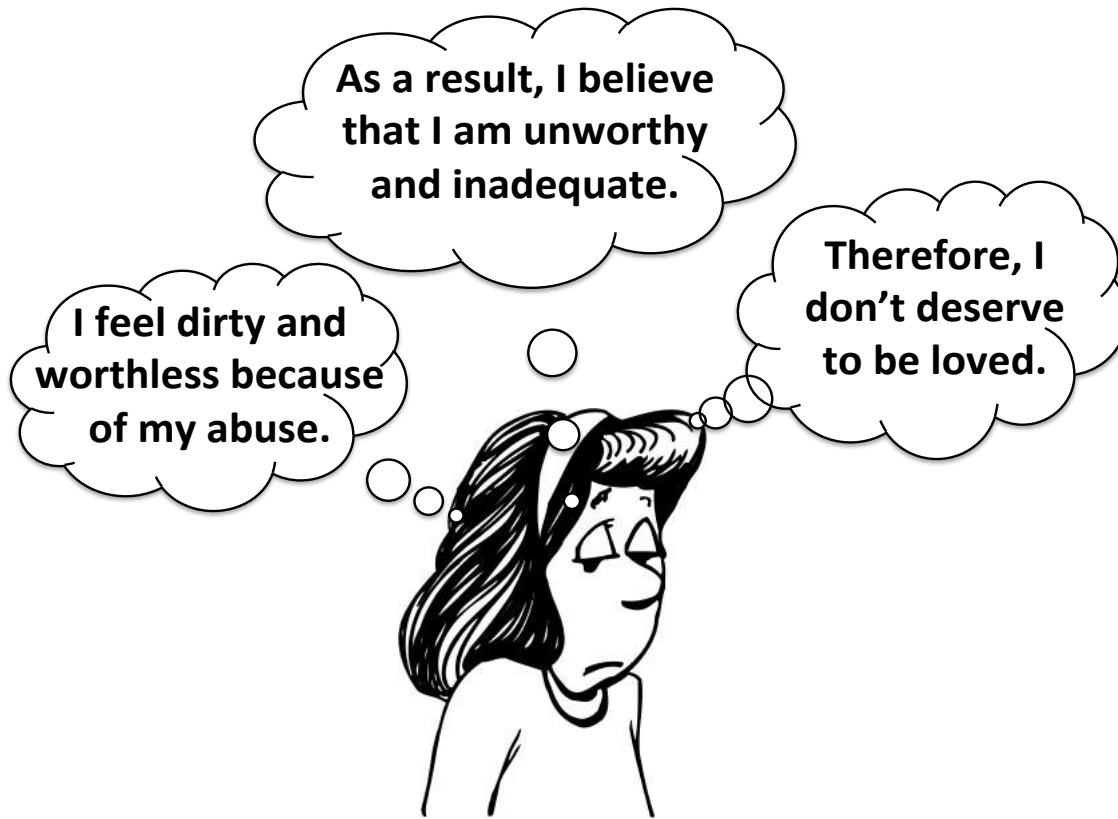
Let me end this section by using sharing a story to illustrate how we move from negative thoughts, wounded feelings, false beliefs, and fleshly behaviors to strongholds.

Example Of Moving From Wounded Feelings To Strongholds

A woman that I was ministering to shared with me that as a little girl she was sexually abused many times by her father. Her thoughts were: “I must not be lovable or valued because of what my father is doing to me.” This followed with wounded feelings such as, “I feel dirty, worthless, and ashamed.” These recurring negative thoughts and wounded feelings were never dealt with resulting in her false beliefs that she was inadequate, unworthy, and rejected. Out of her false beliefs she had fleshly behaviors of self-pity, playing the victim, and beating herself up. She was married twice to abusive husbands who reinforced her false beliefs and fleshly behaviors to a point that they became strongholds.

She married a third time to a very godly husband who loved and cared for her. However, because of her strongholds, she believed that she was not worthy of such a loving, godly husband. Because of her false beliefs, she could not engage in sexual intimacy which eventually destroyed her marriage.

The following is an illustration of her feelings, her beliefs based on those feelings, and the resulting stronghold she developed:



Exercise: Write down any of your false beliefs and/or fleshly behaviors from what you wrote down in the previous section that you believe may have become strongholds.

Before we end this lesson, I want to look at three final truths concerning woundedness.

DAY FIVE

Truth #1 - Even A SINGLE Event Can Trigger LONG-TERM Woundedness.

To illustrate this point, I have a friend who shared with me that he had a very loving and affirming father while he was growing up. While he was attending college, he realized that he needed to stay an additional year to finish his degree. When he called his dad for financial help, his dad responded by saying this, “You are a loser.”

From that one event, my friend felt that he was being rejected by his dad even though up until this point his father had been loving and affirming. He told me that the message was so wounding that he spent the next thirty years of his life trying to prove to his dad that he was not a loser.

Exercise: Write down any single event you received from your parents, siblings, or teachers, that may have left you feeling wounded.

Exercise: Write down from the list on page 12 the words that most describe how you feel about the single event that you listed above.

Engaging God: Ask the Lord to reveal to you any past one-time event you negatively interpreted that you may not remember. You may want to begin with a persistent negative thought or feeling you don't know the origin of and ask Him to reveal the circumstances when it began.

Truth #2 - Woundedness Can Result From How We MISINTERPRET INNOCENT Events

I said previously children are constantly recording messages and events in their lives but often don't have the maturity to accurately interpret those messages or events. In addition to having a negative interpretation of wounding events, they can also falsely interpret what I call "innocent" events that can result in woundedness. Let me share a personal story to further explain.

My parents, three siblings, and I were visiting the Garden of the Gods National Park outside of Colorado Springs. I was eight years old at the time. Before we left the park, our parents let us go into the gift shop located in the park. I wandered up and down the aisles looking at all the things I wanted my parents to buy for me. I was so caught up in all the "stuff" that I lost track of time and didn't realize that my family had left the gift shop and were getting back into the car.

My mother asked if everyone was in the car and my three siblings said, "Yes." She never looked back to get a head count. So as I was coming out of the gift shop, our car was driving down the hill. I started to panic and ran after the car as fast as my eight year old legs would allow. At some point in my pursuit, the car stopped when my mother realized that my siblings were playing a trick on her (and me).

She was in tears when she saw me sobbing. The point of this story is that my parents did not mean to leave me behind but I certainly interpreted it that way. My immediate thoughts were, "They purposely tried to leave me. I must really be the black sheep. I don't really matter."

Along with those thoughts, I had feelings of fear, insecurity and abandonment. Every time that event would come to my mind, I would replay my thoughts and feelings over again. The fact that my family repeated and laughed about this incident over the years only reinforced my pain and negative self-image. Since I did not know God's truth during those years, those thoughts and feelings compounded over time and developed into deep seated beliefs that I was a fearful, insecure, and unworthy person. Even though that was not the truth, I believed it was because I misinterpreted this innocent event that left me deeply wounded.

Exercise: Think about any events in your past that have been “innocent” but resulted in your feeling wounded. If you can remember any of those events, write them down and how they may still be impacting you today.

Exercise: Write down from the list on page 12 the words that most describe how you feel about yourself as a result of the events you listed above.

Engaging God: Ask the Lord to reveal to you any past “innocent” events you negatively interpreted that you may not currently recall. If He brings any event to mind, talk to Him about how it made you feel at the time and how those feelings may still be affecting you now.

TRUTH #3 - We Make COVENANTS, PROMISES or VOWS To Ourselves As A Result Of Our Woundedness.

I have seen many wounded Christians that have made covenants, promises, or vows to themselves as a result of their woundedness. Let me give you some examples of some covenants, promises or vows that have been shared with me.

- I will never trust anyone again.
- I will never be weak or vulnerable again.
- I will never let anyone get too close.
- I will never feel again.
- I will never love again.
- I will always be strong.
- I will always be in control.

Key Truth

These covenants or promises can NEGATIVELY impact your life, your Christian walk, and eventually the lives of your spouse, kids, friends, and co-workers.

Before I expand on this truth, let me share a story about my dad to illustrate. I will never forget my dad telling me a story about when he was a boy and his dad was a farmer. Even though my dad was only 11 years old, his dad told him it was time for him to learn how to plow (it was a mule and plow; they didn't own a tractor).

But my dad was too small to make the plow work even though he tried and tried. When he told his dad he couldn't do it, his dad severely beat him. After the beating, my dad made this covenant with himself: “I will never fail again. I will succeed at all costs.” That vow not only negatively impacted my dad's life but he applied that vow to my behavior and that of my siblings

which resulted in deep wounding in all of us.

These covenants or self-made promises build walls of self-protection. As we saw earlier in this lesson, those walls of self-protection keep us locked in bondage to our wounded thoughts and feelings and prevent the Holy Spirit from healing our wounded heart. The wounding thoughts and feelings associated with these covenants are like a submarine in that most of the time they stay submerged, but when they surface, they negatively impact us and everyone around us.

Note: These self-made covenants can be unspoken as well as spoken. Sometimes, the vow stays hidden from even the one who made it especially if the vow was made when he/she was very young.

Question: Have you made any covenants with yourself as a result of your woundedness? If so, please write those down.

Engaging God: If you can't remember making any covenants, ask the Lord to reveal any covenants, promises or vows you may have made to yourself as a result of your woundedness. Ask Him to bring to mind anytime you told yourself, in reaction to a wounding event, you would "never" do something again. Ask God to show you how those covenants affected you and others close to you.

I want to end this lesson by sharing with you more details about my woundedness.

I Experienced Overt and Covert Woundedness

My woundedness began at an early age largely due to my dad. The two primary words to describe my dad were "angry" and "controlling." My dad had to be in control at all times. His controlling attitude was directed toward his three sons and one daughter. Whenever he felt he was losing control, he would become verbally, physically, and/or emotionally abusive. He had very high standards of performance for his kids and when we failed to meet his expectations, he got angry. We had to succeed at everything we did because part of his reputation was based on our performance in school, our hobbies, our sports, etc.

For our part we, like every son or daughter, wanted to be loved, valued, and accepted by our dad. We thought by performing well we would earn those things. Therefore, we all tried to jump over our dad's bars of expectations in what turned out to be vain attempts to experience his love, acceptance, and worth. However, for me, every time I thought I was meeting his expectations, he would raise the bar.

Consequently, even though I performed at a very high level, it was never quite good enough. In addition, when we didn't perform to his standards, then he physically abused us. Fear of failure and what failure would bring was another potential consequence of his verbal and emotional abuse. Therefore, by age 18, instead of feeling loved and valued by my dad, I felt inadequate, insecure, unloved, and most importantly, rejected.

I was covertly wounded by my mother because she did not protect me from my dad's abuse. The result was that I felt I was not worthy of being protected. This led to even deeper feelings of

rejection and being unworthy of love. I will share more of my story and the effects of my woundedness later in this study.

Now that you understand key truths about woundedness and the pathway to woundedness, let's look in the next lesson at how woundedness affects our heart and what (or who) is the source is for healing that woundedness.

Fleshly Behaviors

Be self-absorbed

become overly introspective
feel sorry for myself
get depressed
beat up on myself
play the role of victim/martyr
focus on my suffering to get
attention and sympathy
be jealous of another's
success and happiness

Withdraw (isolate myself)

be aloof (pull away)
distance myself from others
avoid others (be a loner)
go into a shell
become unapproachable
give them the silent
treatment
refuse to communicate

Escape (pain/pressure) by using:

promiscuity	carousing
drugs and alcohol	talking
staying busy	school
hobbies/games	reading
computers	fantasy
television	movies
pornography	sleep
overeating	religion
work/career	sex

Be anxious (worry and fret)

be fearful (apprehensive)
lack peace and rest
become paralyzed (numb)
be paranoid (overly
suspicious)
refuse to see the positive
assume the worst

Seek guidance from:

astrology/horoscopes,
fortune telling and/or
the occult

Be self-disciplined (self-reliant)

base acceptance of self and
others on performance
become a perfectionist
try hard so as not to fail
fear making mistakes
be legalistic:
live "by the book"
feel obligated (have to,
should, ought to)
be too hard on
myself/others
set unrealistic standards
for myself/others

Become obsessed with:

accomplishments
recognition/status
acquiring material things
what others think of me
how I look physically
my physical health
the past (especially past hurts
and failures)
a devotion to a cause
structure, order and
regulations

Become dominant

be dictatorial (bossy)
be demanding (pushy)
be overbearing (controlling)
intimidate others
refuse to give in

Stay in control through:

blackmail (making threats)
manipulation (use of guilt,
pity, silence, flattery, etc.)
coercion (physical threats)
profanity (swearing)
passivity (playing helpless)
not eating (anorexia/bulimia)

Lack compassion, gentleness

understanding, kindness, love,
become defensive

Be self-righteous (self- justifying)

make excuses (rationalize)
cover up and hide mistakes
have to prove my point
assume I am never the
problem
blame someone or something
else as the problem
avoid taking responsibility
for failure or problems
have difficulty: apologizing,
admitting I was wrong,
asking for forgiveness,
asking for help, and/or
expressing gratitude
have a superior attitude
(saying in effect):
"I know what is best"
"My way is the right way"

Be critical (judgmental)

find fault with others, myself
and everything around me
nit-pick things to death
be prejudiced (intolerant)
complain a lot (nothing is
ever good enough)

Be self-assured (self- confident)

depend on myself instead of
God or others
become proud (haughty)
be egocentric (act pompous)
brag (be boastful)
become arrogant (cocky)
become conceited (smug)

Come across as insensitive,

uncaring, unsympathetic,
indifferent or unconcerned

Be complacent (nonchalant)

say things like, "it's okay" or
"it doesn't matter."

Fleshly Behaviors (Continued)

Be pessimistic (negative)
lack confidence and optimism
be skeptical (suspicious)
distrust others, myself, God,
church and/or government
expect the worst
never pleased with self
or others
never be satisfied or content

Become hostile
be unfriendly
be sarcastic (caustic)
be cynical (contemptuous)
be hateful (mean-spirited)
be cruel (malicious)
have a quick temper
rant and rave to vent my anger
be physically abusive
be verbally abusive
break things

Hold a grudge (be resentful)
become moody (sulk)
harbor bitterness
be unforgiving
keep a scorecard of offenses
try to get even (seek revenge)
want others to fail or get hurt
punish myself or others

Fight unfair
be slanderous
misrepresent the situation
gossip (talk behind their back)
engage in passive-aggressive
behavior: use humor to hide
real feelings, forget things,
refuse to communicate, be
late, procrastinate, etc.)

Be self-deprecating
assume I am always the
problem
become overly apologetic
be too hard on myself
uncomfortable with success

have difficulty receiving: love,
compliments, forgiveness
be unable to forgive myself

Challenge others
resist authority
be uncooperative (inflexible)
be unteachable (close-minded)
cause dissention (strife)
be irritating (aggravate others)
be argumentative
be stubborn (unyielding)
be unreasonable

Deny reality
ignore problems and hope they
will go away
deny anything is bad or wrong
be subjective
deceive others and myself
lie to self and others
exaggerate (overstate matters)
play games to hide real intent

Put up a front
hide what I really think
pretend
try to impress others
and/or get attention
fake it (act like I know
something even when I don't)
be pretentious (phony, unreal)
be superficial (never let
anyone
get too close)

Be passive (lack initiative)
quit too easily (give up)
don't take chances
wait for someone to tell me
how to think and what to do
vacillate (be too changeable)
be indecisive
avoid failure at all costs
procrastinate (put things off)
be irresponsible (unreliable)
be lazy (apathetic, lethargic)

Be tense ("on guard")
find it hard to relax
be restless
become impatient
be easily agitated

Become emotionally insulated
avoid intimacy
have difficulty expressing
feelings and opinions
suppress (stuff) emotions
be inhibited (restrained)

Live by my feelings
believe that truth is what I feel
be too sensitive to criticism
be hypersensitive
be touchy (irritable)
be controlled by fear, anger,
doubts and insecurities
automatically read in rejection

Be a pleaser (be nice)
try to keep everyone happy
avoid conflict/keep the peace
say what I think others want
overly submissive
have difficulty saying "no"
can't stand up for myself
afraid to disappoint others
give in to others too easily

Be a caretaker (rescuer)
be overprotective
be overly responsible
become too involved with
other's affairs/concerns
be possessive (too invested)
talk too much and listen poorly
make decisions for others

Be too serious (intense)
be overly analytical
not be able to have fun
lack joy or life.

LESSON TWO

Woundedness and The Heart

The Source for Healing

DAY ONE

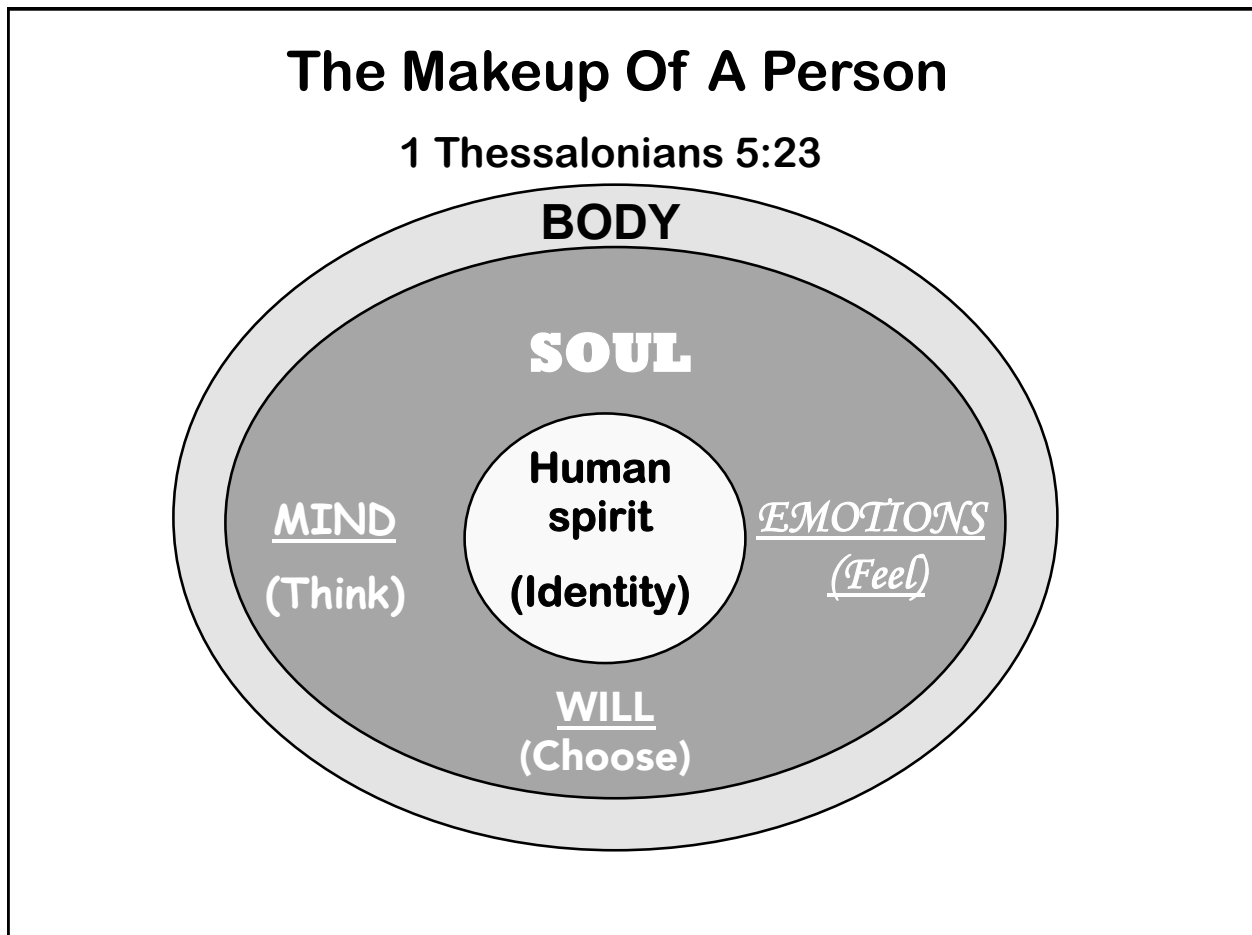
PART ONE: Woundedness and the Heart

Introduction

To further explain woundedness, I would like to talk about its relationship to our makeup as human beings. Let's start in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 which describes our makeup:

“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete....”

This verse reveals each person is a three-part being. We are made up of a **body**, a **soul**, and a **human spirit**. Let's look further into the meaning of the body, soul, and human spirit. The diagram below illustrates this truth.



BODY - The body represents the **physical** body or that part of you which is seen. This is how you relate to the physical world through your five senses. This is the dwelling place of the next two parts of your being: the soul and the human spirit. They may be a little more difficult to understand because they are unseen. The body will pass away, but the soul and the spirit are eternal.

SOUL- The soul is your unique **personality** or the psychological part of you through which you relate to people and react to the circumstances of life. The soul is made up of your **mind** (Proverbs 23:7), **will** (1 Corinthians 7:37a), and **emotions** (Luke 10:33).

HUMAN SPIRIT - The third part of your being is your human spirit. Your human spirit is not to be confused with the Holy Spirit. Your human spirit is that part of your human makeup you have from birth. However, you did not receive the Holy Spirit until the point when you trusted Christ by faith for salvation. What is the function of the human spirit?

When God said in Genesis 1:26 that He created man in His likeness, He meant He created man first and foremost as a “**spirit**” being. John 4:24 reveals we, as spirit beings, can worship God:

“God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

In addition to worshipping God from our human spirit, it is also from our human spirit we learn from Him (Job 32:8), commune with Him (Psalm 51:12), receive revelation and wisdom from Him (Ephesians 1:17), and, most importantly, are able to have an intimate relationship with God (Romans 8:16).

You may have read in your Bible, references to our “heart.” So it may seem like we have four parts instead of just three. Let me try to clear this up.

What Is The HEART?

The word “heart” is referenced in the Bible 795 times. “Heart” can refer to the **human spirit** or the **soul**. Let me share with you some passages that show a reference to the human spirit and others where heart refers to the soul.

A biblical reference to the word “heart” meaning the **human spirit** is found in Ezekiel 11:19:

“I will give them one heart (human spirit), and put a new (human) spirit (heart) within them; I will remove their heart (human spirit) of stone from their flesh and give them a heart (human spirit) of flesh.” (Parenthesis mine)

Ezekiel is saying that God, at salvation, will exchange our heart of stone (our old human spirit) with a heart of flesh (a new human spirit). (We will explore this concept of the exchange of your old human spirit for a new one in the next lesson.)

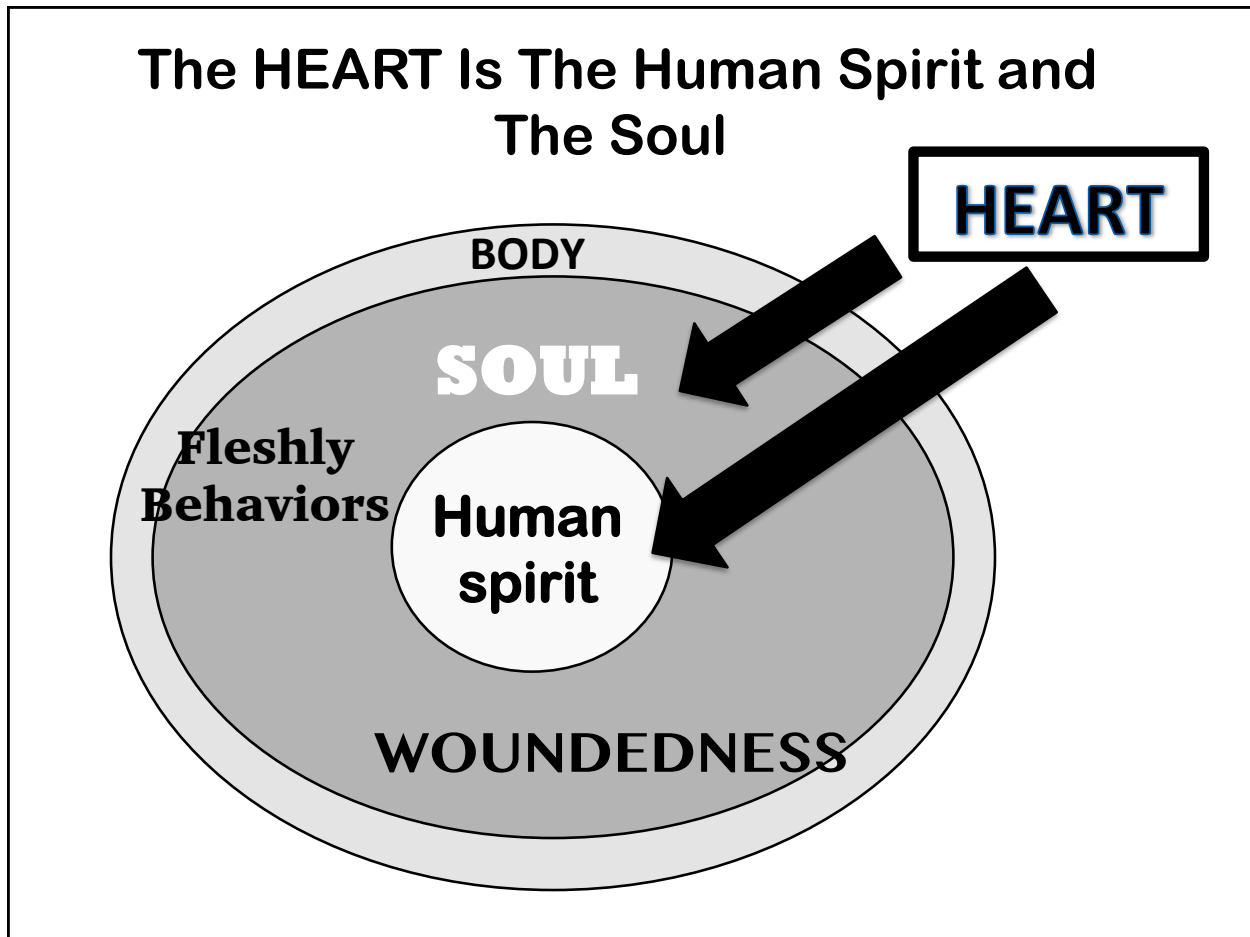
However, most verses associate the word “heart” with the **soul**. So for purposes of our discussion on woundedness, I will always be referring to the “heart” to mean the **soul** and vice versa. Here are some verses where the heart refers to the soul.

*“For out of the **HEART (soul)** come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders.” Matthew 15:19 (Parenthesis mine)*

*“Be strong and let your **HEART (soul)** take courage, All you who hope in the LORD.”
Psalm 31:24 (Parenthesis mine)*

*“When You said, “Seek My face,” my **HEART (soul)** said to You, “Your face, O LORD, I shall seek.” Psalm 27:8 (Parenthesis mine)*

Now, let’s look at our body, soul, and human spirit diagram to illustrate how the “heart” can refer to the soul or the human spirit.



[Note: Your fleshly behaviors and woundedness manifest themselves in your body and soul, not in your human spirit. I will explain in the next lesson why this is an important distinction.]

The problem is that if we don’t know and believe God’s truth about ourselves, God and others, we will interpret all of our wounding events through our soul (mind, will, and emotions). If those events are not interpreted through the grid of God’s truth, they create wounding thoughts and feelings which result in our choosing, in our will, to live from our fleshly behaviors. The greater problem comes when we don’t know either God’s truth about healing or choose not to live from that truth. The result is that we try to deal with our woundedness independent of God. Let’s look at some of the ways we try to do that.

How We TRY To Deal With Woundedness INDEPENDENT of God

If we do not seek the Spirit of God for healing, then we will try to deal with our woundedness independent of God in some of the following ways:

1. COMPARTMENTALIZE Our Woundedness

One of the key ways that we try to deal with our woundedness independent of God is what I call “compartmentalization.” Let me give you an example to illustrate.



Let's compare your heart to a home. Like a home, our heart has rooms but these rooms we build to lock away or compartmentalize wounding events or the results of those wounding events.

If we were to put labels on these rooms, some of the labels may read: sexual abuse, trauma, abandonment, father abuse, mother abuse, or divorce. As we experience more woundedness, we add more rooms. These rooms come in different sizes. Some larger and some smaller depending on the impact

of the wounding event(s) on our lives and the grip those events have on our heart.

Because of the pain created by these rooms, we put locks on their doors to try to lock away the pain. We falsely believe if we lock away these wounding memories, feelings, and events, they won't impact us and we can walk away and live life as if these events never took place.

Exercise: To make this more personal write down the names you would put in the rooms of your heart that are wounding events or are the feelings associated with those wounding event.

Questions: In what ways do you think these rooms of woundedness may be impacting what you think, the choices you make, and, most importantly, how you feel about yourself, God and others? Is it possible these rooms are restricting or stifling your spiritual and emotional growth?

The Truth: We can't lock these events and walk away or live as if they never happened. The truth is that these locked rooms become prison cells that keep us imprisoned to our woundedness. Trying to lock away the wounding events and the resulting wounded emotions and thoughts is impossible. Eventually, Much like heart disease slowly kills the physical heart, woundedness kills our “soulical” heart. I call this process the “hardening of our heart.” (I will share more about the hardening of our hearts at the end of this lesson.)

Engaging God: As you examine your own rooms of woundedness, ask Him to show you the impact of your woundedness on your relationship with Him and with every important

relationship in your life.

2. DENIAL

One of the primary ways we try to deal with our woundedness is through denial. In relationship to woundedness, denial usually comes in two forms:

a. Denial that a wounding event ever took place.

I have met with a number of people who deny a wounding event ever took place. However, it was obvious, as I ministered to them, they were exhibiting all the signs of a wounded person.

b. Denial that past events impact you today.

Another way of dealing with woundedness is simply to deny that some past wounding event has any affect on your life today. It is what I call the “**forget and move on**” syndrome. Wouldn't it be nice if that worked? Have you tried to do this? If so, have you really moved on?

The Truth: We may fool ourselves into believing denial is an effective strategy for living, but our behavior and negative emotions dictate otherwise. Whether or not we acknowledge it, our own misery and the toxic overflow to others from our woundedness will be a constant reminder that denial is an illusion.

Engaging God: Ask the Lord to reveal if you are living in denial concerning your past woundedness. If you still can't accept that your past woundedness is affecting you, ask God if you are wounding others (especially those closest to you) by your negative behavior, and, if so, what the origin of that behavior is.

3. SELF-PROTECTION Or INSULATION

Another method of coping with your pain is through self-protection/insulation. Much like insulation in a house protects the house from extreme temperatures from the outside, you believe that you can protect or insulate yourself from further pain associated with those events.

Let me give you an example to illustrate. There was a man who was rejected by his mother from the day he was born until the day she died (I mean this literally because she made rejecting remarks about him on the day she died). He shared with me the many ways she rejected him and the resulting woundedness. This man knew and lived Christ as life, but early on in his life, he tried to insulate himself from his mother's ongoing rejection. Before I continue with his story, look at the truth concerning self-protection or insulation.

The Truth: The problem is self-protection and insulation from the pain is an **illusion**. This is because the self **cannot** protect or insulate itself from woundedness.

Going back to my friend who was rejected by his mother, a series of rejecting events came about later in his life from other people. Since he was living in self-protection mode, he thought he had sufficiently insulated himself from this rejection. To prove my point that self can't protect itself, these later rejecting events exposed my friend's failure to protect himself from the earlier rejection. Because he took ownership of their rejection which was amplified by his mother's rejection, he lashed out in anger towards them and rejected them back. It is futile, therefore, to try to protect yourself from the pain of your woundedness. Self-protectionism will do nothing to

stop your own pain or prevent you from acting out of that pain towards others.

Engaging God: Ask the Lord to reveal any ways you may be trying to self-protect or insulate yourself as a result of your woundedness. Ask Him to reveal times when you may have over-reacted to others' offenses towards you and whether that is related to earlier woundedness.

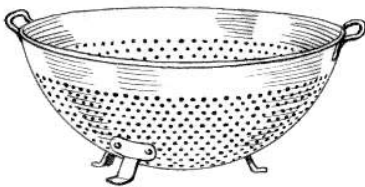
DAY TWO

4. STUFF Your Emotions

Another thing we do is to try to stuff our emotions associated with our areas of woundedness. Stuffing your emotions is like trying to cram your past woundedness into a trash bag or locking it away in a bank vault where you believe it will be locked away forever. The problem is woundedness will not go away or no longer negatively impact your life by your vain attempts to ignore your associated damaged emotions.

One of the results of stuffing your damaged emotions is it forces you to wear various masks designed to portray that all is "okay" in your life and the wounding events (or the results of those events) do not negatively impact your life.

The Truth: The truth is damaged emotions that are stuffed or buried are in reality buried alive. They are like a time bomb that can explode every time those emotions are triggered.



Like insulation or self-protection, stuffing is an **illusion**. Why? Instead of a bank vault, your pain, in reality, ends up in a "soulical" colander where it flows or "oozes" out to negatively impact you, your relationships, and your circumstances. As the old joke goes, it is like putting a screen door on a submarine.

Engaging God: Ask the Lord to reveal any ways you may be trying to stuff the pain of your past woundedness..

5. ESCAPE or ANESTHETIZE

If we can't insulate or compartmentalize the pain, we look for ways to cope with, escape or anesthetize it.

Here are some examples of ways we try to escape or anesthetize the pain that can become addictive:

Workaholism	Shopaholic	Television	Pornography	Medication
Hobbies	Sex Addiction	Overeating	Movies	Computer
Anorexia/Bulimia	Working for God	Drug Abuse	Alcoholism	Cell phone
Social media	Video games	Exercise	Texting	Fantasizing

Here is a key truth concerning these escape options:

***Using these methods of ESCAPE will only bring TEMPORARY relief
from the pain but will NEVER produce healing or freedom.***

Most of these are self-explanatory, but you may be a little puzzled why I put “working for God” as a way of escape. I know of pastors and lay people who have used God “work” to run from God. By this I mean they are using Christian activity as an unconscious attempt to escape from the pain and from God who will heal their pain. In other words, we can minister to others or work for God to try to cover or avoid our own pain.

Another wrong motivation in working for God is what I call the “let’s make a deal” plan. We make a one-sided deal with God thinking if we do enough for God we will obligate Him to heal us or otherwise meet our needs. This common fantasy is very familiar to “doers” like me. It was this “let’s make a deal” plan that drove me for years in my Christian life. I kept thinking the more I did for God the more He would do for me. Sadly, nothing changed, and the effects of my woundedness only got worse.

Exercise: From the list above, write down the coping mechanism you are currently using to try to escape or anesthetize your pain.

The Truth: There is no human-centered method of escape from the pain. Trying to anesthetize the pain will only produce momentary relief but will never produce true healing and freedom.

Engaging God: If you are struggling with identifying your methods of escape from your pain, ask the Lord to reveal any ways you may be trying to escape the pain of your past woundedness.

6. IGNORING Your Emotions.

When feelings such as anger, sadness, and fear surface that are tied to our woundedness, we simply ignore them. We feel if we ignore them long enough, they will subside and eventually not resurface again.

You have heard the expression concerning the “elephant in the room.” Imagine yourself being in a room full of elephants that represent the negative feelings attached to your woundedness. Do you imagine if you simply turn your back on them or walk around them they will disappear?

The Truth: There is no real ignoring avoiding or going around your wounded feelings. They are like the wolves circling around the door of your heart, always waiting for a chance to attack.

Engaging God: Ask the Lord to reveal any ways you may be trying to ignore the feelings caused by your past woundedness.

7. SPIRITUALIZING AWAY Your Woundedness: “This is my cross to bear.”

Another way we deal with woundedness is to try to “spiritualize” it away. There are a number

of ways we can do this. One way is to say our woundedness is like Paul's thorn in the flesh. We just need to accept it as a spiritual reality, not seek healing, and move on. In addition, people have told me their woundedness "is just my cross to bear." Below is a story to illustrate this.

There was a lady who had two children who died as adults resulting in great woundedness. However, instead of seeking divine healing for her woundedness, she kept her pain alive as her cross to bear by making it a point to tell everyone her story. (I don't share this in any way to minimize the grief she must have felt.)

Instead of her seeking the Spirit for healing, her self-pity produced by the woundedness continued to grow and be reinforced every time she told the story. This resulted in her self-pity becoming such a deep-seated stronghold that people did not want to be around her.

This does not mean we can't have thorns or experience suffering like Paul, but when we use these spiritual or biblical phrases to justify perpetuating our woundedness, then, in reality, we are saying, "I can't be healed or I don't want to be healed."

These phrases may sound very spiritual, but I simply call this practice "chocolate covered Alpo" (if you didn't know it, Alpo is a brand of dog food). In my example, Alpo represents our woundedness and the chocolate syrup represents our spiritual sayings or justifications we use to cover our woundedness. While it may look appealing, I have never been able get anyone to take a bite. Would you?

The Truth: Trying to spiritualize away our woundedness will only serve to kick the can of our woundedness down the road thus preventing the Spirit from accomplishing a healing work in us.

Question: Is it possible you are trying to justify your woundedness by believing it is just your cross to bear or your thorn in the flesh?

Engaging God: Ask the Lord to reveal if you are, in any way, trying to spiritualize away your woundedness.

8. Continuing to see yourself as a VICTIM

Another way of dealing with the pain independent of God is continuing to dwell on the fact that you are and will always be the victim. I hear these comments often: "Can't you see what this person did to me?" "Don't you understand how abusive they were to me?" "If you could understand the extent of my woundedness, you would see I am justified in my anger." These are all comments of "victims." I am not minimizing the fact you may have been victimized. However, the question is, "Do you have to continue living as a victim?"

Continuing to see yourself as the victim can create feelings of hopelessness. You can also play the "victim" by trying to get attention, sympathy, and validation from others. It becomes a manipulation tool we use to try to get our validation needs met by others while we remain unhealthy.

The Truth: Even if you were truly victimized and deeply hurt by it, Galatians 5:1 says, “*It was for freedom that Christ set us free...*” Being a victim does not have to define you now or in the future. As you allow the Spirit to renew your mind to the truth that you are free, then you no longer have to remain a victim of your woundedness or be tempted to manipulate others to try to receive sympathy or comfort.

Engaging God: Ask the Lord to reveal if you are, in any way, trying to play the victim. Ask Him to renew your mind to the truth according to Galatians 5:1 that you are truly free and no longer have to see yourself as the victim. Seek Him to convince you that there are no victims in Christ.

Exercise: From the eight ways of trying to deal with your woundedness independent of God that you just read, please write down which ones might apply to you. Are there some other ways you may be trying to deal with your woundedness independent of God? Please write those down, too.

If you choose to continue walking in the ways you listed, let me ask you a question:

What will be the RESULTS if you DON'T let God into your heart to heal?

What do you think the results may be? I will give you some answers to that question in the next section.

What Are Some of the RESULTS If You Don't Let God Heal Your Heart?

1. “DEFAULT” thoughts and feelings are created.

Apart from the healing process, we will keep replaying the wounding events. Much like hearing a recording over and over again. The result is you continue reinforcing The result is that you continue reinforcing the pain and wounded thoughts and feelings caused by those events. As these wounding thoughts and feelings are reinforced, they will become the “default” thoughts and feelings we go to every time an event(s) comes to mind.

Here is a personal example to illustrate this point:

Every time I replayed one of the many wounding events in my mind caused by my father, I would feel anger and unforgiveness rising up in me. These feelings eventually became my “default” feelings automatically activated every time my dad or a wounding event came to mind that reminded me of him.

2. The strongholds resulting from your woundedness will be REINFORCED.

In addition to the default feelings, every time you replay the wounding events you will be reinforcing the strongholds created by your woundedness.

Here is a story to illustrate this point. Two of my strongholds were anger and unforgiveness towards my father. Can you imagine after 48 years of replaying these wounding events and not

engaging God to deal with these strongholds how reinforced they became? Like layers on an onion, I kept adding layer after layer of anger and unforgiveness.

3. We open ourselves to FURTHER woundedness.

If we don't allow the Spirit to heal our woundedness, we open ourselves up to further woundedness.

Let me make this point by sharing a story about a man who was made to feel unworthy and rejected by his dad. He did not allow the Spirit to heal that woundedness which, over time, grew deeper and more entrenched. When others wounded him in ways similar to his dad, it peeled the band aid off his unhealed wounds and he experienced the pain from his woundedness once again.

When our reaction is way out of proportion to the wounding event causing it, this is often a sign that an old unhealed wound has just been re-opened. This is a great opportunity to stop and ask the Holy Spirit to show you what earlier wounding event is really behind the heightened reaction and pain.

4. Your woundedness will keep you locked into EMOTIONAL IMMATURITY

The following truth is key concerning woundedness and emotional maturity:

Woundedness
RETARDS or RESTRICTS your EMOTIONAL maturity.

There is a direct correlation between spiritual maturity and emotional maturity. You can't have one without the other. Continuing to live from your woundedness not only retards your spiritual growth but it restricts your emotional maturity as well. If we don't experience healing, we never grow up, and will continue to revert to childish things (i.e., fleshly behaviors such as anger, controlling, manipulation, selfishness, etc.) which are the outflow of our woundedness.

Let me give you an example to illustrate. I know of a man who was emotionally and verbally abused by his dad as a boy. This abuse left him feeling unloved and rejected. His unmet needs for love and acceptance blocked him from growing emotionally. Even though he is now an adult, he has the emotional maturity of a teenager.

Unhealed woundedness leaves us stuck emotionally. In light of this, let's look at the following verse:

"When I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child. But when I grew up [spiritually], I put away childish things." 1 Corinthians 13:11

What Paul is referring to is spiritual growth as opposed to just getting older physically. The point is we are to grow up spiritually. If we don't, we will continue to speak, think, and reason as children. Unhealed woundedness will prevent the "growing up" process. Let's now look at some of the symptoms of emotional immaturity:

DAY THREE

a. Being SELF-ABSORBED.

Just like a child is all about themselves, woundedness keeps us in bondage to ourselves as we continue to focus on **our** pain, **our** struggle, or **our** heartache. We become self-absorbed and cannot focus on anyone but ourselves.

b. OVERREACTION to someone's comments.

Someone may make an innocent comment to you, or it may be the tone of how the comment was made, and you will overreact as if you were being attacked or rejected. Because these comments or the tone of the comments touched the nerve of some unhealed woundedness, your emotional reaction is out of proportion to what was said or meant.

For example, let's say a good friend says you have not been in touch with him recently. Even though it was a comment only of concern, it touched your unhealed nerve of rejection and you respond with frustration or you become defensive.

c. Continuing to BLAME or NOT forgive your offender/abuser.

*"... and you will know the truth, and the **truth** will make you **free**." John 8:32*

You will be stuck emotionally for as long as you continue to blame or not to forgive your offender. Blaming and unforgiveness will hold you hostage and keep you from being set free.

5. RESIGNATION – "This is as good as it gets."

Another result of not letting God heal you is that you can choose to move to a place of resignation. Let's assume you received counseling or read books about healing, but no healing took place. Maybe, for a while, you sought God for healing, but He didn't produce the healing you expected in your timetable.

Over time these unmet expectations can bring you to a place of resignation where you say, "This is as good as it gets." This is a very dangerous place to be because you have not only given up on God, but you have opened the door for Satan to use your resignation to keep you in bondage to your woundedness.

Some people can adopt resignation as a defense to feeling disappointed by God or feeling rejected if He hasn't healed them in the time they wanted.

Remember resignation can either be conscious or subconscious. You may be overtly thinking you haven't given up on God, but your actions and decisions dictate otherwise.

Question: Do you have any feelings of resignation (this is as good as it is going to get) concerning the woundedness and the fleshly behaviors, false beliefs, or strongholds that caused it? If so, what have you given up on?

6. Unhealed woundedness can eventually produce feelings of HOPELESSNESS.

A continuing attitude of resignation can eventually lead to your experiencing hopelessness that you will ever be healed. Hopelessness is like a “soulful abyss” in which you are so consumed by the darkness you believe your healing is beyond even God’s ability to heal. If you continue in this hopelessness and despair, it can become a self-fulfilling prophecy, and no healing will ever take place because you have lost faith in God’s ability, desire or willingness to heal you.

Question: Do you have any feelings of hopelessness concerning your fleshly behaviors, false beliefs, or strongholds that resulted from your woundedness?

7. Leads To The HARDENING Of Your Heart Towards God

All of the six things listed will lead you to what I call the “hardening” of your heart. I define the hardening of the heart as:

The DEATH that occurs in your heart from continuing to live from your woundedness and from RESISTING God’s healing power.

One of the results of not inviting the Spirit to heal you of your woundedness is a growing desire to protect yourself from further pain. Through trying to protect yourself from the pain, you end up “stiff-arming” or blocking the Holy Spirit from healing that pain.

Hardening of the heart is like compounding interest on a certificate of deposit (when they actually made real interest). We know interest on a CD compounds the longer we keep the CD. It is the same way with our woundedness.

As time goes by and you fail to allow God into your locked rooms to heal, you compound or add to the existing pain with more pain. Over time this “compounding” or hardening of the heart causes you to move further and further away from seeking God as the solution. Eventually you can turn away from God completely and will no longer seek Him as the Source for healing. Let me share a story to illustrate:

I was discipling a man who shared with me that his fiancé was run over by a drunk driver the day of their rehearsal dinner. This event happened 15 years prior to our meeting. Nonetheless, he told (and felt) the story as if it had just happened. He said with deep anger: “God killed the only person in the world who ever really loved me.” It was obvious that over the past 15 years he was resisting God and His healing power which resulted in this man’s heart being hardened against God.

Question: Do you have a growing desire to protect yourself or resist God’s healing of your woundedness?

Engaging God: Because of the subtlety of the hardening of your heart, ask the Lord to reveal to you if you are resisting His healing work in your life. If you are resisting His healing work, ask the Lord to reveal the reason for this.

Summary

When you look at the ways we try to deal with our woundedness independent of God and the effects of those ways, I hope you are beginning to understand that you need someone greater than yourself to deal with your woundedness. Another way of saying it is that you need a “source” other than yourself and greater than yourself to be healed. Let me further explain this statement in Part Two of this lesson.

PART TWO: Your SOURCE For Healing

Here is how I define the word “source” when it comes to your woundedness.

SOURCE means the one who is RESPONSIBLE for and is ABLE to heal you.

That “one,” who is the source, is either going to be you or God. Let’s look at God’s truth to understand who is the real source for healing.

Who Is The REAL Source For Healing?

Let’s look at the word “source” in light of three categories of Christians I have discipled over the past. The first category is Christians who believe that a counselor, pastor, or a book on healing, etc. will be the source for healing. The second category is Christians who believe they can read the Bible or a book on healing and then they, acting as their own source (by using their own ability, self-discipline, and willpower), can heal themselves. The third category of Christians, when it comes to healing, believe God will **help** them be their own source for healing. The question is: Can any of these categories of Christians produce true healing? The answer is “no.” Why?

Because God and God ALONE is the SOURCE for healing your woundedness.

Look at 1 Corinthians 1:30 (RSV):

“He (God) is the SOURCE of your life in Christ Jesus, ...”
(Parenthesis and emphasis mine)

In this verse, there is only One source for healing our life: God. This is not to say God can’t work through counselors, friends, books, or even studies like this to accomplish His healing. However, they are **not** the source for healing. Rather, they are the tools or conduits the Lord may use to be a part of your healing process. The only Source for spiritual healing is God Himself. The key to this truth is that God is **not** going to help you be the source. Rather, He, and He alone **is** the Source for healing. The foundation for comprehending this truth is understanding the difference between “A” Christian life and “THE” Christian life. Let’s start with looking at “A” Christian life and the results of living that kind of Christian life.

What Is “A” Christian Life?

Many Christians have been taught it is up to them with God’s help to live the Christian life. That was my experience for 30 years. I was told to take God’s truth and ask the Holy Spirit to help me make it an experiential reality in my life. This is what I call “A” Christian life. Let me give you a definition of what I mean by “A” Christian life.

“A” Christian Life

It is up to YOU, with God’s help, to be the SOURCE, using your own intellect, willpower, and ability to learn God’s truth and make it an experiential reality in your life with God’s HELP.

Like many other Christians, I fervently tried to do this, especially in the area of healing my woundedness. The problem was that after 30 years of trying to be the source and living “A” Christian life, I was NOT healed and the effects of my woundedness (false beliefs and wounded feelings of inadequacy, rejection, and unworthiness) had only gotten worse. The truth is what I believed about living the Christian life was not producing any of God’s promises of healing, victory, freedom, or transformation. Why not?

Before I answer that question, let me ask you some questions. What do you believe about living the Christian life? Do you believe it is up to you with God’s help to live it? If so, I have another question for you. How is it working for you? Are you experiencing the victory, the freedom, the transformation, and the healing that God promises? If not, is it possible you have been living “A” Christian life?

Question: If you have been wanting or trying to be healed of your woundedness, what have you tried to do?

Is any of what you are trying to do producing deep healing of your woundedness? If not, is it possible that you, a counselor, a friend, or someone else has been attempting to be the source to heal you? Let’s look at the meaning of “THE” Christian life and the true Source for healing.

What Jesus Says Is “THE” Christian Life

Jesus says in John 14:6 and John 11:25:

“...I AM the way, the truth, and THE LIFE...”
John 14:6

“...I AM the resurrection and THE LIFE.” *John 11:25*

What is Jesus saying in these two passages? Clearly, Jesus is saying He Himself is **THE** Life. What does He mean when He says He is **THE** Life? For many years, I read these verses and concluded they only meant He was the source for my **eternal** life. But is it possible Jesus is telling us something more in these passages? Let's further explore the answer to this question by looking at what Paul said.

DAY FOUR

What Paul Said About Living "THE" Christian Life

Paul took the truth of Christ as "THE" Life to a more personal level when he said in Colossians 3:4:

"...Christ who is YOUR life..."

What is Paul saying in this verse? He is saying the life of Christ is more than the eternal life He gave you at salvation. He is asserting that Christ is **your** life today, at this very moment. At this point you may be scratching your head and asking, "What is Paul talking about? What does it mean that Christ is my life? Is the life Paul is referring to the Christian life?" I believe the answer is found in Philippians 1:21 when Paul says:

"For me, to live IS Christ..."

Paul is saying life for him is Christ being his life. Jesus and Paul are revealing to us an incredible truth:

"THE" Christian Life is a PERSON:

It is Christ HIMSELF!

Have you understood before now that Christ Himself is THE Christian life? Think about this for a moment. If "THE" Christian life is a Person, does that mean "THE" Christian life is not about completing a checklist, trying to keep a set of rules, trying to keep from sinning, or trying to do your best to live for God? I believe what Jesus and Paul are saying is that THE Christian life is not a life we are able to produce. It is a life only Christ can produce.

The truth is the Christian life is not about living "A" life. It is about living "THE" life. The problem is you and I cannot live "THE" life. Only Christ can do that. Let me share with you how I discovered "THE" life.

I Finally Understood What It Meant To Live "THE" Life.

Little did I know during those thirty years of trying to live "A" Christian life, God was in the process of persuading me that living "A" life will never produce God's healing or His promises. God finally broke through to me on Sunday, October 4, 1998, while sitting in the parking lot of our church. As I was sitting there hopeless and depressed, a thought came rolling across my mind in the form of a question.

The question was: “**Are you done trying, in your own strength and ability, to make the Christian life work?**” There was no doubt in my mind the Spirit of God was asking the question. My response to God was, “I am done! I can’t do it.” God’s timing was perfect because on that day in church, God used a guest speaker named Ian Thomas to share the truth of “THE” life. When he got up to speak, the first words out of his mouth that Sunday were:

***“God never intended for you to live THE LIFE that
ONLY Christ can live in and through you.”***

I was stunned by these words because he was the first person in my thirty years as a Christian to ever tell me that it was not up to me to try to live THE Christian life. What the Holy Spirit was telling me through Ian Thomas was this key truth:

***KEY TRUTH:
There is only ONE Person who truly lived “THE” PERFECT
Christian life, and that was Christ HIMSELF.***

This truth may be as startling to you as it was to me when I first heard it. Yet, isn’t it true? No one other than Jesus has lived a perfect Christian life. Therefore, what makes us think we can do the same. Think about the following truth:

***All that we can do in our own strength and ability is live
“A” FORM of the Christian life.
Only Christ can live “THE” Christian Life.***

Meditate: on John 14:6, John 11:25, Colossians 3:4, and Philippians 1:21 listed above and ask God to reveal to you if you have been living “A” form of the Christian life or if you have been living “THE” Christian life.

Engaging God: If this truth is new to you, please take a few moments to go to God and ask Him to make these truths real to you personally. Ask God to reveal to you in a deeper way what it means that Christ is THE Christian life. If this truth contradicts what you have believed about the Christian life so far, ask God to reveal to you if what you have just read is the truth or not.

In this next section, we will look further into what it means that Christ is your life.

What Does It Mean That Christ IS Your Life?

The next question you may be asking is: “What does it mean that Christ is my life?” This takes us back to where we started this section of the lesson in 1 Corinthians 1:30 (RSV):

“He is the SOURCE of your life in Christ Jesus, ...”

God gives us the answer in the first part of the verse when He says that He is the SOURCE of your life in Christ. One of the definitions for the word “source” is “the one who produces.” This may be a new truth for you because so many Christians have been taught falsely, as I was, that they are to be the source for living the Christian life with God’s help. You see, there can only be ONE true Source from which to live the Christian life.

***The truth is that God, NOT you, is the only SOURCE
from which you are to live THE Christian life.***

Look at two other verses that reveal God is your Source for living the Christian life:

“In Him we live and move and have our being.” Acts 17:28

“For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things.....” Romans 11:36

These are just two of many verses in the Bible that reveal to us that God is to be our Source for living the Christian life. You may be wondering what it means practically that God is your Source. Let me give you two examples.

1. Christ is your Source to meet your NEEDS.

We all have needs. Philippians 4:19 tells us Christ is the Source/supply to meet our needs:

“And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”

Christ as your need-meeter will Himself meet your need for:

Unconditional love	Victory	Worth	Acceptance	Faith
Freedom	Patience	Strength	Peace	Power
Forgiveness	Understanding	Security	Fearlessness	Wisdom
Discernment	Adequacy	Humility	Christ-confidence	Boldness
Righteousness	Selflessness	Rest	Compassion	Courage
Hope	Gentleness	Control	Faithfulness	Joy

Later in this study, we will discuss further the application of Christ’s meeting these needs. For now, it is simply important to understand Christ as your Source will meet those needs.

2. God is your Source to make ALL His promises an EXPERIENTIAL reality in your life.

“And I am sure that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.” Philippians 1:6

God began His good work in you at salvation. Part of God's being the Source to bring His work to completion is His also being your Source to make His promises an experiential reality in your life. Let's look at five of those promises:

- **Promise of VICTORY** – God will give you experiential victory over the power of sin, the flesh, the world, and the power of Satan.

*“...but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
1 Corinthians 15:57*

- **Promise of FREEDOM** – God will set you free from your false beliefs, your defeating sin patterns, and your ongoing inner struggles.

“So Christ has really set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don't get tied up again in slavery to the law.” Galatians 5:1

- **Promise to TRANSFORM your life** – God will transform you into Christ-likeness.

“For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren.” Romans 8:29

“And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.” 2 Corinthians 3:18

“My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you.” Galatians 4:19

- **Promise of INTIMACY** – He will draw you into a personal, intimate relationship with Himself.

“His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into His own family by bringing us to Himself through Jesus Christ. And this gave Him great pleasure.” Ephesians 1:5

These are just a few of the promises for you as a Christian as you let Christ live His life in you.

<p><i>God living His life in you results in your <u>EXPERIENCING</u> His promises!</i></p>

Questions: Are you experiencing the promised freedom, victory, healing, and intimacy with God that you desire? If not, do you want to experience these promises?

Meditate: on the promises listed above. Think about which of these promises you most want to experience.

Engaging God: If you are not experiencing these promises to the extent you would like, ask God to begin making these promises an experiential reality in your life.

Have you tried to be the source to meet your needs or experience God's promises? If so, how is that working for you? If we are honest with ourselves, we would have to say it is not working. The truth is if we try to be the source for living the Christian life, we are destined to fail. If God is not the Source in our Christian walk (and in all other areas of our life), we will never experience God's truth and His promises in our lives.

God as your SOURCE for living THE Christian life means that ONLY God can make His truth and His promises an EXPERIENTIAL reality in your life.

Meditate: on 1 Corinthians 1:30, Acts 17:28 and Romans 11:36 (quoted above).

Questions: Have you believed up to this point that you are the source with God's help to live THE Christian life? Do these three verses give you a clear understanding that Christ and Christ alone is your Source?

Engaging God: Using these three verses, ask the Spirit to give you a deeper understanding of what it means for Him to be your Source for living THE Christian life.

DAY FIVE

If God is the Source, is He Going to HELP You Be the Source?

Ask yourself this question, "If God is the Source, then why would He **help you** be the source?" The truth is God is **not** going to help you be the source for living life because there's only one Source and that is God. You see, God **never** intended for man to be the source for living life or being transformed. We know this because in the garden of Eden before the fall of man, God was the source to meet every one of Adam's and Eve's spiritual, physical, and emotional needs. God's design after the fall has not changed. Let me say it another way that may help you understand this truth:

If Jesus is THE Way, THE Truth, and THE Life then WHY would He help you be the way, the truth and the life?

Psalm 37:5 says this:

*"Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and **He will do it.**"*

What this verse does not say is God will "help" you do it. Rather, it says He and He alone will do it. What is the meaning of "it?" "It" is everything God promises to do. In regard to your Christian walk, you will no longer ask God to help you. Rather, you will trust Him as your Source to produce His promises in your life.

Since THE Christian Life Can Only Be Lived By One Person (Jesus) Then How Do We Live THE Christian Life?

Paul gives us the answer in the first part of Galatians 2:20, when he says:

“I am crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives IN me...”

Think about what Paul is saying in this verse. When Paul says, “I no longer live,” he is, in effect, saying he CANNOT be the source for living the Christian life. This is amazing considering all of Paul’s credentials, intellect, and capability. He clearly acknowledges none of those things qualifies him to be the source. Since he admits he cannot live the Christian life, he says, “Christ lives in me.” What does Paul mean by this statement?

***He means that for Christ to live in us, we need to live in a MOMENT by MOMENT
DEPENDENCE on Christ who is THE Christian life.***

Dependence on Christ living His life in you may be a new concept for you. It was a radical concept for me, especially after trying (and failing) for thirty years to live the Christian life on my own. However, as the Lord gave me greater revelation of the meaning of Christ living in me, I became convinced I cannot live THE life that only Christ can live.

The KEY to living THE Christian life is to DEPEND on Christ to live HIS life in you.

Questions: Have you realized before now the Christian life is about Christ living His life in you? How might this truth change the way you think about how you are to live the Christian life?

Meditate: on the truth you can’t live the Christian life. Only Christ living in you will ever create true change your life.

Engaging God: Ask God to give you revelation of what it means for Christ to live His life in you. Ask Him to show you how many areas of your life would change for the better if you were allowing Him to live through you, such as, His lifting your burdens, guiding your decisions and relating to others through you.

How Do These Truths Apply to Healing?

Now that you have a better understanding of God as your Source, let’s apply these truths to the healing of your woundedness.

1. God is Your Source for HEALING.

Based on what we have discussed in the previous section, here is a key truth that applies to your healing:

***God and ONLY God will be the Source to HEAL your
past and present woundedness.***

God as your Source for healing will:

- Give you REVELATION of His truth about healing. Ephesians 1:17.
- PERSUADE you He is able and willing to heal you. Ephesians 3:20.
- Move you from unbelief to BELIEF that He will heal you. Philippians 1:6.
- Give you the WILLINGNESS to say, “Yes” to whatever He chooses to do to heal you. Matthew 26:39.

Engaging God: Begin asking God to give you revelation; persuade you of His ability and willingness to heal you; move you from unbelief to belief; and give you the willingness to say, “Yes” to His plan for your healing.

2. Christ is your HOPE for healing.

You may be reading this and are feeling, on some level, hopeless that you will ever be truly healed of your woundedness. I understand. I have been where you are. If this is where you are, please read the next two verses carefully.

*“... to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is **Christ in you, THE HOPE**.....” Colossians 1:27*

*“Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your **HOPE completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.**” 1 Peter 1:13*

Christ is not only THE Life (John 14:6), He is THE Hope. Think of it. Christ embodies hope. Therefore, we can look to Christ to be our hope. What kind of hope are we talking about? The worldview says about hope, “I hope that I will be healed” which means maybe it will or maybe it won’t happen.

“Hope” in the worldly sense leaves doubt about the certainty of the outcome. However, “hope,” as defined in the New Testament, means “**confident expectation or certainty.**” This means when we put our trust in Christ as THE hope for healing, we can say, “I have a confident expectation and a certainty that God will heal me.” Let’s look at a few other examples that differentiate human hope from Christ-hope.

Human hope says: “I hope to see the light at the end of the tunnel concerning my healing.”

Christ-hope says: “I (Jesus) AM The Light at the end of the tunnel and I will heal you.”

Human hope says: “If I read one more book, go to one more counselor, or hear one more sermon, I hope I will be healed.”

Christ-hope says: “I (Jesus) may use a book, a counselor, or a sermon, but I am the ONLY One you can count on to heal.”

Human hope says: “I am running out of hope.”

Christ-hope says: “I (Jesus) will provide an endless supply of hope because I AM Hope.”

In light of this truth, my prayer for you is that the Holy Spirit will grow your Christ-hope and your Christ-confidence so you will experience healing.

Engaging God: If you are feeling, on some level, hopeless about your healing, seek Christ to persuade you He is your hope.

3. You Have the Holy Spirit’s POWER in You to Heal Your Woundedness

In addition to containing The Life of Christ, we, as Christians contain all of the Holy Spirit’s power to heal us. We see this in 2 Corinthians 4:7:

*“But we have **this treasure** in earthen vessels, so that **the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God** and not from ourselves.” 2 Corinthians 4:7*

Think of it. The treasure within us is the surpassing power of God which will heal our woundedness.

a. What kind of power is God’s power?

The treasure you and I already have is the “surpassing greatness of the power of God.” What kind of power is that? Look at Ephesians 1:19, 20:

*“I pray that you will begin to understand the **incredible greatness of His power** for us who believe him. This is the **same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead** and seated him in the place of honor at God’s right hand in the heavenly realms.”*

Think of it!

The SAME power that resurrected Jesus from the dead is IN YOU!

In addition, God’s power in you is the same power that:

- **Created the heavens and the earth.**
- **Opened the Red Sea.**
- **Is holding the universe together.**

b. Why do we need God’s power?

Without God’s power there will be no healing and no transformation. Your willpower, strength, ability, and capability will never produce the healing and transformation God promises. This is why we live from God as our Source because, as we do, we are living from His power to make His promises an experiential reality in our lives.

As we draw on God’s power, we will experience His healing of our woundedness.

Question: Have you realized up to this point the greatness of God's power that resides in you?

Meditate: on 2 Corinthians 4:7 and Ephesians 1:19, 20, above, and think about the magnitude of God's power that lives in you.

Engaging God: Ask God to persuade you in a deeper way concerning His divine power that you possess and how He wants to use that power to set you free.

4. God WILL heal you.

We see this in Psalm 147:3:

*"He **heals** the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds." Psalm 147:3*

What a confirming and affirming promise is contained in this verse. I pray that from this moment on you will not see this verse as just a possibility, but rather as a **certainty** that God will heal you. We will learn that healing is normally a process rather than an instantaneous occurrence; nonetheless, we can be certain that God's promise of healing is one we can cling to throughout the healing process.

Questions: Is it discouraging to you that healing is generally a process rather than an instantaneous event? Do you think God may be more interested in deepening your relationship with Him by making healing a process and a journey with Him rather than a one-time event?

Engaging God: Ask the Lord to begin persuading you of the certainty of His healing in your life.

Engaging God

Before we go any further, I would like to share a few key truths on what it means to engage God. I hope this will help you better understand why I insert these sections throughout the study.

1. The WAY We Engage God: By FAITH

*"Without **faith** it is impossible to please God." Hebrews 11:6*

The way you engage God is by FAITH.

Faith, as it relates to woundedness, is realizing you, by yourself,

CANNOT accomplish the healing you desire and God promises.

Instead, it IS your coming to God and asking or seeking Him for

healing with an attitude of TOTAL dependence on Him.

I believe there are two parts to faith: (1) coming to the place of "I can't" which means you acknowledge you cannot produce transformation or healing of your woundedness that God promises, and (2) coming to God with an attitude of total dependence on Him to do what He promises to do.

2. The OBJECT of our Faith

The key issue in faith is the **object** of our faith. The object of our faith as Christians should be Jesus. We see this in the following verses:

*“We do this by keeping our eyes on **Jesus, on Whom our faith depends from start to finish.**” Hebrews 12:2 (NLT)*

*“And on the basis of **faith in His name**, it is the name of **Jesus...**” Acts 3:16*

Let me explain in this next section why I said the object of our faith as Christians “should be” Jesus.

3. Is It Possible There is ANOTHER Object of Your Faith?

If you have been living the Christian life for some time, you know that the object of your faith should be Jesus Christ. However, in ministering to many Christians (who have been Christians for 10, 20, 30+ years), I have personally witnessed there is another object of their faith. The reason I say this is because what they believe about living by faith has not resulted in consistent freedom, victory, transformation, or healing of their woundedness. Here is a question you may ask yourself about your walk of faith:

***Is what I BELIEVE about walking by faith TRANSFORMING
my life and HEALING my woundedness?***

If what you believe is not working, there is a possibility the “real” object your faith is your own IQ, ability, self-discipline, and willpower. Let me give you an example to explain.

Let’s assume you believe it is up to you with God’s help to live the Christian life. Consistent with that assumption, you will take God’s promises of victory, freedom, and transformation and try in your own ability and willpower to make those promises an experiential reality in your life. In essence, what you have done is to put faith in yourself, and then you have asked God to help YOU be the source for making those promises real in your life.

However, what do we know is true? We know from 1 Corinthians 1:30 (that we studied earlier in this lesson) that God is the Source for living life in us and He is not going to help us be the Source. At this point I want to make it personal by asking you this question:

If you are TRYING in your OWN strength and willpower to live the Christian life, to be transformed, or to be healed; how well is it working for you?

I share this because if we are truly walking by faith (with Christ as the object of our faith), our lives should be in the process of being transformed and we should be experiencing healing of our woundedness.

Engaging God: If you are not sure who is the real object of your faith (you or Christ), ask the Lord to reveal that to you.

4. What Happens When You Engage God?

When you engage God by faith, you **RELEASE** the Holy Spirit to take Biblical truth you have learned intellectually and make it **REVELATION** which will eventually lead to **TRANSFORMATION** and **HEALING**.

Engaging God by faith is releasing the Holy Spirit's power to give you revelation of the information you know and make it revelation. Revelation, as we said in the introduction, simply means God **supernaturally** takes His truth and makes it personal to you and to your life circumstances. Revelation takes you from intellectual understanding to spiritual understanding of God's truth.

As we continue to engage God, not only will the Holy Spirit gives us revelation, but He will move us from unbelief to belief thus allowing us to experience healing of our woundedness.

Final Note

When you get to the Engaging God sections, you are simply asking/seeking God with an attitude of total dependence to do what only He can and will do and you can't do. Remember that without engaging God nothing changes.

Do You Want To Know More?

If you would like a more in-depth study of living from God as your Source, I encourage you to go to our ministry website: www.christislifeministries.com. On the home page you will find a DISCIPLESHIP icon that will take you to the Discipleship page. On that page you will see a study called *Living Life From A New Source?* There is a curriculum you can download for free and a DVD series based on the study that you can watch online.

LESSON THREE

Woundedness Your Identity In Christ

*“Therefore, if anyone is **in Christ**, he is a **new creation**; the old has gone, the new has come!”*
2 Corinthians 5:17

DAY ONE

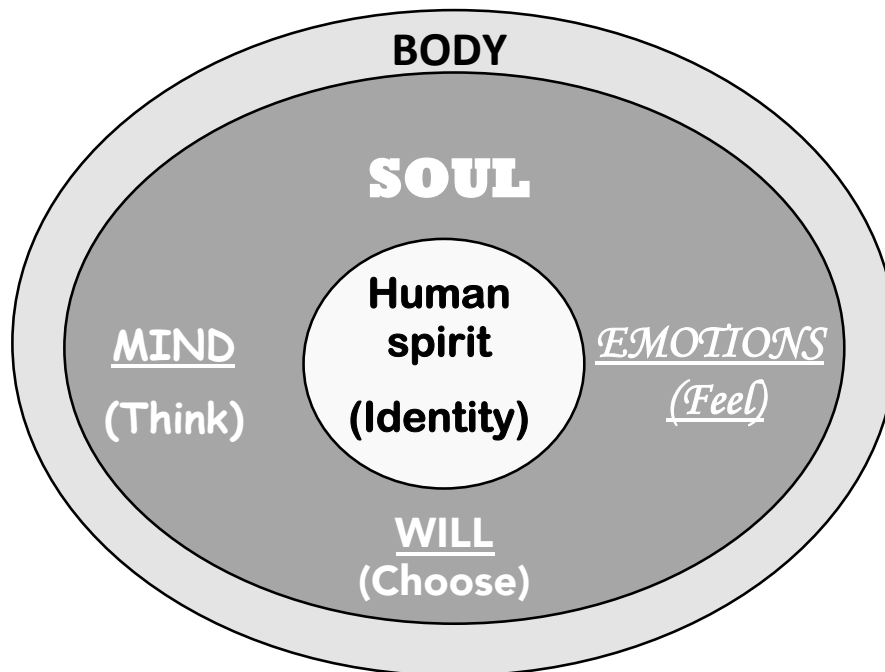
Introduction

We talked earlier about false beliefs (relating to ourselves, God and others) being formed as a result of our woundedness. In this lesson, we are going to focus on our false beliefs about ourselves as a result of our woundedness and how those false beliefs not only negatively impact our lives but the lives of those around us. In addition, we will discuss the truth of our true identity and how God uses this truth in our healing process.

What Is Our Identity?

Therefore, let's begin by looking once again at the circle diagram depicting the body, soul, and human spirit.

Your Human Spirit Is The Place Of Your True Identity



In this diagram we see that our identity is located in our human spirit. Let me define what I mean by the word “identity.”

***Your IDENTITY is made up of what you THINK, BELIEVE, and FEEL
is the truth about yourself.***

I base this definition on Proverbs 23:7:

“As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.”

The crucial question that we must ask ourselves is this: Does what I think, believe, and feel about myself line up with God’s truth? Why is this so important?

***What you believe about yourself will AFFECT the decisions you make and
will impact EVERY one of your relationships.
It is VITAL, therefore, to understand whether you are believing
the TRUTH or have FALSE beliefs about yourself.***

Having said that, let’s contrast your false identity with your true identity to determine whether you have false beliefs about yourself or believe the truth of your true identity.

What Do You BELIEVE or FEEL Is True of You?

As we discussed in the previous lesson, woundedness occurs from wounding events, traumatic events and how we interpreted positive or negative messages from parents, siblings, friends, teachers, etc. These reinforced messages and wounding/traumatic events may eventually produce false beliefs about ourselves. Remember our definition of a false belief:

***A FALSE belief is any belief about yourself that does NOT
line up with God’s truth.***

Here are some examples of negative false beliefs we can have about ourselves as a result of our woundedness:

I believe or feel I am:

Unworthy/worthless
Rejected/Rejectable
Anxious
Weak
Insecure
Self-hating
Shameful
Unwanted
Insignificant
Unforgiving

Unacceptable
A failure
Inadequate
Defeated
Fearful
Defective
Guilty
Unloved/unlovable
A disappointment
Not valuable or valued

Exercise: From the list on the previous page, write down all of the beliefs you feel or believe are true of you as a result of wounding events, traumatic events, or positive/negative messages. Write down any other false beliefs you have about yourself that may not be listed above.

Engaging God: If it is not readily apparent what your false beliefs are, ask the Lord to reveal to you whether what you believe about yourself is true.

As a result of my abuse and my negative messages, I came to believe I was a rejectable, insecure, inadequate, and unworthy person. These false beliefs formed my false identity.

A FALSE identity is made up of all your FALSE beliefs.

Living From Your False Identity Produces FLESHLY Behaviors

As we talked about in Lesson Two, what flows out of false beliefs is fleshly behaviors. Another way of saying this is that we exhibit certain fleshly behaviors based on our false beliefs about ourselves. Fleshly behaviors are a consequence of false beliefs. Let me share with you some examples of what I mean. The false belief is in bold and examples of fleshly behaviors follow.

1. **Unworthy** - overly introspective, self-condemning, being critical of others to build yourself up.
2. **Unacceptable** - jealousy, envy, being a people-pleaser.
3. **Rejected** - angry, defensive, rejecting others
4. **A failure** - fearing to make mistakes; becoming overly introspective; being envious of others' successes, being a loner.
5. **Inadequate** - critical and judgmental of others, in denial, people-pleaser.
6. **Fear** - isolate yourself, self-protection, avoid failure at all costs.
7. **Insecure** - depression, overly controlling, obsessed with succeeding.
8. **Defeated** - self-pity, pessimistic, depressed.

Exercise: Go back to the list of fleshly behaviors on pages 26 and 27 and write down any fleshly behaviors you feel or believe are attached to your false beliefs.

Question: Write down how your fleshly behaviors may be negatively impacting yourself, your spouse, your kids, your friends, and/or your co-workers.

Engaging God: If you are having difficulty tying your fleshly behaviors to your false beliefs, ask the Lord to first show you some of your fleshly behaviors (often linked to negative emotions) and then reveal the false belief that generated that behavior.

[**Note:** While God wants to free you from your fleshly behaviors, He does not condemn you because of them. (“*Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,...*” Romans 8:1)].

Living From False Identity and Fleshly Behaviors Produces DEATH

*“For the **mind set on the flesh is death**, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace.”*
Romans 8:6

According to this verse, continuing to live from your flesh leads to **death!** What kind of death is referred to in Romans 8:6? It is not spiritual death because we know as a result of trusting Christ for salvation, we have eternal life in Christ and can never die again spiritually.

***The “DEATH” referred to in Romans 8:6 is defined in Strong’s
Lexicon as “the MISERY of the soul as a result of SIN.”***

In other words, if we continue to live from the fleshly behaviors that result from our false beliefs about ourselves, the inevitable result will be **misery in our souls**.

The following are some examples of what misery of the soul involves:

Condemnation	Stress	Anxiety	Shame	Unforgiveness
Anger	Guilt	Pride	Bitterness	Selfishness
Self-pity	Inadequacy	Fear	Worry	Frustration
Unworthiness	Blame	Rejection	Insecurity	Dissatisfaction

Using the diagram of the body, soul, and human spirit, let’s look at an illustration of the misery of the soul.

Death = Misery Of The Soul



Exercise: From the list on the previous page, write down the things that most characterize the misery of the soul that you may be experiencing now as the result of your fleshly behaviors.

Remember: If you keep living from your false beliefs about yourself, then you are like the person in 2 Peter 2:22:

“Of them the proverbs are true: ‘A dog returns to its vomit’ and, ‘A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud.’”

A dog returning to its vomit or a pig returning to wallowing in the mud are great pictures of what it is like to continue living from your fleshly behaviors flowing from your false beliefs. If this is the case, why, like the dog returning to its vomit, do we keep going back to the flesh?

To make this point, let me share with you the story of a man I was ministering to who told me he grew up with a domineering mother. She controlled every move he made. When he failed to perform up to her standards, she made him feel inadequate and a failure. Over time this resulted in his believing that he was inadequate and worthless. As a result of his false beliefs, he became very angry and controlling. These fleshly behaviors eventually became strongholds in his life. Like the dog returning to his vomit this man kept going back to his anger and controlling behavior which became “death” to him, his marriage, and his other relationships.

Questions: Can you identify in some way with 2 Peter 2:22? Are there some flesh patterns you go back to time and time again that are creating “death” in you and those around you? Is this where you want to continue living?

Let's look at some other ways that continuing to live from your false identity negatively impacts your life.

DAY TWO

Your False Identity and Your Woundedness

Here are three examples of consequences that may occur if you continue living from your woundedness flowing from your false beliefs:

1. It keeps you TRAPPED and in BONDAGE to your woundedness and the fleshly behaviors that result.

The longer you live from your false identity, the more entrenched will be your bondage to your woundedness. I can personally bear witness to this because continuing to live out of my false identity for 48 years kept me trapped in my woundedness.

Paul bears this truth out by calling his bondage to the flesh "this body of death" in the second half of Romans 7:24:

"Who will set me free from this body of this death?"

Paul is in misery! He is in such misery it seems like he is pleading when he asks to be set free. The phrase "body of this death" refers both to the flesh and the associated misery that is within him. Isn't it interesting Paul **didn't** ask, "**Which** self-help program or **what** ten steps **will set me free?**" He asked,

"WHO will set me free?"

2. It HARDENS your heart towards GOD.

*"Today if you hear His voice, **do not harden your hearts....**" Hebrews 3:15*

As we mentioned earlier, continuing to live out of our woundedness hardens our hearts toward God. It is the same with living out of our false identity. I know for me, the longer I lived from my false identity, the colder and more resistant I grew in my relationship with the Lord,

3. It HARDENS your heart towards the TRUTH

Because your false identity continues to be reinforced, it also hardens your heart towards God's truth concerning your true identity. Let me give you an example to illustrate.

I had a very strong false belief that I was rejected and rejectable. When I first read Romans 15:7, that I am totally accepted and acceptable in Christ, I really struggled with believing it. Why? My false belief of rejection and being rejectable was so entrenched that I did not receive nor believe God's truth. In other words, my false belief was so strong that it was "truth" (even though it was false) to me. So when my "false truth" came up against God's truth, my familiar and default position was to believe my "false truth" instead of His truth.

The result of living from false beliefs (false identity) is summed up very well by the words of my counselor friend, Perri Dupree, who said:

*“Those wounds become your internal experience of self and block
God’s view of self from ever becoming experiential.”*

Questions: Can you identify with any of these three points? Do you feel trapped by your fleshly behaviors or do you feel that you may be hardening your heart towards God or His truth? If so, would you like to be set free?

My hope is that at this point you want to be free from your false beliefs and your fleshly behaviors. The apostle Paul certainly did when he asked the question:

*“WHO will set me free from this body of this death?”
Romans 7:24*

Who is the “who” Paul is referring to? Paul gives us the answer in Romans 7:25:

“Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!”

Paul is telling us that Christ Himself will (and has) set us free. Therefore, look at this final point.

***God knew that you could NOT set yourself free from your FALSE identity.
Therefore, as your SOURCE He did something at salvation to set you FREE.***

So let’s look at what God did to set you free from your false identity.

What God Did At SALVATION To Give You A New Identity

The good news is that when you were saved, God didn’t leave you with your false identity. Instead, He gave you a new one. Let me share with you in this section how He did that.

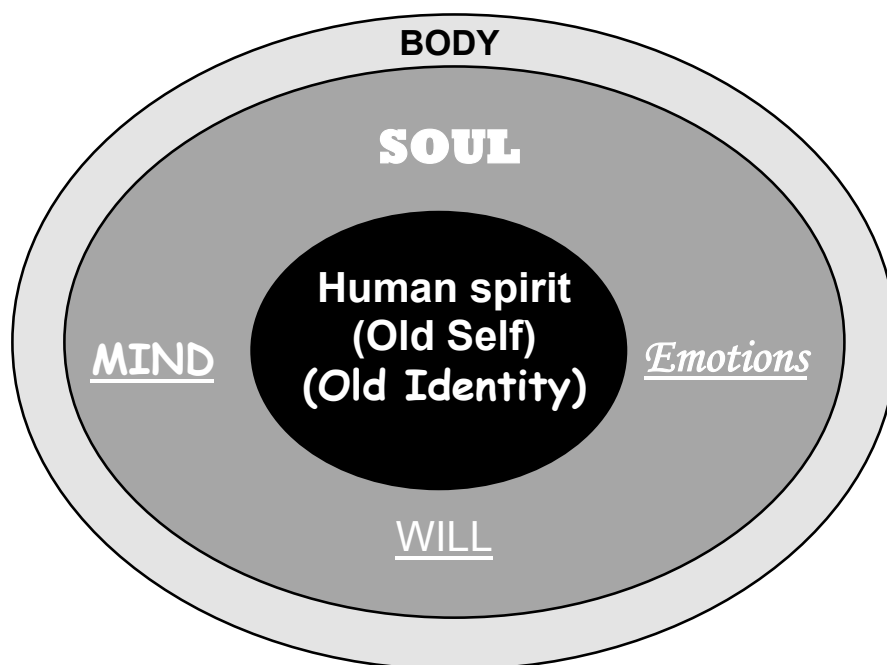
1. Before salvation, your human spirit contained your false (OLD) identity.

As we said earlier in this lesson, your false identity was part of your human spirit before you were saved. The Bible calls this false identity and your old human spirit before salvation as your “old self.” Your “old self” is referred to at the beginning of Romans 6:6:

*“knowing this, that our **OLD SELF (human spirit and old identity)**....”
(Emphasis and parenthesis mine)*

To give you a visual of this truth, look at the diagram on the following page.

Your Human Spirit Before Salvation Is Called Your “Old” Self Which Contained Your “Old” Identity



Before we see what God did with your old self and your old identity at salvation, I would like to conclude this section with this key truth:

Your old identity is who you really WERE before salvation.

I will explain the importance of this truth in the next section.

2. At salvation, God did TWO things concerning your identity

a. He CRUCIFIED Your Old Identity.

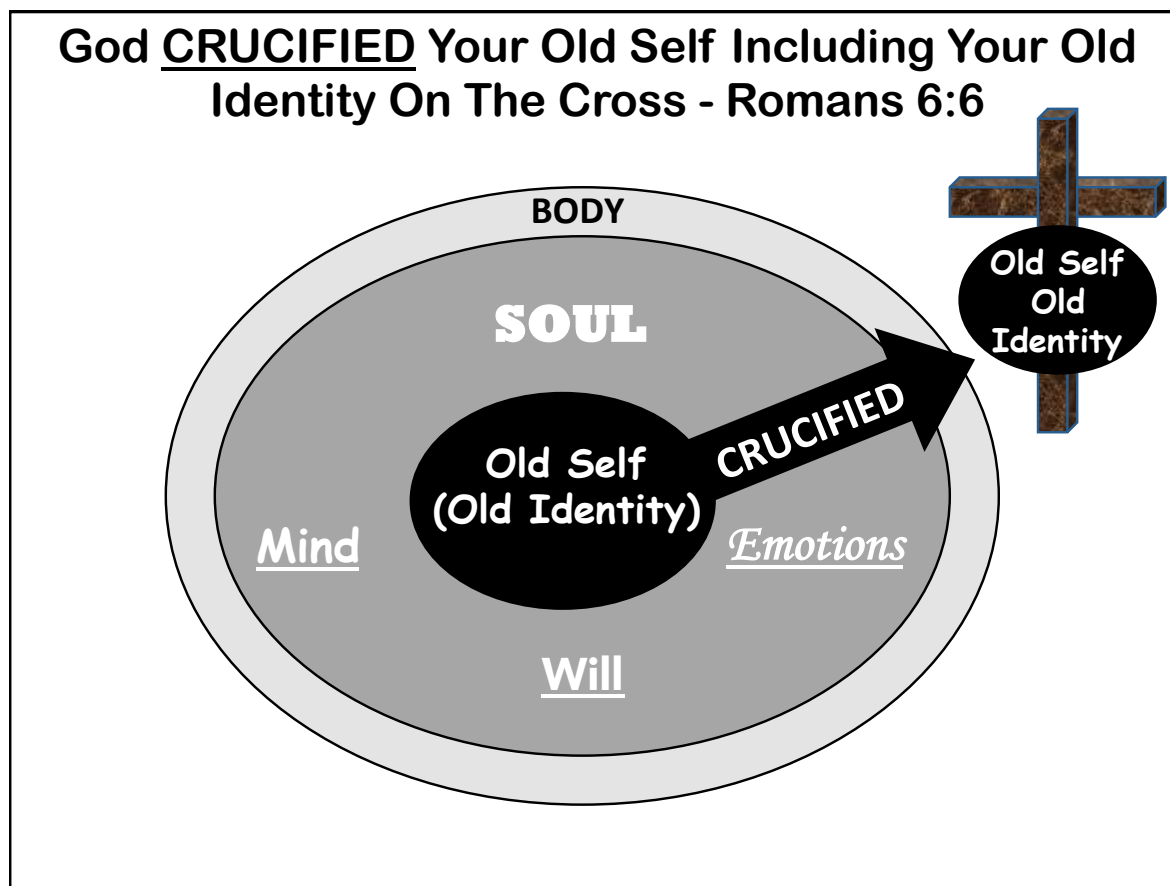
Before God could give you a new human spirit and a new identity, He had to deal with your old self and old identity. What He did according to Romans 6:6 below is that He **crucified** your old self and old identity **with Christ** on the cross.

*“knowing this, that our **old self (human spirit and old identity)** was crucified with Him (Christ), that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin.” Romans 6:6 (parentheses mine)*

Paul confirms this truth again in the first part of Galatians 2:20:

“I (the old self and the old identity) was crucified with Christ and I (the old self and the old identity) no longer live....” Galatians 2:20a (parentheses mine)

Instead of leaving our old identity in us at salvation, God crucified it. The following diagram depicts your old self and old identity being crucified with Christ at the cross:



Note: You may be asking, “How can my old self and old identity be crucified with Christ since the crucifixion of Jesus took place over 2000 years ago?” The answer is that in the eternal realm with God there is no time. Everything is present with God so that regardless of when you were saved, God crucified your old self with Christ on the cross at the moment you were saved. This is truly beyond man’s comprehension. Like the rest of scripture, this is a place where we must believe it by faith.

Question: Based on what we just learned, what happened to your old identity at salvation according to Romans 6:6 and Galatians 2:20?

Meditate: This is a very difficult truth to understand when you first hear it so I would encourage you to meditate on Romans 6:6 and Galatians 2:20, set out above.

Engaging God: Ask God to give you revelation and a deeper understanding of the significance that your old human spirit and old identity were crucified with Christ.

The good news is that God did not leave a vacuum when he crucified your old self. Let's see what He did to give you a new identity.

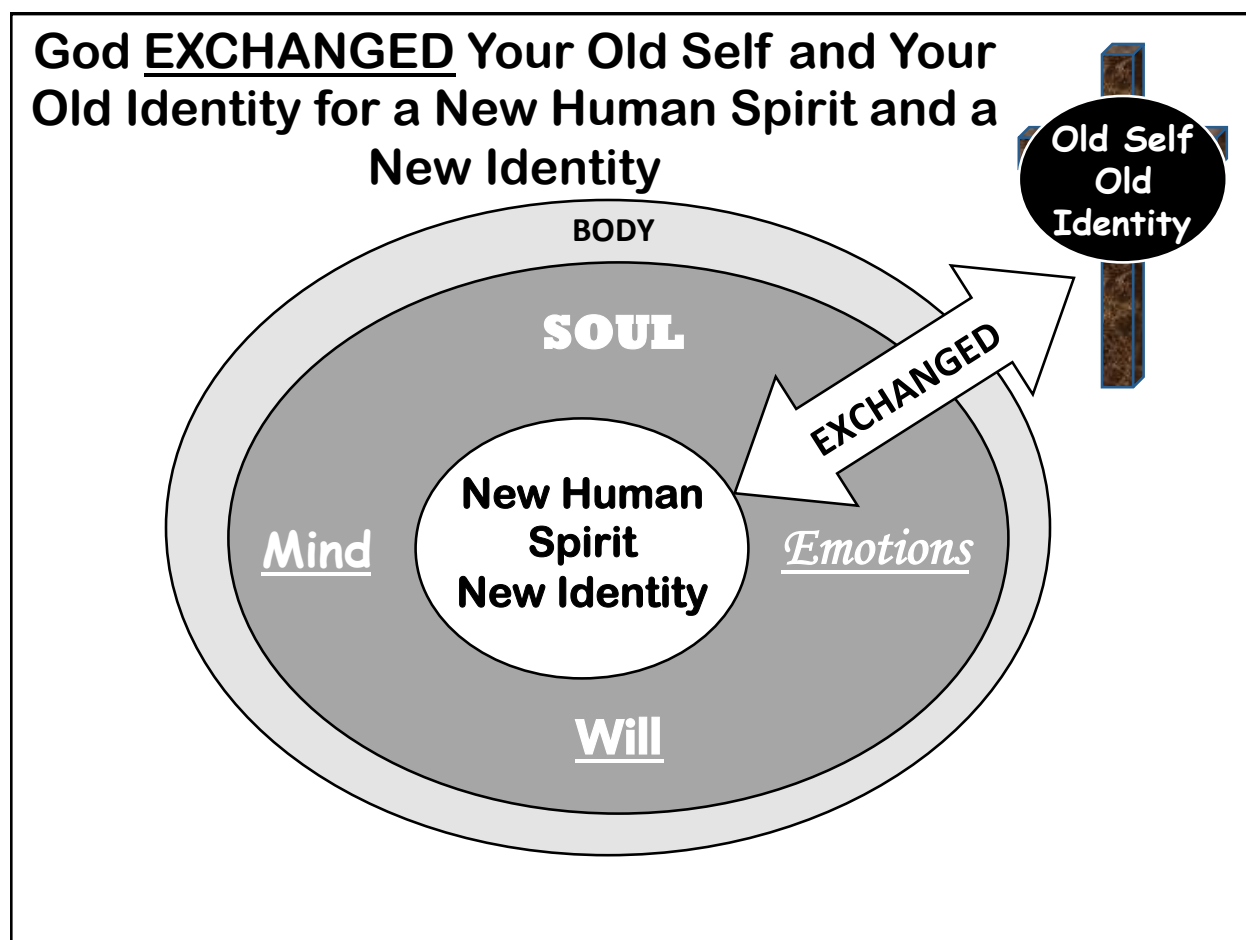
b. God EXCHANGED Your Old Self and Old Identity For A NEW Human Spirit and A NEW Identity.

2 Corinthians 5:17 tells us what happened to give you a new identity.

“Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creation [with a new identity]; the old things [old self and old identity] passed away; behold, new things [new self with a new identity] have come.” 2 Corinthians 5:17

The moment you trusted Christ for salvation, you became a **new creation**. Becoming a new creation means you now have a **new human spirit** and a **new identity in Christ**. The “old things” in 2 Corinthians 5:17 (referring to your human spirit and your old identity) were crucified (passed away), and the “new things” (your new human spirit and new identity) were given to you by God at salvation. In other words, at salvation God **exchanged** your old identity for a new identity.

This diagram illustrates how God EXCHANGED your old self and old identity for a new human spirit and a new identity.



This exchange is truly a supernatural process because there is no human explanation for how this happened. However, God says you are a new creation with a new identity so it must be true.

Think about this key truth now that you know you have a new identity.

Now that you have a NEW Identity you NO longer have to continue believing your false beliefs.

I hope this is good news because you, knowing and living from your new identity, are free from continuing to believe the lies about yourself. Here again, this exchange is not something we can explain but God promises that you have a new identity the moment you trusted Jesus for salvation.

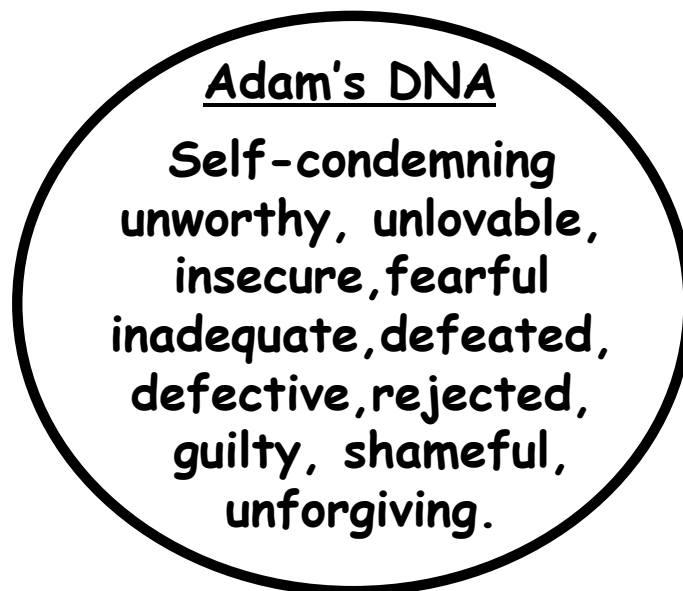
If these diagrams seem a little overwhelming and hard to understand, let me give you a simpler illustration concerning what happened at salvation.

DAY THREE

Let Me Illustrate This Same Truth In Another Way

Remember we discussed that we were all born IN Adam with his DNA. Having his DNA that we looked at ourselves through a grid of false beliefs. Let me again share this illustration:

We Were All Born IN ADAM



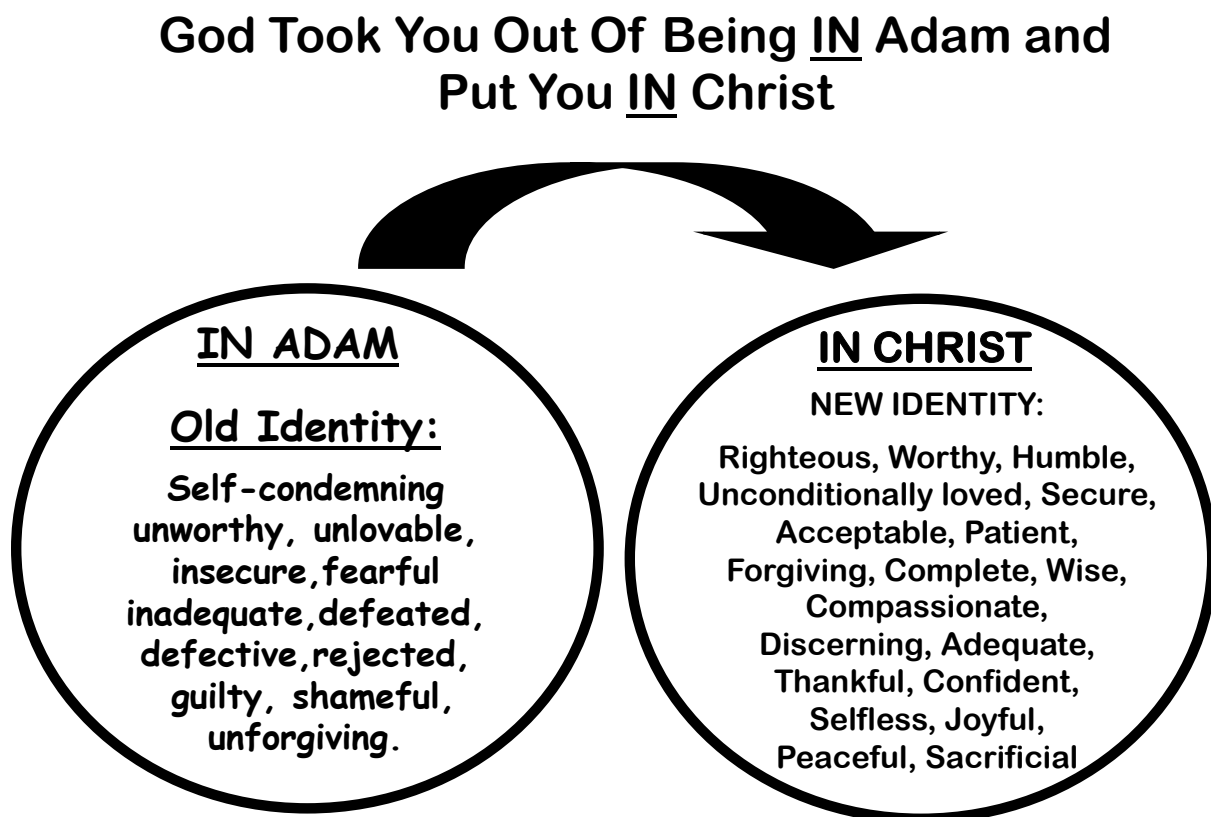
At salvation, what God did was to take you out of being IN Adam and place you IN Christ. Let's look again at 2 Corinthians 5:17 in light of this truth:

*"Therefore if any man is **in Christ**, he is a **new creation (IN Christ)**; the **old things (IN Adam)** passed away; behold, **new things (IN Christ)** have come." 2 Corinthians 5:17*

Another way of saying it is this:

God replaced your ADAMIC DNA with CHRIST'S DNA.

The following diagram illustrates this truth:



Now that you know that you have a new identity, let's look at what your new DNA IN Christ looks like.

The Characteristics Of Your NEW, TRUE Identity

Here are some of the characteristics of your TRUE IDENTITY in Christ:

Romans 8:35, 38-39	In Christ, I am unconditionally loved.
1 Corinthians 15:57	In Christ, I am victorious.
Psalms 71:5	In Christ, I am confident.
Psalms 56:4	In Christ, I am fearless.
2 Corinthians 9:8	In Christ, I am sufficient.
Psalms 139:14	In Christ, I am valued/worthy.
2 Corinthians 3:5	In Christ, I am adequate.

Romans 8:37	In Christ, I am more than a conqueror.
Ephesians 6:10	In Christ, I am strong.
Romans 15:7	In Christ, I am accepted and acceptable.
Ephesians 4:24	In Christ, I am righteous and holy.
Colossians 3:13	In Christ, I am a forgiving person.
Colossians 2:10	In Christ, I am complete in Him.
Galatians 5:1	In Christ, I am free.
Colossians 3:12	In Christ, I am compassionate, humble, kind, patient.
Psalms 139:5	In Christ, I am secure.
Ephesians 1:1	In Christ, I am a saint.
John 15:13	In Christ, I am sacrificial.
Philippians 2:3	In Christ, I am others focused.
Galatians 5:22, 23	In Christ, I am joyful, peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle.
John 1:12	In Christ, I am a child of God
John 15:15	In Christ, I am Christ's friend.
Colossians 3:12	In Christ, I am chosen of God, holy, and dearly loved.
Hebrews 3:14	In Christ, I am a partaker of Christ.

Exercise: Now that you have read through this list, go back and very slowly read this list again and write down three of the characteristics listed above that you most want to experience?

The Meaning of Some of The Characteristics of Your True Identity.

1. You are RIGHTEOUS!

There is another critical way that you became identified with Christ. When God crucified your old unrighteous identity within you, He exchanged it for a **righteous** new identity. You are no longer under condemnation. God made you RIGHTEOUS in your new identity! Even though you find it hard to believe you are righteous, look at what God's word says about your righteousness.

*"for with the heart a **person believes, resulting in righteousness...**" Romans 8:10*

*"Consequently, just as the result of one trespass (sin) was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. For just as through the disobedience of the one man (Adam) the many were made sinners, so also through the **obedience of the One man (Jesus) the many will be made righteous.**" Romans 5:18-19
(Parentheses mine)*

*"God made Him (Jesus) who had no sin to be sin for us, so that **in Him we might become the righteousness of God.**" 2 Corinthians 5:21 (Parenthesis mine)*

Have you believed the lie that you have to work for God to be righteous? Have you thought that it was up to you to do (or not do) something to attain God's righteousness? These three verses (and many others) tell us that we became righteous the moment that we were saved! In other words, righteousness is not something that you earn. It is something that you receive at salvation because God gave you a new righteous identity.

Your *RIGHTEOUSNESS* in Christ has nothing to do with what you do or don't do. It is the result of what God did *IN* you at salvation.

2. In Christ You Are Totally ACCEPTED and Are ACCEPTABLE.

*“Accept one another, then, just as **Christ accepted you...**”*
Romans 15:7

The reason why a holy God can totally accept us is because He has made us acceptable through Christ's death, burial and resurrection. You may feel or experience rejection coming from others, but that does not change the truth that you are accepted by God unconditionally! This means there is no sinful behavior too great to cause God to reject you. While God does not condone sinful behavior, He does not reject you because of it. As a result, you no longer have to earn, or perform for, God's acceptance or rely on the acceptance of others. You can receive God's acceptance and be free from accepting rejection by others. Believing that you are accepted in Christ will also give you the freedom to accept others unconditionally.

3. In Christ You Are UNCONDITIONALLY LOVED and Are An Unconditional LOVER

*“And we have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us.
God is love...” 1 John 4:16*

*See how **great a love the Father** has bestowed on us, that
 we would be called children of God.” 1 John 3:1*

You no longer have to believe that you are unlovable because God immeasurably, eternally, and unconditionally loves you. It is His essence to do so! He has no greater desire than to love you because of Who He is. There is nothing that you can possibly do that will change God's continuous flow of His love to you.

In addition, in your true identity you are an unconditional lover. If you believe that you are unconditionally loved by God, then you are able to love others with that same love.

4. In Christ You Are VICTORIOUS And Are More Than A CONQUEROR

“... but thanks be to God, Who gives us the victory through ... Christ.”
1 Corinthians 15:57

*“But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through **Him** who loved us.”*
Romans 8:37

You may see yourself as a failure, but in Christ you are victorious and a conqueror. There is no problem, conflict, or adversity that Christ cannot conquer through you. Therefore, see yourself as a victor who is living from victory because you are victorious in Christ.

5. In Christ, You Are STRONG.

*“Finally, be **strong in the Lord** and in the **strength of His might**.”
Ephesians 5:10*

As humans, we all have an inner strength, a physical strength, and an intellectual strength. We tend to use our own strength to try to resolve or deal with the issues of life. However, events, circumstances, and relationships can rob us of these human strengths. God allows events in our life to reveal to us that our human strengths are no match for the power of sin, the flesh, or Satan. He also uses these events to remind us that He provides us supernatural strength in our true identity that can never be defeated or overcome. Paul came to realize his human strengths were actually weaknesses in 2 Corinthians 12:9-10:

“....Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.”

6. In Christ You Are A FORGIVING Person.

*“Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, **forgiving each other**, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.” Ephesians 4:32*

You may have been offended by another person but feel you don’t have to forgive them (or you believe that you have the right **not** to forgive). The truth is you have no excuse for not forgiving others. Why? It is because in your true identity you **are** a forgiving person. Whether or not you feel like forgiving is not the issue. You can choose to forgive because that is your true identity in Christ. If you are unwilling to forgive, ask God to move your heart to become willing.

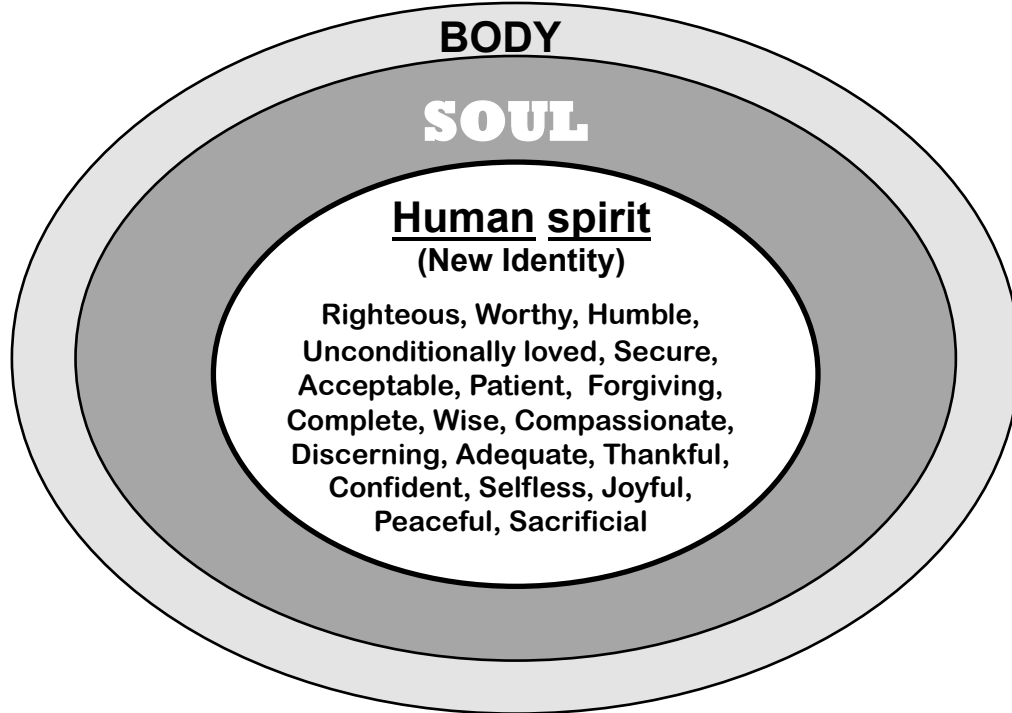
As you look back at these characteristics I would like for you to remember the following key truth.

***When God looks at you ALL he sees is you as a NEW creation
with a NEW identity.***

Even though, right now, you may struggle with believing that some of these characteristics are true of you, this is literally how God sees you. You may still see yourself through the filter of your old identity but God only sees you as a new creation.

Since your identity resides in your human spirit, let’s take the characteristics listed above and put them in your human spirit. The diagram on the next page illustrates this.

Your True Identity In Your Human Spirit



As you look at this diagram, remember this is who you truly are and how God sees you. Even though we have a new identity, we, on some level, struggle with believing it is true. Let's look now at why this occurs.

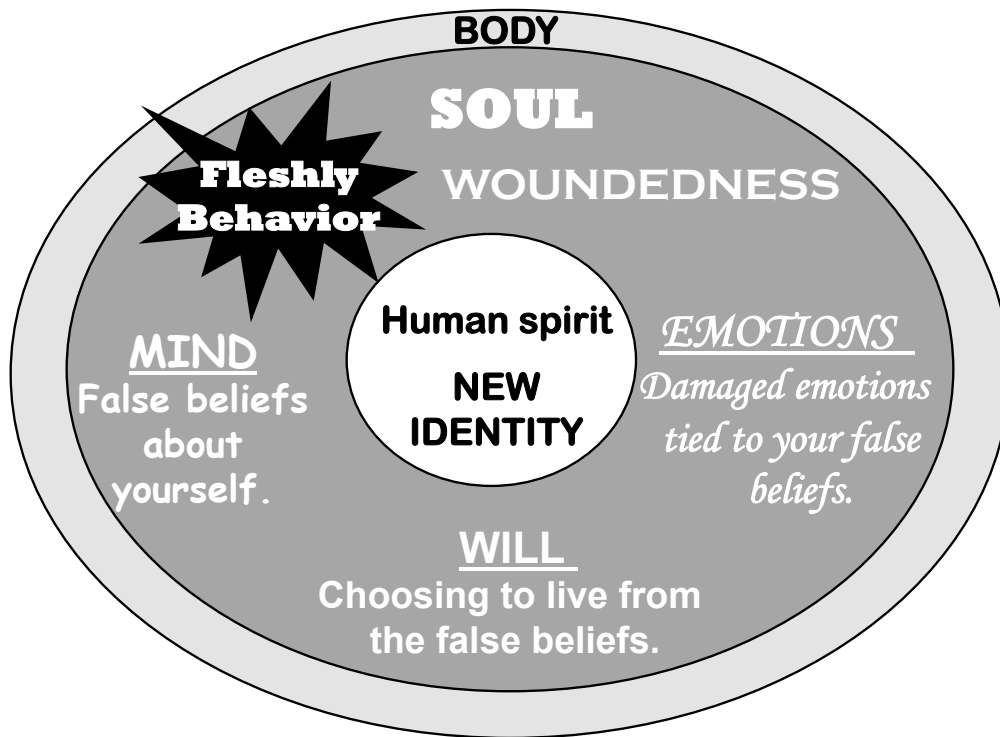
Why We Struggle With Believing We ARE Who God Says We Are

Even though God removed your old human spirit and your old identity and exchanged it for a completely new human spirit with a new identity at salvation, I believe that none of us, without God's revelation, can instantly switch from believing our false beliefs to believing the truth. If you are an exception to this, I praise God for that.

However, I know for me (and most of those I minister to), the truth of my new identity in Christ required such a radical shift in my thinking that I struggled, like you may be, to believe it. I knew intellectually that God had given me a new identity in my human spirit, but my old identity was so strong that it was hard for me to grasp the truth. But I want you to know that this struggle is normal because at salvation, God did not automatically transform our souls.

Look at the following diagram to better understand this truth:

The Condition Of Your SOUL Before Being Transformed



You can see from the diagram is that even though you have a new identity, your wounded soul has not been transformed. Look at the condition of the soul below.

- **MIND** – is still believing the false beliefs about yourself based on your woundedness.
- **EMOTIONS** – are damaged due to your woundedness and are tied your false beliefs about yourself .
- **WILL** – is making choices based on your false beliefs.
- **FLESHLY BEHAVIORS** – are the result of choosing to live from your false beliefs.

The condition of your soul confirms the following truth.

***Even though you have a NEW identity in your HUMAN SPIRIT,
your SOUL is that part of you that still needs to be TRANSFORMED.***

We will be looking at God's process of transformation but before we do there is a key truth that is crucial for you to know in light of your woundedness and your true identity.

DAY FOUR

KEY TRUTH: Your FLESHLY BEHAVIOR Does Not Determine Your Identity In Christ

Now that you know your true identity, here this is a question you may be asking: “Even though God’s truth says that I am righteous, accepted, forgiving, etc., my fleshly behaviors tells me just the opposite. Which is true, my fleshly behaviors or what God is telling me is true of me?”

Let me give you an example to clarify. On page 54, I listed false beliefs and the fleshly behaviors that flow from those false beliefs. One of the false beliefs was, “I am rejected.” From that rejection flows fleshly behaviors such as anger, being defensive or rejecting others. You now know in your true identity that you are totally accepted and acceptable according to Romans 15:7.

However, even though you know you are accepted, you still get angry and defensive, plus you continue rejecting others. You could easily conclude that since you are still angry, defensive and rejecting others, you really aren’t unconditionally accepted by God. In other words, you are basing your identity on your fleshly behaviors rather than God’s truth.

Just to further make my point, add the word “Christian” to each of those fleshly behaviors. I am an angry Christian, a defensive Christian and a rejecting Christian. Is that really true or is the truth that you are an accepted and accepting Christian in your true identity? The truth is this:

Even though your BEHAVIOR does not always line up with what God says is TRUE about you, it does NOT change the truth of your true identity in Christ.

Since this may be a difficult truth to grasp, let me give you another illustration. When I was born into the Loveless family, my identity is I am a Loveless. It doesn’t make any difference if I am a good Loveless or a bad Loveless; my behavior doesn’t change my identity as a Loveless. In the same way, your identity in Christ remains unchanged even when you live out of your fleshly behaviors.

Let’s look at one more example. You were wounded by your dad resulting in your having an unforgiving attitude towards him. However, even though you are not forgiving your dad, it does not change the truth that you are a forgiving person in Christ.

Before we go any further, I need to ask you this question. Does the fact that your sinful, fleshly behaviors do not determine your identity give you “license” to live from your fleshly behaviors? Of course not! God is never pleased with your sin in any form. Consequently, what He will do in the transformation process is transform you (using the example above) to believe you are a forgiving person so you will forgive your dad. In other words, as God persuades you to believe you are a forgiving person, you will exhibit a Christ-life behavior of forgiveness instead of a fleshly behavior of unforgiveness.

As God transforms you to BELIEVE your true identity, then your behavior will fall in line with your true identity.

You move from living from your FLESHLY behaviors to living from CHRIST-LIKE behaviors.

Meditate: On the truth that your fleshly behaviors do not determine your true identity.

Engaging God: If you struggle with the truth that your identity is based on your behavior, then ask God to renew your mind to the truth that your sinful behavior does not determine your identity.

It may take a while for God to persuade you that your behavior does not determine your identity. However, as you depend on God to transform your soul, you will begin to believe your true identity instead of continuing to live from your false beliefs and associated fleshly behaviors connected to your woundedness. Therefore, let's end this lesson by looking at some key truths concerning God's transformation process

Key Truths Concerning God's Transformation PROCESS

Now that we have a foundation of the truth, let's look at some key truths and then practical application of those truths to God's transforming process.

1. The Renewing Of Your Mind

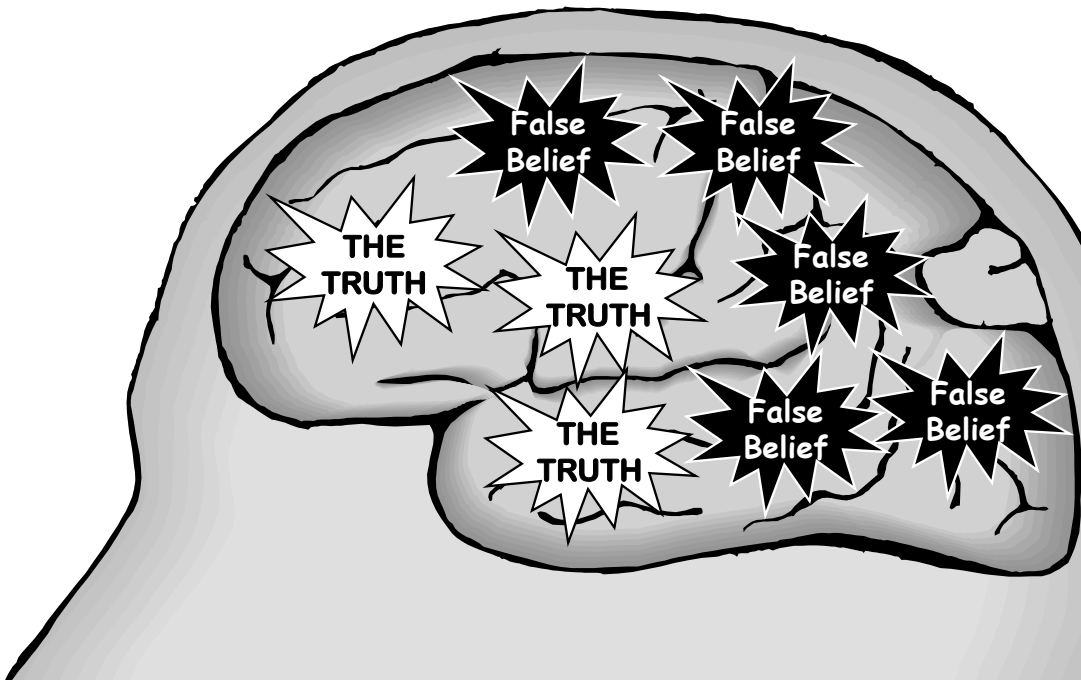
*"Be not conformed to this world, but **be transformed** by the **renewing of your MIND**....."*
Romans 12:2a

The key truth to remember concerning healing of your woundedness and your true identity is this:

The KEY to the healing of your woundedness is the RENEWING of your MIND.

You may think we need to address our damaged emotions before we discuss renewing our minds. However, remember your woundedness began through your interpretation of wounding and traumatic events in your mind and then taking ownership of negative or wounding messages. These produced wounding thoughts and emotions which eventually formed false beliefs. Therefore, the key to healing is for the Holy Spirit to renew your mind and replace your false beliefs with God's truth as illustrated on the following page.

Renewing Your Mind To Believe The Truth



Therefore, what God wants to do is to use His truth to renew your mind and set you free from your false beliefs. Remember, we previously discussed that **knowing** the truth and **believing** the truth are two separate issues. You now know you have a new identity. The question is do you really believe it? As you seek the Spirit to renew your mind, He will take you from knowing the truth to believing the truth that you have a new identity.

God wants to RENEW your mind to the truth of your new identity so your BELIEFS about yourself will line up with your true identity.

Meditate: on Romans 12:2, above.

Engaging God: Ask God to move you from knowing this verse to believing it.

Personal Testimony: Previously, I shared I had strongholds of fear and rejection. They were such a strong reality to me that in the beginning I did not believe the truth in God's word that in my true identity I am fearless and accepted. However, the fact I did not believe God's truth about me at that time, did not change the fact it was true. As God started renewing my mind to His truth, I began to believe I am both fearless and accepted.

2. FAITH is the Key to Healing and Transformation

When Jesus said in the last part of John 15:5, "apart from Me you can do **nothing**," that word "nothing" included healing your woundedness. Consequently, healing can only come from God Himself. Remember from Lesson One: God is not going to help you heal. He is the only Source to heal you.

Nonetheless, you have a vital part to play in the healing process. Again, as we discussed in Lesson One, your part in God's process of healing is faith (moment by moment dependence) and the object of your faith is Christ. Therefore, we are going to look at steps of faith and how they apply to the renewing of your mind to be transformed to believe and live from your true identity

3. The Journey of Healing and Transformation Begins with a STEP of Faith.

*"The mind of a man plans his way, but the **Lord directs his steps.**" Proverbs 16:9*

Imagine you have moved from your home to Indonesia. You would be moving from a very familiar culture to one that is 180 degrees different from the one you have been living in. You will now have to learn how to live in this new culture. In the same way, God is moving you away from the "self" culture of living from your own abilities to a new "spiritual" culture of living from His infinite ability. It, too, is a very difficult and sometimes prolonged transition. However, God promises that as we take steps of faith, He will make real to us the transformation and abundant life that He promises. Therefore, let me begin by defining a step of faith:

STEP OF FAITH
is a MOMENT in time where you
ENGAGE God and His LIFE and POWER by faith.

If you have been a Christian for any length of time, you know the Christian walk is a walk of faith. Still, there are two key things I want to emphasize about our walk of faith. First, I would like for us to look at what happens when we take a step of faith. Second, I want to take a closer look at the object of our faith.

4. What Happens at That MOMENT When You Take a Step of Faith?

As stated in Lesson One, the truth is, at this very moment, you have within you ALL of God's life and power according to Colossians 2:9, 10:

*"For **in Christ** all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and **you have been given fullness IN Christ**, who is the head over every power and authority."*

Since you contain all of God's life and power, what happens when you take a step of faith?

When you take a step of faith, ALL of God's LIFE and POWER is
RELEASED in you to transform your thinking, your beliefs, and your
behavior sothat you will be healed of your woundedness.

We will talk more about God's life being released in us at the end of this lesson. For now, let's take a closer look at God's power and what happens when it is released in us. Look at how Paul ties faith in with the power of God:

*“... so that your **faith** would not **rest** on the wisdom of men, but on **the power of God**.”*
1 Corinthians 2:5

*“To this end also we pray for you always, that our God will count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and **the work of faith with power**.”* 2 Thessalonians 1:11

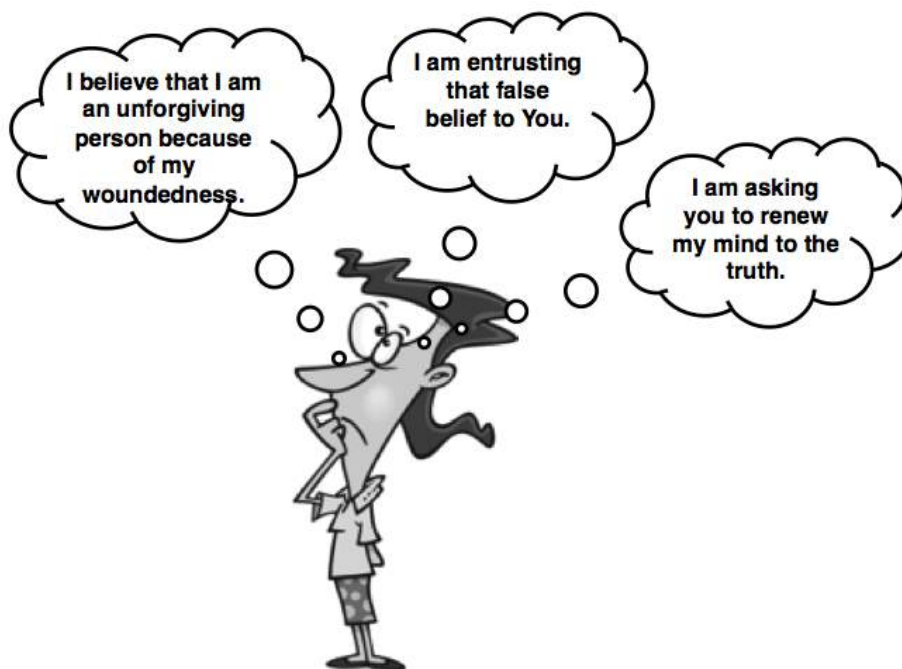
When you take a step of faith, God is not giving you just a part of His life and power. He releases the full force of His power in you to transform every area of your life.

Examples of Steps Of Faith

To make walking by faith more understandable, let's look at some examples of steps of faith with regard to your false beliefs, your true identity, and your fleshly behaviors.

1. Examples of Steps of Faith Concerning Your FALSE BELIEFS.

Engaging God: Take one of your false beliefs that you listed on page 53. Using the examples below begin taking steps of faith for God to renew your mind to the truth. Some examples of steps of faith might be:



False Belief: You can't forgive the offender, abuser, etc. who wounded you.

Step of Faith: “Lord, I am believing the lie that I am an unforgiving person. I am entrusting (giving over to You) that false belief to You and I am asking You to renew my mind to the truth that I am a forgiving person in my true identity.”

Key Point: “**Entrust**” is a key faith word. It means giving over to God something or someone you are holding on to. Think about your false belief being like a piece of burning coal. If you hold on to that piece of burning coal, what happens? God wants you to entrust or give over your false beliefs to Him so that He can renew your mind to the truth.

DAY FIVE

False Belief: You are inadequate.

Step of Faith: “Lord, I am believing the lie that I am inadequate. Your word says in 2 Corinthians 3:5 that I am totally adequate in You. I am trusting You to renew my mind to the truth that I am adequate in my new identity.”

False Belief: You are rejected/rejectable.

Step of Faith: “I am believing the lie that I am rejected/rejectable. I am asking You to renew my mind to the truth that I am totally accepted in You and acceptable to You as a result of my new identity.”

Feel free to verbalize God’s truth out loud as you take steps of faith.

2. Steps of Faith Concerning Living From Your TRUE IDENTITY.

Engaging God: Refer back to the list on pages 64 and 65 of characteristics of your true identity. Choose one or more characteristics you want to experience more of and using the examples below, begin taking faith steps asking/trusting God to renew your mind to the truth.

Your True Identity: You are totally secure in your true identity. (Psalm 139:5)

Step of faith: “Lord, the truth is in my true identity I am totally secure in You, and because of that nothing or no one can rob me of that security. I am asking You to persuade me of this truth.”

Your True Identity: You are worthy in your true identity. (Psalm 139:14)

Step of faith: “Lord, the truth is in my true identity that I am totally worthy in Christ. Therefore, I am entrusting my thoughts and feelings of unworthiness to You and I am trusting You to renew my mind to the truth that I am totally worthy.”

3. Steps of Faith to Transform FLESHLY BEHAVIORS Associated with Your False Beliefs

Exercise: Look at the fleshly behaviors flowing from your false beliefs that you wrote down on page 19 or 54. Using the examples below, begin taking steps of faith to engage God to transform your life in those areas.

Fleshly Behaviors: People pleasing and controlling due to my feelings of inadequacy.

Step of Faith: “Lord, I know my false belief of inadequacy is causing me to be a people-pleaser and a controller or rescuer. I am trusting You to renew my mind to the truth that I am totally adequate in my true identity. I am asking You to move me away from my fleshly behavior of people-pleasing and controlling.”

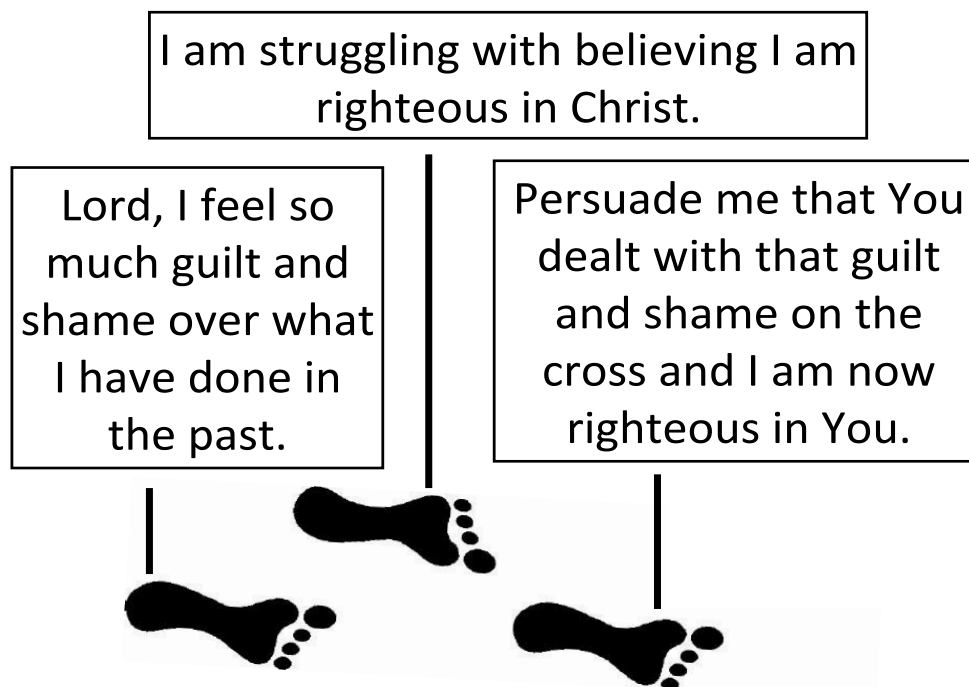
Fleshly Behaviors: Self-protection due to my fear.

Step of Faith: “Lord, I want to protect or insulate myself from my fears. Renew my mind to the truth that in my true identity, I am fearless. Remove that fleshly desire to protect or insulate myself.”

Remember: Your behavior does not determine your identity. If you struggle in this area, take steps of faith for God to persuade you of this truth. The following are some examples of what that may look like:

Step of faith: “Lord, even though my behavior and emotions are telling me a lie that I am not accepted or an acceptable person, I am trusting You to transform my life so I will believe, by faith, the truth that in You I am totally accepted and acceptable.”

On the next page you will see an illustration of how to engage God when your behavior does not line up with your true identity



I hope this section has helped you in practical ways to engage God to transform you to believe your true identity. The following are some key truths to understand about God’s transforming process.

Key Truths To Remember as You Engage God by Faith to Replace Your False Beliefs With the Truth of Your True Identity

As you take steps of faith to be transformed and healed, remember these truths.

- It is crucial to understand that being transformed to live out of your true identity is a PROCESS. It is a journey and not a sprint.
- You will not necessarily FEEL or EXPERIENCE God’s power flowing in you as you begin taking steps of faith but know by faith that God IS working.
- God is NOT telling you how He is working. We trust by faith that He is transforming us as we walk by faith.

- There will be RESISTANCE to our walk of faith by the flesh, the power of sin, Satan, and our minds.
- You may have to take SEVERAL steps of faith over time before you experience any changes in how you think or feel about yourself.

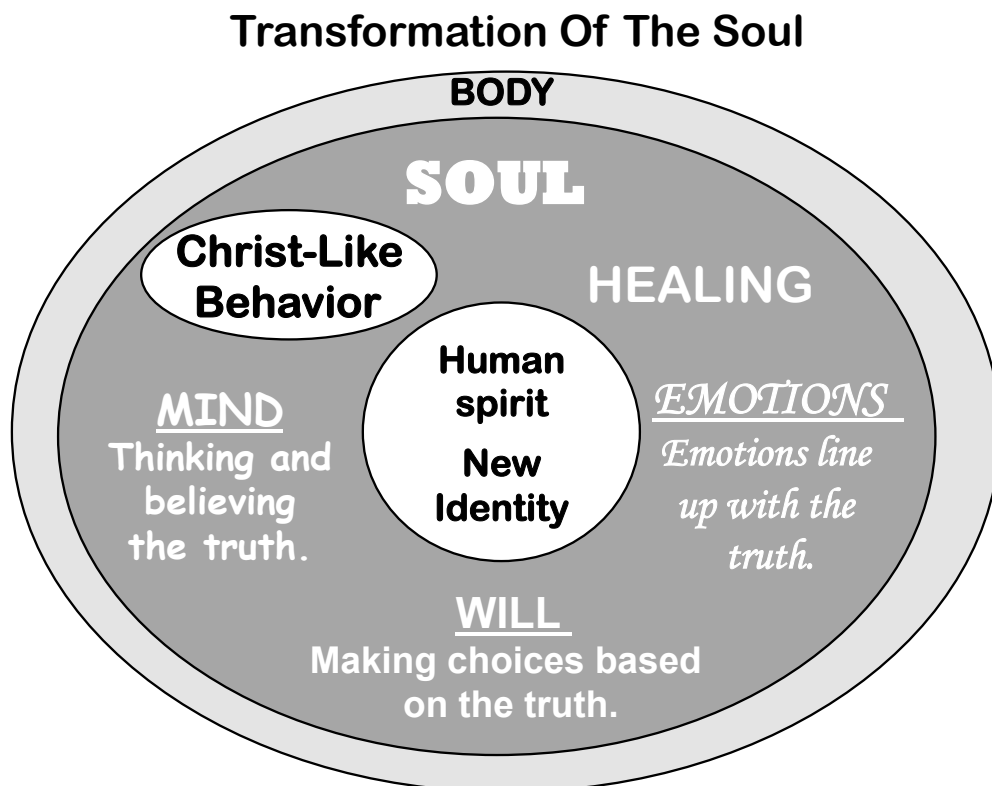
How Do You Know That Changes Are Taking Place?

The promise is that you will eventually experience the changes God is making in your thoughts, emotions, choices and behavior that will lead to the healing of your woundedness. Let's take a closer look at what you can expect:

- You begin to have thoughts that line up with the TRUTH versus your false beliefs.
- As your mind is being renewed, your emotions will begin to LINE UP with your thinking. (This does not mean you won't have feelings that are tied to your false beliefs, but you will find yourself NOT responding to them as often).
- As your mind is being renewed and your emotions line up with the truth, you will find yourself making choices based on your TRUE IDENTITY.
- As God is changing you, He will TRANSFORM your fleshly behaviors into Christ-like behaviors.
- HEALING will be the result.

Note: You may not recognize how much He has healed you until you look back at how you used to think, feel or believe.

Let's go back to the body, soul, and human spirit diagram to illustrate what your soul looks like as it is being transformed.



- **MIND** – is being renewed so you will think and believe the truth about your true identity.
- **EMOTIONS** – will begin healing and increasingly line up with the truth.
- **WILL** – you begin making choices based on the truth of your true identity and not out of your false beliefs.
- **CHRIST-LIKE BEHAVIORS** – will replace your fleshly behaviors associated with your woundedness.
- **HEALING** – will result as your mind, emotions, will and behavior line up with the truth of your true identity.

As your mind is being renewed to the truth, your wounded emotions will subside; you will no longer make choices from your false beliefs; and your fleshly behaviors will be replaced by Christ-like behaviors. The result will be the healing of your soul.

The key word to remember concerning transformation is PROCESS.

Let me share a story to illustrate the process. There was a lady who was sexually abused by her stepfather. As a result, she believed and felt she was rejected and unworthy to be married. When she got married, her false beliefs of unworthiness and rejection, along with her woundedness from her stepfather, began to sabotage her marriage.

However, when she learned and began to walk in the truth that she was totally worthy and adequate in Christ, her damaged emotions of inadequacy and unworthiness caused by her woundedness were replaced by feelings of adequacy and worthiness. Over time, she was healed (as was her marriage) and was transformed into a Christ-centered wife.

Engaging God: Ask the Lord to begin persuading you that you have a new identity and no longer have to live from the woundedness produced by your old identity.

Let me end this section with this truth:

As God RENEWS your mind to the truth of your true identity, you NO longer have to live from your false identity and the woundedness associated with it.

Understanding My True Identity and My Healing

The truths of my true identity were the key to my healing. As God began to renew my mind to the truth, I moved from believing I was rejected/rejectable to believing I was accepted; from believing I was unworthy to believing my worthiness in Christ; and, from believing and living from my inadequacy to living from my adequacy in my true identity. Because of how entrenched these false beliefs were, it involved a process of being set free that was not always evident to my senses. However, as I kept taking steps of faith, God persuaded me of His truth with each step I made in my true identity.

As a result, those false beliefs born out of my woundedness no longer have a grip on my soul. I am still a work “in process” but I want to encourage you through my journey that freedom, healing, and transformation will eventually be part of your experience as you allow the Holy Spirit to renew your mind to the truth of your true identity. Whenever you get impatient about your progress, ask the Lord to encourage you by showing you the changes He has produced in you since you first started taking steps of faith.

Summary

- What you feel or believe about yourself (arising out of your woundedness) that contradicts God’s truth is a lie.
- Your true identity is who you REALLY are regardless of how you feel or what you believe that contradicts God’s truth.
- God crucified your old identity (Romans 6:6) and gave you a new identity (2 Corinthians 5:17).
- Since the Lord promises to heal you, allow the Holy Spirit to heal your woundedness by renewing your mind to the truth of your true identity.

Do You Want To Know More?

If you would like a more in-depth study of your true identity, I encourage you to go to our ministry website: www.christislifeministries.com. On the home page you will find a DISCIPLESHIP icon that will take you to the Discipleship page. On that page you will see a study called *Do You Know Your True Identity?* There is a curriculum you can download for free and a DVD series based on the study that you can watch online.

LESSON FOUR

The Impact of Woundedness On Your Concept of God

DAY ONE

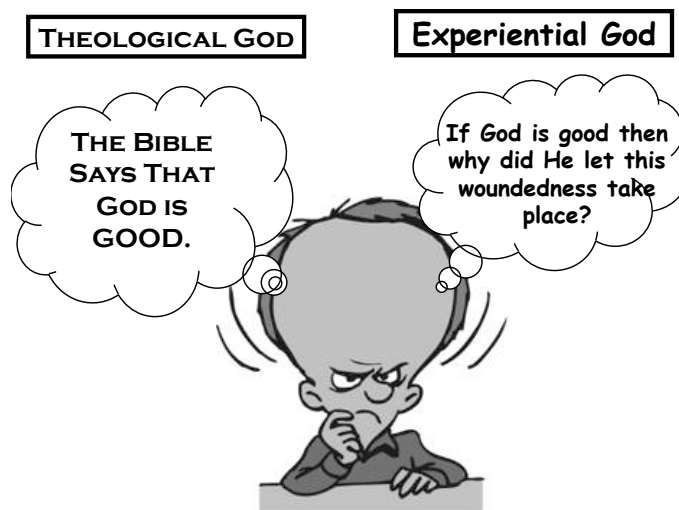
Introduction

I hope the study on your woundedness and identity was helpful in your healing process. I believe another crucial component is the impact of woundedness on your concept of God. I say this because any false concept you have of God flowing from your woundedness will create doubt, distrust, or unrealistic expectations that will hinder or even prevent you from seeking the Holy Spirit for healing. So, I would like to focus in this lesson on how our woundedness negatively impacts our concept of God and how we engage God to renew our minds to the truth. Why is the renewing of our minds crucial to the healing process?

Part of the healing of your woundedness will take place when your false beliefs about God associated with your woundedness are replaced with the truth.

Something We Need to Understand Before We Go Any Further

Before we get into the heart of this lesson, I want to share with you an observation I have had about Christians. What I see in many Christians is they have two Gods. One God is what I call the “theological” God based on what we know **intellectually** about God from what the Bible tells us. Our other God is what I call our “experiential” God which is based on how we truly **feel** and what we actually **believe** about God. I make this distinction because what we have learned about God may not necessarily line up with what we feel or believe about God, especially when it comes to our woundedness. Let me illustrate. Let’s assume you experienced a wounding event. Look at the illustration below to reveal the difference between a “theological” God versus an “experiential” God.



The guy in the illustration “knows” intellectually and theologically God is good because the Bible says it is so. However, when it comes his woundedness; he is questioning God’s goodness. This is what I call our “experiential” God because this is how we truly feel about God concerning our past or present woundedness.

I share this with you because we are going to be doing some exercises in this lesson where it will be important for you to answer questions based on how you feel about God instead of what the theologically correct answer is. Let’s start by looking at how parents create woundedness and distort our concept of God.

How PARENTS Create Woundedness and Distort Our Concept of God

I believe the most influential persons in shaping your beliefs about God were your parents during your childhood. The repeated negative verbal and non-verbal messages you may have received from them, or the way they mistreated or abused you, is likely to have created a distorted image of God.

As a result, you may have transferred some of these false beliefs you got from your earthly parents to your heavenly Father. (Although I am using “Father/Mother,” since parents are usually the most influential people shaping your beliefs about God, you may need to mentally substitute some other authority figure, like a stepparent, grandparent, teacher, coach, etc., when I use the term “Father/Mother.”)

Let’s look at five examples:

a. The Authoritarian Father/Mother is more concerned with compliance than relationship. They insist on things being done their way. They are not interested in their children's opinions, desires, or goals. They desire no real intimacy with their children. They only want obedience. When they don’t get their way, there is a price to pay.

Distorted View of God: “God expects me to do things His way, and if I don’t there will be consequences.”

The Result: This distorted view of God usually results in either our rebelling against Him or trying harder to please Him.

b. The Abusive Father/Mother deliberately inflicts pain on their children, hurting them emotionally, verbally, mentally, physically, and/or sexually. This type of relationship destroys their children’s sense of worth and robs them of their natural ability to trust. The children see themselves as someone to be used rather than someone who is valued in relationships. Frequently, young children in this situation wrongly take responsibility for their parents’ bad behavior by believing it is their fault or they brought it on themselves.

Distorted view of God: “God is out to inflict pain and suffering in my life. He is the cause of that pain and suffering and isn’t trustworthy,” or “God can’t love me because I am not good enough.”

The Result: This distorted view of God can destroy our ability to trust God and to relate emotionally to Him.

c. The Distant/Passive Father/Mother expresses little affection. They may be good providers but interact very little with their children. They rarely show emotion or say, "I love you." They don't share in their children's joys or pains. This can produce covert woundedness.

Distorted view of God: "God is not concerned with my life and He really doesn't love me."

The Result: This distorted view of God can result in our distancing ourselves from God.

d. The Accusing Father/Mother is critical and judges every failure. They think this will motivate their children to do better and to try harder. They rarely give encouragement or affirm their children.

Distorted view of God: "God is angry with me. He is judging me and is never satisfied with me." "God won't love me no matter what I do because I'm not good enough."

The Result: This distorted view of God can result in either an unhealthy fear of God or else trying harder to do whatever it takes not to be judged or rejected by Him.

e. The Absent Father/Mother is one who is absent because of death, divorce, work, or disinterest. Unlike the passive parent who is there but who never communicates, the absent parent is just not there at all. His/her children feel abandoned and neglected not only by their earthly parents but also by God as well.

Distorted view of God: "God is neglecting me. He has abandoned me."

The Result: This distorted view of God can result in either believing God has given up on us and therefore we give up on Him or trying to gain His attention by working harder for Him.

Question: Which one (if any) of the parenting models describes your parents while you were growing up? What are some false beliefs about God that may have resulted from your parents' impact on your life?

Question: When you envision God, do you see Him with your father's or your mother's face (that is, with his/her character traits)?

Engaging God: Begin seeking God to reveal to you how your parents have shaped what you believe about God. Ask Him to open your eyes to the origin of any negative thoughts you have about Him.

Remember: God already knows your thoughts about Him and He will never condemn you, punish you or judge you for the distortions you have about Him. It is His desire to free you from those wrong ideas and thoughts.

Key Point: It would be very easy at this point to blame your false beliefs about God on your parents. **I caution you not to do that.** If your parents were not walking in and parenting from God's truth, then they were only passing along the false beliefs they learned from their parents. I

am not excusing their fleshly behaviors towards you. They were living out of their own woundedness and fleshly behaviors because they did not live from Christ as their Life.

My Personal False Beliefs About God Based On An Abusive and Authoritarian Father

In addition to being abusive, my father was an authoritarian. As I mentioned before, things had to be done his way. He was totally in control. He was detached from his emotions, and he was not able to have any degree of intimacy with me or my siblings. He was much more interested in compliance than in relationship.

My father set bars of expectations I had to jump over and when I didn't, I was made to feel unworthy, inadequate, and rejectable. His verbal, emotional, and physical abuse flowed out of his being authoritarian. Therefore, when I became a Christian and someone referred to God as the Father, you can only imagine how my upbringing by my earthly father impacted my beliefs about my heavenly Father.

The truth is I put my earthly father's face on my heavenly Father. As a result, these were some of the things I felt about God early on in my Christian walk:

- God was angry with me and judging me.
- I needed to perform for God (evangelize, get involved in ministry, etc.) so He would love and accept me.
- God did not really care about me personally. He only wanted obedience.
- If I didn't measure up to what I was told that God expected of me, I would feel unworthy, condemned and a failure as a Christian.
- God could not possibly love me or be good because of all He let happen between me and my dad.
- God was not to be trusted.

Some of you may be able to relate to my false beliefs. The result of my false beliefs was that I worked very hard for God and did whatever I thought it took to please Him. I tried to follow all His rules because, like my earthly dad, I believed there would be a price to pay for breaking the rules and not pleasing Him. For the most part, I felt I did not measure up to the standards I thought God had for me, so I lived most of the time in self-condemnation.

How Abuse, Verbal and Non-Verbal Messages, and/or Negative Circumstances Negatively Impact What You Believe About God

Whether it was abuse, negative verbal and non-verbal messages, divorce, or other wounding events, they all can have a negative impact on your concept of God. Let me share some examples to help you better understand this truth.

1. Forms of ABUSE

Sexual abuse – can lead you to believe God is not safe and He does not value your life.

Emotional abuse – can distort your concept of God by believing He is angry with you, will condemn you or will reject you.

Physical abuse – can lead you to believe or feel God will punish you when you step out of line or He is stern and demanding.

Question: What false beliefs about God do you feel you have as a result of your abuse ? (Choose from the false beliefs on page 110.)

2. NEGATIVE VERBAL and NON-VERBAL MESSAGES

Repeated negative verbal or non-verbal messages – such as “I don’t love you” or “You are a failure” can lead not only to false beliefs about yourself, but they can also lead you to believe God doesn’t love you or that in His eyes you are a failure.

Question: What false beliefs about God do you feel you have as a result of your repeated negative verbal and non-verbal messages? (Refer to the false beliefs on pages 110.)

3. ADVERSE CIRCUMSTANCES

Divorce – if you parents got divorced while you were young, you may have been left with thoughts and feelings of being unloved or unworthy or at fault. These thoughts and feelings could lead to a false belief that God doesn’t love you or value you.

If you have been through a divorce yourself, then you could conclude God did not care enough to save your marriage, or He condemns you as a failure.

Premature death of a parent or sibling – if you lost a parent or sibling at a young age, then you could develop thoughts and feelings of abandonment or you could feel out of control. These thoughts and feelings could distort your image of God by believing He will eventually abandon you or He is not in control.

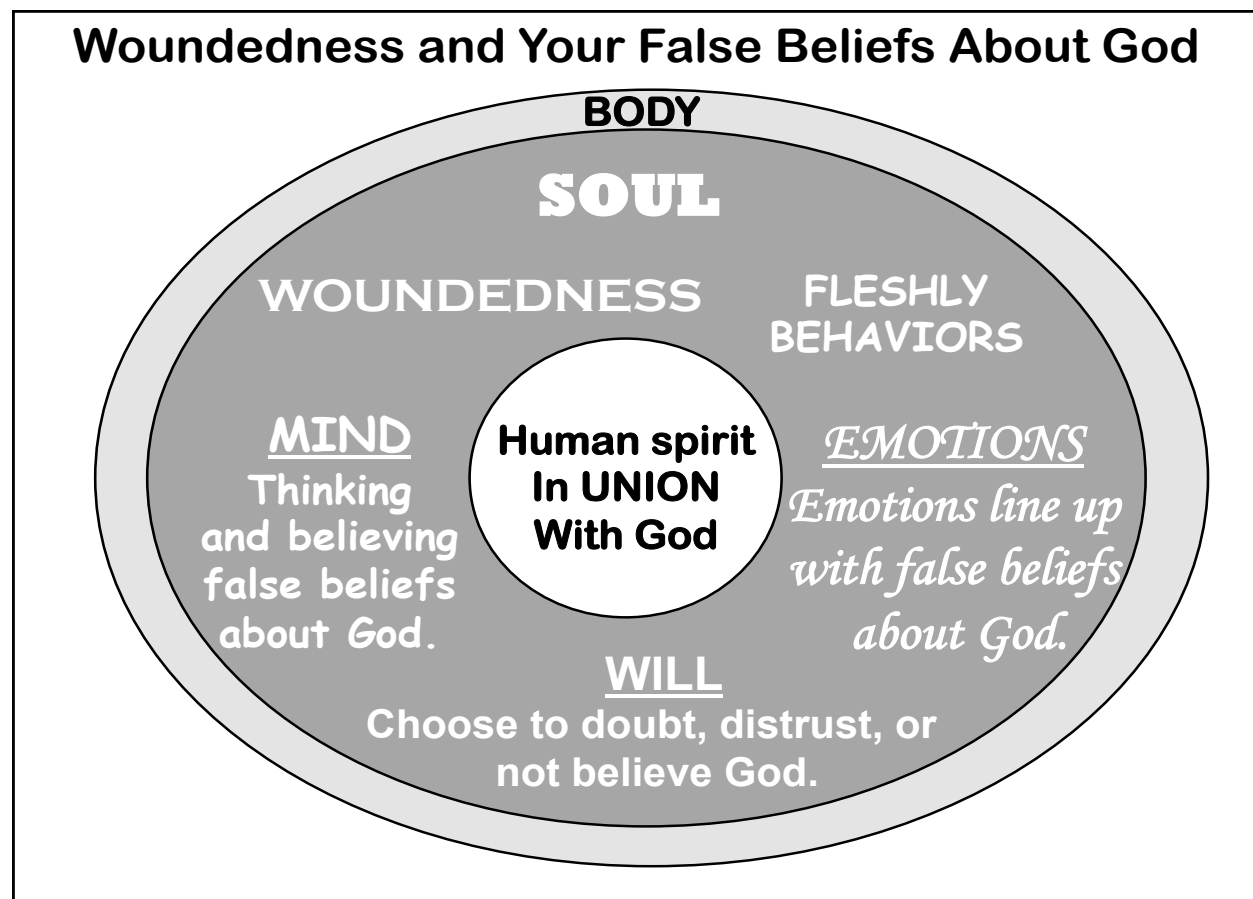
Question: What false beliefs about God do you feel you have as a result of adverse circumstances in your life? (Refer to the false beliefs on pages 110)

Engaging God: If you are having trouble connecting these areas listed above to your false beliefs about God, ask Him to reveal your false beliefs.

DAY TWO

How Woundedness Impacts Your Soul and Your Beliefs About God

In the last lesson, we learned about the body, soul, and human spirit. Using that same illustration, let's look at how woundedness negatively impacts your mind, emotions, and will.



MIND – As we mentioned earlier, abuse, wounding events, verbal and non-verbal messages, etc. can create false thinking and false beliefs about God.

EMOTIONS – Our emotions tend to line up with our false beliefs about God. Examples of those emotions are that we fear God (in an unhealthy way), we are angry with God, or feel condemned by God.

WILL – as a responder to the false beliefs that we think and believe about God and our emotions associated with those false beliefs, our will chooses to doubt, distrust, or simply not believe God.

FLESHLY BEHAVIORS – such as anger, unforgiveness of the one who wounded you, and seeking revenge will result from your false beliefs about God.

Examples of False Concepts of God

Exercise: Based on your past or present woundedness, write down any of the concepts of God below that you believe about God.

The following are some examples of false concepts of God:

- **Conditional lover:** “I feel He only loves me if I do something for Him.”
- **A traffic cop:** “I feel God is always waiting to punish me when I break the rules.”
- **Distant or cold:** “I feel He doesn’t make Himself truly available to be intimate with me.”
- **A taskmaster:** “I feel God expects me to do certain things and I better do them or else.”
- **Not Good:** “He always acts unkindly towards me.”
- **A harsh judge:** “I feel He punishes or threatens to punish me when I don’t do the right things.”
- **Unforgiving:** “I feel I can’t approach Him easily because He still holds against me things I have done in the past.”
- **A rejector:** “I feel God will eventually reject me like everyone else has.”
- **A manipulator:** “I feel He controls the events of my life, not for my good but to get me to do what He selfishly wants.”
- **Indifferent:** “I feel He doesn’t really want to be close to me.”
- **Unaccepting:** “I feel I can never quite measure up to His expectations of me, therefore He rejects me or finds me unacceptable.”
- **Angry:** “I feel He is angry with me when I make mistakes and sin.”
- **Not trustworthy:** “I feel I can’t trust Him because of what He allowed to happen to me.”
- **Not a protector:** “I feel He really won’t protect me.”

Now that you have written down some of your false beliefs about God let’s look at the overflow of those false beliefs.

The Overflow of Your False Beliefs About God

Let’s look at what flows out of your false beliefs about God as a result of your woundedness.

1. Leads to UNBELIEF.

*“As a result of this many of **His disciples withdrew**, and were not walking with Him anymore.” John 6:66*

False beliefs about God may eventually lead to unbelief. For example, if I believe God is condemning me, then I won’t believe He will ever heal me. If I believe God is insensitive and uncaring, then I won’t believe He will comfort me in my woundedness.

Exercise: Refer to page 110 when filling in the blanks below.

Example: Since I believe God is angry with me,
I don't believe God will heal me.

Since I believe God is _____,
then I don't believe God _____

Since I believe God is _____,
then I don't believe God _____

Engaging God: Seek the Lord to transform you in the areas where you struggle believing God. Ask Him to renew your mind to the truth and move you from unbelief to belief.

2. You become DISTRUSTFUL of God

False beliefs as a result of woundedness can lead you to distrust God. If you believe as a result of your woundedness that God is not safe or secure or in control, then you may not trust God to heal you of your woundedness.

Exercise: Fill in the following blanks if you struggle with trusting God:

Because of my woundedness and resulting false beliefs, I don't trust God to _____

Engaging God: Seek the Lord to transform you from distrusting Him to the truth that He is trustworthy.

3. You can develop an UNHEALTHY FEAR of God

We need to understand that there are two kinds of fear when it comes to fearing God. One definition of "fear" is a "reverence and awe" of God. This is a healthy fear because it flows from believing the truth about God. Look at an example of this healthy fear in the first part of Genesis 22:12:

*"You who **fear the LORD**, praise Him; All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him, And stand in **awe** of Him, all you descendants of Israel." Psalm 22:23*

However, there is an unhealthy fear of God which flows from your false beliefs about God. For example, if you have been physically abused, you may be fearful God will punish and condemn you like your abuser did. This unhealthy fear is driven by your false beliefs and can feed on itself by creating even greater fears about God.

Exercise: Fill in the blanks below:

Because of my woundedness and resultant false beliefs, I am fearful God _____

Engaging God: Begin entrusting those fears to God and ask Him to root out all the unhealthy fears you have about Him. Ask Him to replace your unhealthy fear with an awareness of His perfect love for you (“... perfect love drives out fear...” 1 John 4:18).

4. False Beliefs Lead to DOUBTING God

*“And He [Jesus] said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do **doubts** arise in your hearts?”
Luke 24:38*

I believe unbelief, distrust, and fear of God eventually lead us to doubting God. What are some doubts about God we may develop from our woundedness?

Because of my woundedness, I doubt God:

- Is for me.
- Is good.
- Is loving.
- Is trustworthy.
- Is safe.
- Is in control.
- Is able and willing to heal me.
- Has good plans for me.
- Will protect and provide for me.

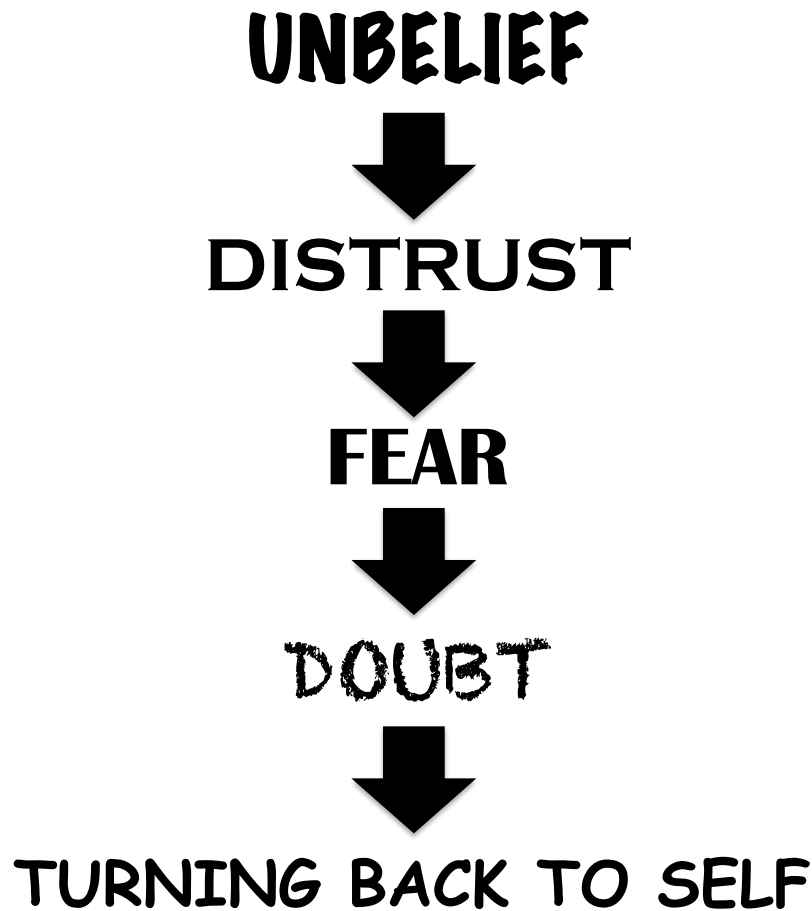
Exercise: Fill in the following blanks below from the list above.

Because of my woundedness and resultant false beliefs, I doubt God _____

Engaging God: Begin asking God to replace your doubt with the truth that God is really who He says He is and will do what He promises to do.

The Result of Living From Unbelief, Distrust, Fear, Doubt Towards God

The diagram on the following page illustrates the process of moving from unbelief to eventually turning back to self.



***The result of living from UNBELIEF, DISTRUST, FEAR, and DOUBT
towards God is going back to yourself as the SOURCE to try to
COPE with your woundedness.***

When you no longer believe God, or distrust, fear, or doubt Him, then your only option is to try to heal yourself or simply cope with the pain of your woundedness. Coping with your woundedness through trying to escape or avoid the pain is, in essence, your concluding it is up to you, independent of God, to deal with your woundedness. In Lesson Two, we talked about some of the other ways you've chosen to cope, such as stuffing your woundedness, denial, social media, movies, etc.

As we discussed in Lesson One, the only Source who can heal you is God. If you live out of your false beliefs about God and turn away from Him as the Source for healing, then no true healing can take place. This could eventually lead you to despair and hopelessness. This creates a dilemma, doesn't it?

***If you turn AWAY from God for healing, then you have
turned your back on the ONLY One who can heal you.***

In order to get past this dilemma, it is crucial you seek God (as difficult as that may be for some) so He will supernaturally replace your false beliefs about Him—and the resultant unbelief, distrust, fear, and doubt—with His truth.

Engaging God: If you feel stuck because you are struggling with unbelief, fears, distrust, or doubts about God, ask Him to renew your mind to the truth about Himself and set you free. Remember, this is usually a process that takes place over time.

The Overflow of Going Back to Self

In addition to coping with your woundedness, there is another problem with going back to self:

Going back to self will keep you LOCKED INTO your FLESHLY behaviors flowing from your woundedness.

Think about the fleshly behaviors flowing out of your woundedness. It may be frustration, anger, fear, unforgiveness, etc. If we don't allow the Holy Spirit to transform our false beliefs about God, then we remain shackled to the very behaviors we want to be set free from. Therefore, the truth is that:

Turning back to self to be the source is NOT an option if you want to be FREE.

Engaging God: If you feel tempted to give up on God and turn back to self, ask the Lord to show you the death that comes with that, especially in the area of your fleshly behaviors. Seek God to give you a glimpse of what your life would be like if you turned to Him to free you from those destructive fleshly behaviors.

EXPECTATIONS Versus the TRUTH About God and Your Woundedness

“From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ‘Never, Lord!’ he said. ‘This shall never happen to you!’” Matthew 16:21, 22

Like Peter in the verse above, we all have expectations of God based on what we believe to be true about God. Before I unpack this any further, let me define what I mean by the word “expectation.”

An expectation is A BELIEF that something WILL happen or will LIKELY happen.

Expectations come in two forms: **realistic** and **unrealistic**. Expectations based on the truth

are what I call “realistic” expectations and expectations based on our false beliefs are what I call “unrealistic expectations.” An example of an unrealistic expectation is in the verse above. Peter’s unrealistic expectation was that Jesus would not be crucified because Peter had a false belief that Jesus would become the king of Israel.

When it comes to our woundedness, there are three major beliefs about God that can result in unrealistic expectations. These three major beliefs are that God is sovereign (i.e. in control), He is loving, and He is good. In this next section, I want to share the truth about each of these beliefs, the unrealistic expectations about each of these beliefs and finish by looking at the truth as it relates to the unrealistic expectations.

Belief #1 - God Is SOVEREIGN and IN CONTROL

1. The Truth About God’s Sovereignty

Webster's Dictionary defines *sovereign* this way: One who is “possessed of supreme power, unlimited in extent, and one who is free from external control.” To say God is sovereign is to affirm that He is the absolute King over all of creation; He has absolute power over all; and He is in control of all that happens in the universe. Here are some verses that reveal God’s sovereignty.

*“Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty; indeed **everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Yours is the dominion, O Lord, and You exalt Yourself as head over all.**” 1 Chronicles 29:11*

*“For I know that the Lord is great, and that our Lord is above all gods.
Whatever the Lord pleases, He does, in heaven and in earth. . .” Psalm 135:5-6*

*“The Lord has established His throne in the heavens, and **His sovereignty rules over all.**”
Psalm 103:19*

2. Unrealistic Expectations About God’s Sovereignty

Let me first give you an example of a realistic expectation about God’s sovereignty. Since God is sovereign, He controls Satan and the demons. We can realistically expect God to keep Satan and his demons in check and under God’s control.

However, when we look through the lense of our woundedness there is a tendency to put unrealistic expectations on God’s sovereignty. Here are some examples of unrealistic expectations associated with woundedness and God’s sovereignty.

- If God is in control, why did He let me be abused?
- If God is in control, then why did He let my divorce take place?
- If God is in control, why did He let my child die?

Have you ever asked questions like these? If so, please write down your questions where you feel God has not met your expectations in regards to Him being sovereign and in control.

If you have asked questions like these, how does it make you feel about God if He has not met your expectations? (You can choose your answers from the three exercises on page 110)

DAY THREE

Belief #2: God is GOOD

a. The Truth Concerning God's Goodness

The New Bible Dictionary defines the “goodness” of God this way: “God is morally perfect, and gloriously generous in what He does, creates, commands and gives, and finally what He approves in the lives of his creatures.” The following are some verses attesting to God’s goodness.

*“I am the **good** shepherd; the **good** shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.” John 10:11*

*“The **LORD is good** to all, And His mercies are over all His works.” Psalm 145:9*

*“What then shall we say to these things? If [**Since**] **God is for us**, who is against us?”
Romans 8:31*

God says in Romans 8:31 that He is **for** YOU! The word “if” in Romans 8:31 is translated “since.”

These are some key truths that we have previously discussed that reveal God’s goodness:

1. Christ died for **all** of your sins. 1 Peter 3:18 (This includes past, present, and even future sins.)
2. He has **removed your sins** as far as the east is from the west. Psalm 103:12
3. He **set you free from the power of sin and death**. Romans 8:2
4. He **gave you His life**. Romans 8:11; 1 John 5:11, 12
5. He **put the fullness of Himself into you** at salvation **to restore His relationship with you**. Colossians 2:9, 10
6. He put His life in you so you **no longer must be the source for living life**. 2 Corinthians 5:15; John 14:6
7. He **crucified your old identity** and **gave you a new identity**. Romans 6:6; 2 Corinthians 5:17
8. He **joined His Spirit with your human spirit**. 1 Corinthians 6:17
9. He **placed the fullness of His power** in you to transform you. Ephesians 1:19, 20
10. He is in the continuous process of working in us **to replace our lies with His truth and to restore our souls**. Philippians 2:13; Romans 12:2; Psalm 23:3
11. He is **conforming us to the image of His Son**. Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18
12. He is **available at every moment to meet our every need**. Philippians 4:19

2. Unrealistic Expectations About God's Goodness

This is just a sample of God’s goodness towards you and I. However, when it comes to our woundedness we can have unrealistic expectations concerning God’s goodness. Here are some examples.

- How can God call Himself good when He allowed my molestation?
- A good God would have never let me be emotionally abused by my mother.
- If God is good, then why did He let my parents abandon me?

Have you ever asked questions like these? If so, please write down your questions where you feel God has not met your expectations in regards to Him being good.

How does it make you feel about God if He has not met your expectations? (You can choose your answers from the three exercises on page 110)

Belief #3: God is LOVE and LOVING

1. The Truth Concerning God's Love

Let's first explore what the Bible says about God being love and being loving.

a.. Truth #1 – God in His ESSENCE is love.

“God is love” 1 John 4:16

A light bulb can only emit light. Its essence determines its function. It was designed to emit light, and that is the source of its function. This is its makeup. So, too, with God. 1 John 4:16 states that God is love. It is His essence. Therefore, God by His very nature loves you because love is Who He is. He can't NOT love you, as His child, because His very being embodies love.

b. Truth #2 - God has loved you for ETERNITY!

*“Long ago, even before He made the world, God **loved** us [you] and **chose** us [you] in Christ...” Ephesians 1:4 (NLT)*

According to this scripture, the truth is that God has loved you for eternity. His love for you stretches from eternity past through the present and to eternity future. Can you imagine God's anticipation and excitement when you were born because then you could experience the unconditional love that He has loved you with for eternity? Not only has He loved you for eternity, but He also created you to be your unique self. Look at Psalm 139:13-16 to confirm this:

“For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother's womb. I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth; Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in Your book were all written The days that were ordained for me, When as yet there was not one of them.” Psalm 139:13-16

God's love for you is so great that at conception there were approximately 500 million possible genetic combinations, and God chose YOU to be the unique person you are!

c. Truth #3 - You can NEVER be separated from His love.

*“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, **will be able to separate us from the love of God** that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 8:38, 39*

Some Christians believe they can do something to lose their salvation or separate themselves from God's love. The “something” usually means sin. However, that is why God died for your sin so it is no longer a barrier to His love. Romans 8:38, 39 destroys that lie. There is NOTHING you can do (or not do) that separates you from His love. For that reason, you can never lose your salvation or be separated from His love.

d. Truth #4 - God is PURSUING you with His love.

*“Surely, goodness and **unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life.**” Psalm 23:6*

Psalm 23:6 affirms that God's love towards you is not passive. He is actively pursuing you with His love every moment of your life. He will not stop until He has totally captured you with His love. When I think of a pursuing love, I remember when I was dating my wife. I was pursuing her intentionally and intensely with my love. Infinitely more than we can pursue someone with our love, God is pursuing you with His. God's greatest desire is for you to understand and experience His love in full measure (Ephesians 3:16-19).

e. Truth #5 - God's love is UNCONDITIONAL.

Many Christians struggle with the truth that God loves them unconditionally. This is primarily because we, as humans, cannot and do not love one another unconditionally. However, God can and does love you unconditionally.

What does it mean that God loves you unconditionally?

- God's love does not change towards you based upon what you do (or don't do).
- Even if you decide to walk away from God, He still loves you.
- When you are angry, upset, or frustrated with God, He still loves you.
- Even when you sin, God loves you. (Remember that while He does not condone sin, that does not change His love for you.)

Micah 7:18 refers to God's love as “unchanging”:

*“Who is a God like You, who pardons iniquity and passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in **unchanging love.**”*

David calls it **unfailing** love in Psalm 25:6 and 3:21:

*“Remember, O Lord, **your unfailing love** and compassion,
which you have shown from long ages past.” Psalm 25:6*

*“Praise the Lord, for he has shown me the wonders of **His unfailing love**...” Psalm 3:21*

2. Unrealistic Expectations About God’s Love

You have just read some incredible truths about God’s love towards you. However, when you look at God’s love in context with your woundedness you might have unrealistic expectations. Here are some examples.

- God calls Himself loving and yet he let me be so traumatized by my parents.
- A loving God would have prevented my parents from getting a divorce.
- How could a loving God allow so much pain in this world?

Have you ever asked questions like these? If so, please write down your questions where you feel God has not met your expectations in regards to Him being loving.

How does it make you feel about God if He has not met your expectations? (You can choose your answers from the three exercises on page 110)

What Are The Consequences Concerning Your Unrealistic Expectations About God

Before we look at the truth concerning unrealistic expectations about God’s sovereignty, goodness and love, I would like for you to do an exercise.

As a result of my unrealistic expectations about God’s sovereignty, goodness, and love, I DON’T:

1. Trust God.
2. Believe that God is willing to heal me.
3. Believe that God can heal me.
4. Want a relationship with God.

Exercise: Write down any of the things listed above that apply to you or write down any other results about your beliefs about God as a result of your woundedness.

What Is The Truth Concerning Your Unrealistic Expectations About God's Sovereignty, Goodness, and Love?

Now that we have looked at some examples of unrealistic expectations about God's sovereignty, goodness and love, let's look at the truth as it relates to those unrealistic expectations.

TRUTH #1 - Even Though God Is Sovereign, Good and Loving, He Gave Man FREE WILL

a. Free Will For Man Began In The Garden of Eden

***Even though God is in control, He gives man FREE WILL
to CHOOSE how he will live.***

One of the greatest debates in Christianity is where God's sovereignty ends and man's free will begins. The truth is that God is always sovereign, and man always has free will to choose. We understand this when we look back at Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden before the Fall. In Genesis 2:16, 17 we see God gave man a choice:

"The LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.'" Genesis 2:16, 17

The choice God gave Adam and Eve was that they could eat of every tree in the Garden but one. If they ate of that one tree, they would die spiritually. We know how this choice played out in Genesis 3:6:

"When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate."

God could have prevented Adam and Eve from eating of the tree; however, since He gave man free will choice, He did not prevent this from happening. The result was not only spiritual death for Adam and Eve, but it meant you and I were born into a fallen world. However, what would the result have been if God hadn't given us free will choice?

***If God did not give humans free will choice, then we would be like
ROBOTS or PUPPETS on a string being totally controlled by God.***

b. Giving Man Free Will As It Relates To Your Woundedness

As we discussed, we all (including those who wounded you) were born with Adam's DNA of inadequacy, self-condemnation, guilt, shame, etc. In addition to our Adamic DNA, we all were born with fleshly behaviors. Our Adamic DNA combined with our inherent fleshly behaviors,

make a toxic combination. In spite of that, God still allowed humans to make free will decisions. Consequently, those who wounded you chose to live from their Adamic DNA and fleshly behaviors with the result they wounded you (as they were wounded by their relationships or circumstances).

Another key thing to remember is those who wounded you most likely did not know the truths you are learning and therefore were living out of their flesh instead of living from the Spirit. I am in no way condoning what they did in creating your woundedness. I am only saying God allowed them to make free will choices that unfortunately created woundedness in you. This next statement may be hard for you to believe.

***The fact that God gave man free will choice does NOT change the truth
that God is sovereign, good, and loving.***

This truth is very difficult if not impossible to reconcile with our woundedness. Yet, only God can persuade you of this truth. This is part of the healing process.

Question: How does this explanation resonate in your heart? Does it answer the question of God's sovereignty and man's free will choice? Does this help you understand that even though God is in control, He allows man to make free will choices that include wounding others like yourself?

Engaging God: If you are still struggling with God's sovereignty and people's free will concerning your woundedness, ask the Lord to give you understanding and revelation.

DAY FOUR

TRUTH #2 - God's Definition of Love DIFFERS From Man's Definition

One of the key problems in understanding God's love is this.

We try to compare God's love with man's definition of love.

Defining God's love according to man's definition, leads us to incorrectly compare the two. We must realize God's love is very different from how we perceive human love. The problem is we, in our finite minds, are trying to understand why God's love can allow wounding events in our lives and in the lives of others.

If we define God's love on our terms, this can lead us to doubt and distrust God. It can limit how we see God and it prevents us from understanding Him as He really is. Satan can use our definition of love to build a case against trusting a God who does not meet our definition of love. I believe there is no better way to understand God's love than to look at the crucifixion of Jesus.

Could we not ask the question: “How could a loving God allow His Son to die in such a horrific way?”

God the Father, in His love for Jesus, could have prevented His Son from being crucified. However, He did not. He allowed sinful man to make a free will choice to crucify a totally righteous person who did nothing to deserve crucifixion. Can you imagine the immense pain the Father must have felt watching the nails pierce His dear Son’s hands? What must the Heavenly Father have felt as His Son agonized for hours on the cross, dying a slow, painful death, taking on the whole sins of the world (including you and me). Even as much love as the Father had for Jesus, He still allowed humans to wound and crucify His Son. Therefore, even though God does allow woundedness, it that does not change the truth that He is a loving God.

***God’s unconditional love for you still **ALLOWS** man to have free will
CHOICE even if it is a **SINFUL** choice to wound you.***

Question: Did what you just read give you any clarity or understanding of God’s love for you, man’s free will choice, and your woundedness?

Engaging God: If it didn’t, ask the Lord to reconcile His love for you and those who wounded you.

TRUTH #3 - God Will Work Your Woundedness Together For GOOD

I want to start this section with the following truth.

***What happened to you to cause your woundedness was **NOT**
good. However, God promises to take these very bad things
that happened to you and work them together for **GOOD**.***

*“And we know that **God causes all things to work together for good** to those who
love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” Romans 8:28*

I am sure you have read or heard of this verse before. However, I believe this is one of the most misunderstood verses in the Bible. Why? It is because we don't truly understand the word “**good**” in this verse.

I would like to go back to the crucifixion to explain what the word “good” means. None of us would call our Lord’s crucifixion a “good” thing; but what was the “good” God worked out from His horrific death? Eternal life for anyone who trusts in Jesus for salvation; and His life for you and me. Based on the “good” that came from the cross, do you believe it is possible for God to work your woundedness together for “good”?

I know this is a very hard but crucial truth to understand, especially if you are experiencing deep-seated woundedness. Like Jesus, you would rather not have gone through what you went through. However, also like Jesus, God promises to work your woundedness together for good.

One of the Greek translations for the word “good” is the word “benefit.” Applying this verse means God is capable of taking the events that caused your woundedness and using them for your benefit. Let’s look at three benefits that result from God’s healing process.

Benefit #1 – God will use your woundedness to PERSUADE you of your need to depend on Him as Your SOURCE rather than depending on yourself.

*“...I am **THE WAY**...” John 14:6a (Emphasis mine)*

*“**Come to ME**....” Matthew 11:28 (Emphasis mine)*

When Jesus says He is The Way, one of the ways He fulfills this verse is to be The Way to your healing. He will use your woundedness to reveal your need to depend on Him moment by moment as your Source for healing and for living life. Why? It is because there is no other source outside of Christ whereby you can be healed. And after you are healed, Christ is the only Source through which to live your life.

Benefit #2 - God uses your woundedness to expose your false beliefs about yourself and to transform you into your TRUE IDENTITY.

In the last lesson we discussed how woundedness produces false beliefs about yourself. However, through God’s truth, the “good” He brings from your woundedness is now you know your true identity and no longer have to stay stuck in your false beliefs. In addition, the “good” is God’s promises to transform you to believe your true identity and to set you free from your false beliefs.

Would you call it GOOD if you were transformed through your woundedness to experience your TRUE Identity in Christ?

Benefit #3 – God will set you free from your fleshly behaviors.

*“It was for **freedom that Christ set us free**; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.” Galatians 5:1*

Another benefit is the Lord will set you free from the fleshly behaviors that flow out of your woundedness. He is able and willing to set you free from your anger, insecurities, unforgiveness, fears, etc. Can you imagine what that kind of freedom must be like? It can happen and will happen as you seek God to heal your heart.

BENEFIT #4 – God WILL heal you.

*“...He has sent **Me to heal** the brokenhearted...” Luke 4:18*

*“He who began a good work in you **WILL perfect it** [accomplish it] until the day of Christ Jesus.” Philippians 1:6*

*“The **Lord WILL accomplish what concerns me**;.....” Psalm 138:8*

The ultimate good or benefit God will work together for you is He will heal your woundedness as you seek Him to do so. Healing will, for most people, be a process; nonetheless, God’s promise of healing will become an experiential reality for those who persist in seeking Him and applying His truth.

Question: Has this section helped you to better understand God’s love, man’s free will, and the “good” God promises to work in the healing of your woundedness?

Engaging God: If not, ask the Lord to give you divine understanding of Romans 8:28. Seek Him to show you why His idea of “good” might differ from yours?

I know this section may have not persuaded you of God’s sovereignty, goodness, and love in light of your woundedness. However, I hope that it will help you in some way seek God to renew your mind to the truth

I Can Empathize With You

I know that even reading through the truths in the last section that you are still struggling with God’s sovereignty, goodness, and love. I can empathize with you because before I understood God’s pathway to healing, there were many times I would shake my fist at God and ask Him: “Why did you let this happen to me? How could you allow me to be so horribly abused physically, emotionally, and verbally?” I would recount in my mind all these terrible wounding events that took place and get increasingly angry. Can you imagine how hardened my heart was after 48 years of anger? I would read Romans 8:28 but I could not understand how God could work all my woundedness for good. However, when I began to understand what it meant for Christ to be my Source and to live His life in me, that is when things began to change.

On my road to healing, I learned that part of my father’s abuse of me resulted from his dad’s abuse of him. I was stunned when I heard about the horrible abuse my dad suffered from his dad. The “generational” sins of his father were definitely passed down to me. Trust me; I am not excusing my dad’s abuse. It was sin. However, God gave me one of the answers to my “why” questions when I realized that even though my dad was a Christian, he was never taught about The Life we have in Christ. Therefore, no transformation ever took place with the result that he lived his entire life out of his angry, controlling, and abusive flesh and tried to anesthetize his pain with alcohol. My dad was like anyone else who is not being transformed into Christ-likeness. He was in bondage to wherever his fleshly behaviors took him. Part of God’s “good” for me was the Lord giving me divine understanding of what drove my dad’s anger and abusive flesh.

As I shared with you in Lesson Three, part of God’s “good” was to expose my false beliefs about my false identity that I was inadequate, unloved, and rejected. As part of my healing process, God transformed me to believe in my true identity in Christ: I am adequate, loved, and accepted. This supernatural transformation did more for me than anything else could have done to enable me to understand God’s sovereignty, His love, man’s free will choice, and God’s “good.”

Finally, God showed me His goodness by healing and transforming my heart to a point where I was able to forgive my dad. That truly was a “Red Sea” experience that convinced me God is good and is for me. It was through the healing and the freedom the Lord gave me that I realized God is a loving God even though He allowed the abuse to take place.

Another Example of God's Divine Good

I would like to go back to the story about the man whose fiancée was killed the day before his wedding and share with you the “good” that came out of this. As I mentioned, when he came to me, he was very angry with God and had stayed angry for 15 years. But his anger did not change the fact that God could and eventually did work this whole situation for good.

However, over time, God persuaded this man that even though He allowed this event to take place, He loved him and was in no way trying to punish him. It was truly supernatural to watch the Lord open this man's eyes to the truth of God's love and goodness. Out of this terrible tragedy came an understanding and experience of God's love this man had never experienced before. I remember sitting down with him for lunch a number of years later and listening him talk about how good and loving God is. It brought me to tears to witness the healing and transforming hand of God at work in this man's life.

Final Key Truths About God

If you are still struggling with your beliefs about God based on your woundedness, I would like to encourage you with some key verses concerning God's character and who He is to you. I would ask you to slowly read these points and allow the Holy Spirit to begin persuading you these verses are true for you.

Genesis 15:1	He is your shield (defense) and your very great reward.
Jeremiah 32:17	Nothing is too difficult for Him.
Ephesians 3:20	He is able to do immeasurably more than all you can think or ask.
Romans 8:31	If God is for you, who can be against you?
Romans 8:38-39	Nothing in all creation can separate you from His love.
John 17:23	He loves you as much as He loves Jesus.
Isaiah 40:12-31	He is absolutely sovereign and knows the end from the beginning.
Isaiah 46:3-10	His purposes will stand.
Psalms 103	His love for you is greater than the height of the heavens above the earth. He's removed our sins from us and has compassion on us as a loving father on a son or a daughter.
Hebrews 13:5	He will never ever leave you nor forsake you.
Psalms 86:15	He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, and abounding in love and faithfulness.
Matthew 11:29	He is gentle, tender, and humble in heart. He gives you rest for your soul.
Ephesians 3:16-19	His love for you is beyond your natural mind's ability to grasp it.
Colossians 3:12	He has chosen you and loves you dearly.
Psalms 23	He is your shepherd. He guides you and supplies all your needs.
Psalms 25:3 & Romans 10:11	No one who puts their hope in Him will be put to shame or be disappointed.
Psalms 86:5	He is kind, forgiving, and abounding in love to all who call upon Him.

John 3:1	He has made you His own child.
Ephesians 1:3	He has blessed you with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ.
Psalms 91	He is your shelter, your refuge, and your fortress.
Psalms 34:15	His eyes are upon you, and His ears are open to your cry.
Psalms 34:18	He is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.
John 6:37	Whoever comes to Him, He will not cast out.
Psalms 37:23-24	Though you stumble, He upholds you with His hand.
Proverbs 19:21 &	He is absolutely sovereign, and your interests are safe with Him.
I Corinthians 6:17	He has joined Himself with you.
Psalms 62:8	He is your refuge and the One to whom you can always pour out your heart.
Isaiah 54:17	He will not allow any weapon which is formed against you to prevail.

Engaging God: Entrust your false beliefs to God and ask Him to persuade you that what He says about who He is and who He is to you is the truth.

DAY FIVE

A Final Truth: Jesus VERY Much Sympathizes with Your Woundedness

*“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to **empathize** with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin.” Hebrews 4:15*

When you think of Jesus while He was on the earth, you may only see the GOD-man. However, it is much more important regarding your woundedness that you see Jesus as the MAN-God. What do I mean? Jesus says in Philippians 2:6, 7:

*“Though He (Jesus) was God, He did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, **He gave up His divine privileges**, He took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being....”*

In other words, Jesus, while on the earth, was fully human. This meant He made a choice not to function in His deity. Rather, He lived in a human body like you, with thoughts, emotions, and a will. It is hard for us to imagine but Jesus, as a fully human man, was tempted in everything you and I are (Hebrews 4:15 above). Being human also meant He felt deeply wounded through His suffering and rejection. We see this in Mark 8:31 and many other passages.

*“And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must **suffer many things and be rejected** by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.” Mark 8:31*

Think for a moment about all the woundedness the Lord endured in three short years. He was betrayed, abandoned, scorned, ridiculed, rejected, judged, and abused. People hated Him, reviled Him, were bitter against Him, and threatened Him. People let Him down, they walked away from Him, they misunderstood Him, and after all this, they crucified Him.

Trust me when I say Jesus feels your pain. He can empathize and sympathize with your woundedness. Let’s look at Hebrews 4:15 in the American Standard Version:

*“For we have not a high priest that cannot **be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.**”*

Hebrews 4:15

His humanity did not like being wounded any better than yours does; but, because He experienced great pain and woundedness, He can (and will) empathize with your pain very deeply and personally. That is why we can call on Him to comfort us because He can identify with our pain.

Meditate: on the fact that Jesus suffered like the rest of mankind and in many ways beyond what any man has suffered. As a result, He understands your pain and can comfort you in it.

Engaging God: If you struggle with feeling all alone in your pain, ask Christ to comfort you because He knows very well the pain you are going through. Seek Him to show you that He is always with you, especially walking with you through the valleys of pain. He chooses to be with you in everything.

Here is an example of what that may look like.

Step of faith: “Lord, I have been severely wounded and I am thankful You can identify with my pain. I am trusting you to be my peace and comfort during my healing process.”

I want to end this section with the following truth, especially if you are still struggling with the truths we have discussed so far in this lesson:

Regardless of how you feel or what you believe that does NOT line up with the truth about God, this does NOT change the fact that God’s truth is true.
The key is to DEPEND on God to REVEAL truth to you; give you DIVINE UNDERSTANDING; and TRANSFORM you so you will believe the truth.

Examples of Moving from Our Unrealistic Expectations and False Beliefs About God To Believing The Truth About God

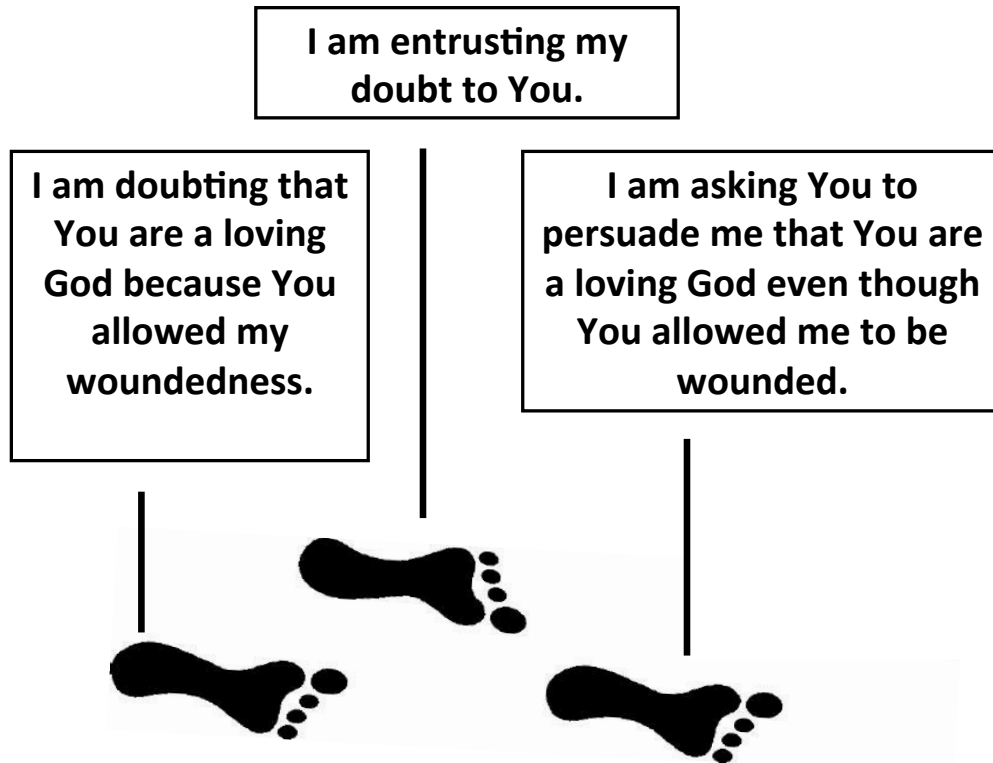
Let’s look at some examples of how we engage God by faith to move us from continuing to believe our unrealistic expectations and false beliefs we have about God.

EXAMPLE #1:

The False Belief: God does not really love me because He allowed me to be wounded.

The Truth: God is a loving God even though He allowed your woundedness.

Steps of Faith: “Lord, your Word says that You are a loving God. However, I am doubting how You can be loving and still have allowed my woundedness to take place. I am entrusting my doubt to You and I am asking You to persuade me that You are a loving God even though You allowed me to be wounded.” Here is an illustration of these steps of faith.

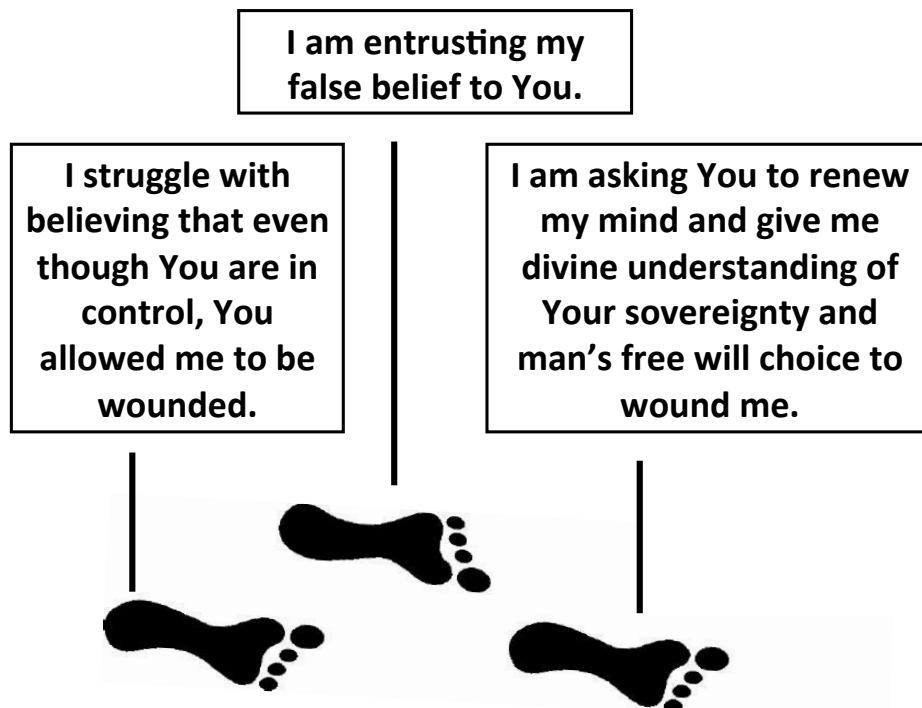


EXAMPLE #2:

The False Belief: If God were really in control, He would not have allowed me to be wounded.

The Truth: God is in control but He allows others to have free will choice (in your case, to wound you.)

Steps of Faith: Look at the illustration on the following page.

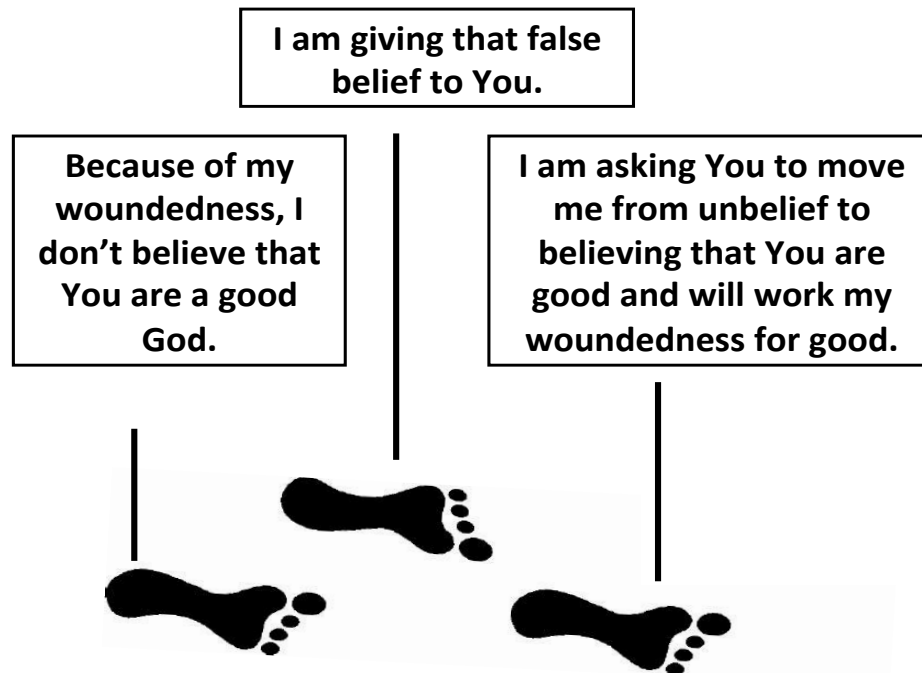


EXAMPLE #3:

The False Belief: God is not good and He is not for me because He let me be wounded.

The Truth: The fact that God allowed your woundedness does not change the truth that God is good and is for you. However, He will work your woundedness for “good.”

Steps of faith: “Lord, because of my woundedness, I don't believe that you are a good God. I am giving that false belief over to You and I am asking You to move me from unbelief to believing that You will work my woundedness for good, (i.e., see You as my Source for healing; walk in my true identity, and experience true healing taking place.)”



I hope these three examples have given you a glimpse of what it looks like to take steps of faith to move from living below the line.

Engaging God To Move From The Lie To The Truth

1. Begin entrusting your false beliefs about God to God

“Lord, I am entrusting my false beliefs that You are: “

1. Distant and disinterested.
2. Insensitive and uncaring.
3. Passive and cold.
5. Not caring and compassionate.
6. Not able or willing to heal me.
7. Condemning or unforgiving.
8. Impatient or angry.
9. Not trustworthy.
9. _____
10. _____

Exercise: Choose what false beliefs about God you are going to entrust to Him to change and begin taking steps of faith for Him to renew your mind to His truth.

2. Begin engaging God to renew your mind to the truth.

“Lord, I am asking you to renew my mind to the truth that you are _____ (fill in blank using words below) in spite of the fact that you allowed my woundedness to take place:”

1. Loving
2. Kind and compassionate.
3. Sensitive and can empathize with my pain.
4. Good.
5. Willing to heal me.
6. For me.
7. Accepting of me.
8. Trustworthy.
9. In control.
10. _____
11. _____

Exercise: Choose what truths about God you are going to trust Him to make real to you and begin taking steps of faith for Him to renew your mind to His truth.

Key Truths To Remember as You Engage God by Faith to Replace Your False Beliefs With the Truth

As you take steps of faith to be transformed and healed, remember these truths.

- It is crucial to understand that being transformed to believe God is sovereign, good, and loving in spite of your woundedness is a PROCESS. It will take time for God to persuade you of the truth.
- Since your flesh (and Satan) will RESIST you being transformed, you will need to draw on Christ’s strength, endurance and perseverance as you take steps of faith.
- Since some of your false beliefs about God may be ENTRENCHED because of the effects of your woundedness, it may take time for the Holy Spirit to renew your mind to the truth.
- As a result, you may have to take SEVERAL steps of faith over time before you experience any changes in your beliefs about God.
- Therefore, seek Christ to BE your patience if the transformation process takes longer than you expected.
- Know by faith that as you engage God He is healing you whether you feel it or not.

How Will You Know That Healing Is Taking Place?

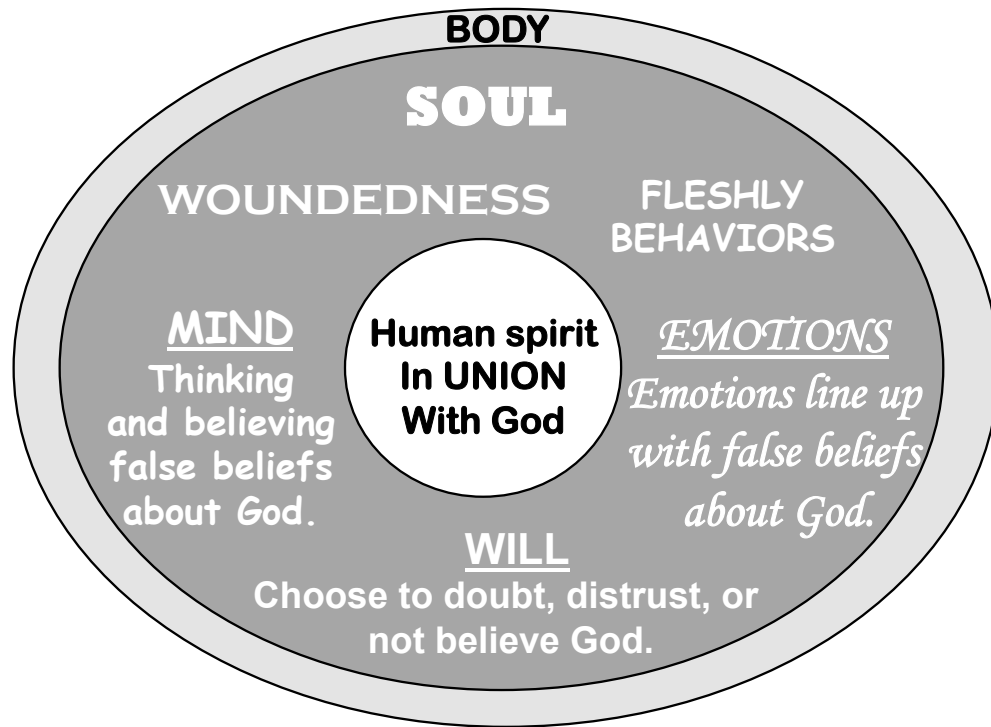
As you take steps of faith, God will be working in your life to persuade you of the truth about Himself. Below are some ways that God confirms in you that He is healing you and transforming you:

1. As your mind is being renewed, you will begin to think and believe God's truth about Himself rather than believing your false beliefs.
2. How you feel about God will begin to line up with the truth you are persuaded to believe about Him.
3. You will begin to make choices based upon the truth that you are now thinking and feeling about God.
4. As you begin to experience supernatural transformation, God will transform your fleshly attitudes and behaviors into Christ-like behaviors.
5. You will begin to experience healing from your woundedness.
6. You will discover growth in your Christ-confidence in God's ability and willingness to heal you and to transform your life.
7. You will find yourself increasingly being stunned, overwhelmed, and in awe of this loving, gracious, and merciful God that lives within you.

The Transformation Of The Soul Concerning Your Concept of God

Remember the condition of your soul concerning your woundedness and your false beliefs about God.

Woundedness and Your False Beliefs About God



The following diagram shows how your soul is transformed as you begin to believe the truth about God:

Healing and Transformation To Believe The Truth About God



Summary

For some of you, this is a very difficult lesson. I understand. The truths in this lesson were hard for me to swallow in the beginning. However, as you begin the process of taking steps of faith, God will persuade you of His truth over time and it will give you a whole new perspective of God.

**Exercises That The Lord May Use To Expose Your False Beliefs and Move You
From Living From Your False Beliefs To Living From The Truth**

Exercise #1: False Beliefs About God

I Feel/Believe that God IS:

- a. The cause of my woundedness
 - b. Cold and distant
 - c. Judging me
 - d. Angry or unhappy with me
 - e. Condemning me
 - f. Indifferent
 - g. Out of control
 - h. Like my earthly (father, mother, stepfather, stepmother, friend, relative, etc.)in that _____
-

Exercise #2: The Overflow Of False Beliefs Towards God

I Feel/Believe That God ISN'T:

1. Safe
2. Loving
3. Compassionate
4. Secure
5. Willing
6. Merciful
7. Trustworthy
8. Caring
9. Able
10. Sovereign
11. _____
12. _____

Exercise #3: How False Beliefs About God Make Us Feel About Ourselves

This makes me FEEL that:

1. I will never be healed.
2. I am not loved.
3. I am not acceptable.
4. I am not worthy.
5. I am not secure.
6. I am condemned.
7. I have to try to heal myself.
8. I don't matter.
9. _____
10. _____

LESSON FIVE

Satan's Strategies Concerning Woundedness

Forgiveness

DAY ONE

Part One: Satan's Strategies Concerning Woundedness

Introduction

[Note: When you see where I use the word "Satan" read that as also meaning "Satan and his demons."]

I believe we need to spend some time learning about the part Satan and his demonic forces play in preventing you from being healed of your woundedness. The key to this section is learning the truth about Satan's strategies so we can engage God to do battle with him. Why?

Because Satan's greatest fear is that:

- **You will learn God's truth.**
- **You will believe God's truth.**
- **You will engage God for Him to transform you and heal you with His truth.**

You see, Satan knows God's word (probably better than most Christians). He knows how the Christian life works; all about your woundedness; and the truth about God's healing process. That being the case, Satan will do everything within his power to keep you from knowing, believing, and living from God's truth in order to keep you imprisoned in your woundedness.

Why wouldn't he since the Lord told us Satan has a three-fold strategy concerning you and me. That strategy is to:

STEAL, KILL, and DESTROY

John 10:10a

Let's apply Satan's strategy to your woundedness:

Steal – Satan wants to try to steal all you have in Christ, e.g, healing, transformation, forgiveness, etc.

Kill – Satan wants to kill your spiritual momentum to prevent your healing and to cause you to resist God's healing process.

Destroy – Satan knows if he can keep you in bondage to your woundedness, it will slowly destroy (poison) your relationship with God, your marriage, your family, and most importantly, with you yourself.

Satan will stop at nothing to keep you in bondage to your woundedness and the false beliefs and fleshly behaviors that are tied to your woundedness. He is strategizing non-stop to keep you locked away in your “soulical” prison so you will continue to live from the pain, misery, and hopelessness those prison cells create. This is part of the “devouring” Peter refers to in 1 Peter 5:8:

*“Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, **the devil**, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.” 1 Peter 5:8*

Satan knows that if you resist God’s healing process, you will continue being “stuck” and will eventually lose your spiritual momentum to seek the Holy Spirit for healing. Accordingly, we will first look at seven strategies Satan uses to keep us in bondage to our woundedness. Then we will apply God’s truth to these strategies and finally, we will look at steps of faith on how to engage God to “devour” Satan.

STRATEGY #1 - Satan will INSERT unbelieving, doubting, tempting, fleshly, and condemning THOUGHTS tied to your woundedness.

*“Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, ‘God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You.’ But He turned and said to Peter, ‘**Get behind Me, Satan!** You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God’s interests, but man’s.’” Matthew 16:22-23*

How do we know that Satan can insert thoughts into our minds? The best example of this is Matthew 16:22-23, above. Jesus addressed Satan instead of Peter because He knew Satan was the source for inserting those thoughts into Peter’s mind. Accordingly, I believe Satan’s #1 strategy with believers is to insert thoughts into our minds. These thoughts usually fall into the following categories:

- **UNBELIEVING** thoughts.
- **DOUBTING** thoughts.
- **TEMPTING** thoughts.
- **FLESHLY** thoughts.
- **CONDEMNING** thoughts.

Let’s look at examples of each of these kinds of thoughts the enemy can choose to insert in your mind. Please keep this key truth in mind as you read through this section:

***The messages Satan inserts into our minds
ALWAYS come in FIRST person in our own voices.***

Satan will never insert a “third” person thought like “You are a failure.” It will always come in first person, “I am a failure.” He mimics your own voice so you will believe and take ownership of his thoughts. Having said that, let’s look at examples of these types of thoughts.

a. **Unbelieving thoughts** can be inserted, such as: “I don’t believe I can ever be healed.” “I can’t let God in because the pain is too great for Him to heal.” “I can’t let God in to heal because His

grace is not greater than my pain.” “God’s power is not enough to set me free from the pain, fear, unforgiveness, anger, and inferiority that flows from what happened to me.”

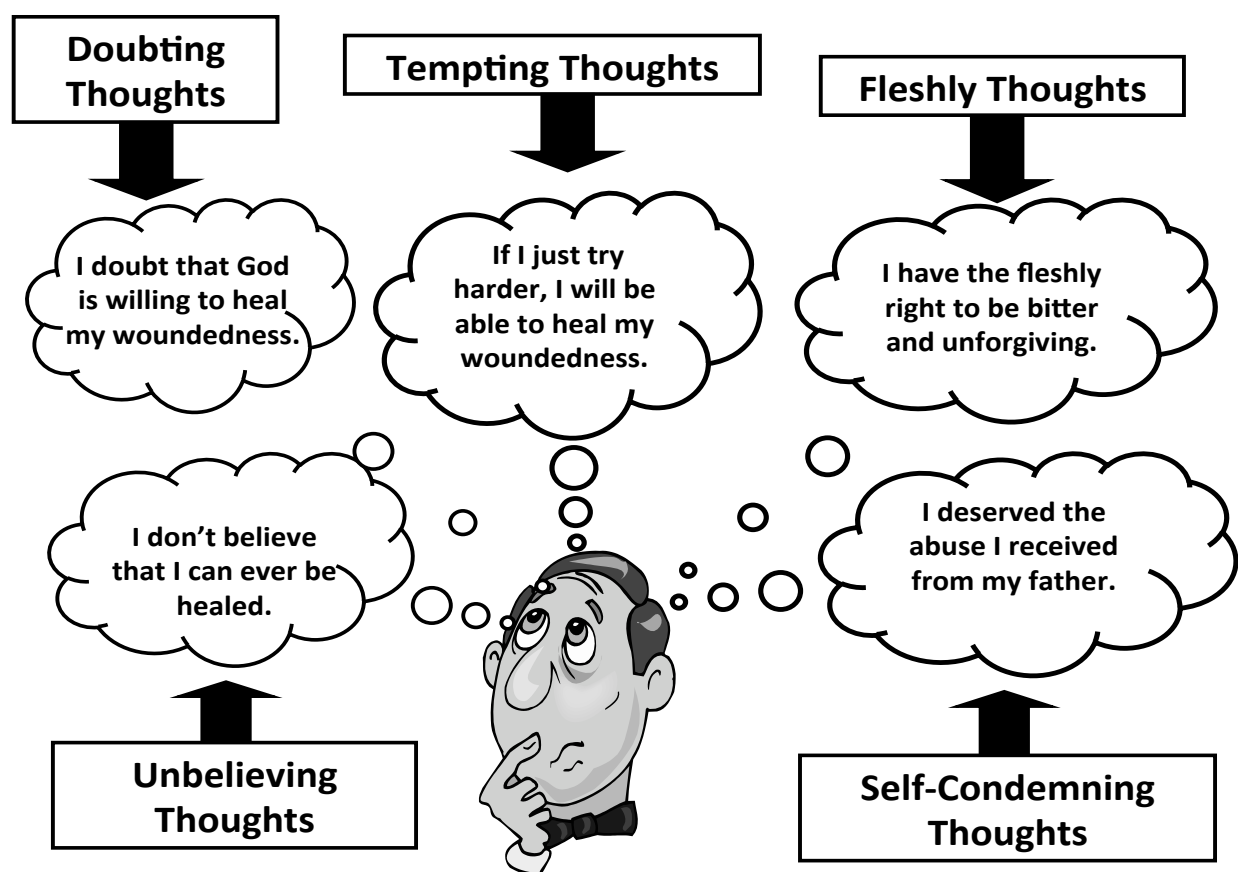
b. **Doubting thoughts** can be inserted, such as: “I doubt God really cares about my pain?” “I don’t think God really is able or willing to heal me and set me free?”

c. **Tempting thoughts** can be inserted, such as: “I need to try harder to heal myself because God is not healing me.” “I might as well give up because I know that I will never be healed.”

d. **Fleshly thoughts** can be inserted, such as: “I have the fleshly right to be _____ (bitter, angry, unforgiving, self-hating, inadequate, etc.) because of what happened to me. My _____ (dad, mom, stepparent, sibling, former spouse, etc.) doesn’t deserve forgiveness for what he/she did to me. I must retaliate.”

e. **Self-Condemning thoughts** can be inserted, such as: “I deserved the _____ (abuse, woundedness, divorce, abandonment, etc.) that I received.” “I am worthless or dirty.” “I am unworthy to be healed by God.”

Here is an illustration of some of the types of thoughts Satan inserts into our minds.



Exercise: Write down any recurring unbelieving, doubting, tempting, fleshly, and/or self-condemning thoughts.

Engaging God: Ask the Lord to reveal/expose any recurring thoughts that might originate with Satan.

STRATEGY #2 - Satan helped you MISINTERPRET the messages you were hearing as a young person and TIE those messages to your fleshly behaviors.

I believe Satan starts the minute you are born to influence you to misinterpret the messages you heard from your parents, siblings, friends, etc. Here is why:

***Kids are the world's best RECORDERS but they are NOT
able to INTERPRET what they are recording.***

I believe Satan misinterprets for children both verbal and non-verbal messages. Part of His strategy includes attaching these distorted interpretations to your Adamic DNA. If you received mostly negative messages, then it was very easy for the enemy to attach those messages to your Adamic DNA of guilt, shame, self-condemnation, etc. Satan can also misinterpret the positive messages given to you by distorting them in a way similar to what I shared earlier concerning the Asian pastor who received positive messages from his dad but misinterpreted them causing him to believe he was inadequate as a pastor.

Satan misinterpreted your messages by inserting thoughts into your mind that were tied to your fleshly behaviors. Let's use a positive message as an example. Let's say your dad said to you when you were young, "You did a good job." Let's assume you have perfectionistic tendencies. The enemy may insert the messages: "I could have done better" or "I wanted him to say I did a 'great job.'" Buying into these kinds of messages could leave you feeling "less than" or inadequate. If these messages continue to be falsely interpreted, this is the result:

***Over time these FALSELY INTERPRETED messages can evolve into
FALSE BELIEFS about yourself and CREATE woundedness.***

This is why it is so critical that parents learn Biblical truths and convey them to their kids to counteract the work of the enemy in their children's minds.

STRATEGY #3- Keep REPLAYING past wounding events in your mind to REINFORCE or THICKEN the walls of your prison cell of woundedness.

One old cliché concerning woundedness is that you should "forgive and forget." We will talk about forgiveness later in this lesson. For now, the truth is that, for the most part, you will not forget your wounding events. Why? These memories are permanently stored in your brain. They are like photos on your cell phone or computer that are always there and readily available.

Satan's strategy is to keep bringing up those memories and the feelings surrounding them like a non-stop running slide show. He knows that if you keep taking ownership of the thoughts and feelings surrounding your wounding events, then you will never be healed.

Question: Do you find yourself replaying the wounding events over and over again? Is it possible the source of those recurring memories could be Satan?

STRATEGY #4 - If you start down the path of spiritual healing, then Satan will pull out ALL the stops to RESIST you and DRAG you back to the prison.

You probably have already discovered when you started your new journey of living from Christ, you felt resistance from Satan. This is because as long as you function in the “default” position of living from yourself as the source, he has no reason to resist you.

However, when you start learning, believing, and choosing to walk in the truth that Christ is your Source and the Holy Spirit can heal you, then Satan must resist you since his greatest fear is that you will learn the truth, engage God to renew your mind to the truth, and eventually be healed. Satan primarily resists you by using the next strategy.

STRATEGY #5 - Satan will TEMPT you to keep using your ESCAPE MECHANISMS to try to stop or anesthetize the pain.

We talked in the previous section about how we try to escape or anesthetize our pain. The enemy will “help” you accomplish this by bringing escape mechanisms to mind and tempting you to use them over and over as you try to anesthetize or escape the pain. Ultimately, they want you to turn your escape mechanisms into addictions and strongholds.

Example: Let’s assume that your escape mechanism is overeating. The enemy brings to mind a wounding event and then tempts you to overeat to anesthetize the pain created by the event.

Engaging God: Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any areas where Satan is tempting you to use your escape mechanisms.

STRATEGY #6 - Satan will tempt you to stay BUSY to distract you from dealing with the pain of your woundedness.

This is a subtle but very effective tool Satan has used on me for the past several years. If Satan can keep us focused on staying busy, we will be tempted to use that busy-ness to distract ourselves from our own pain and to keep us from seeking the Lord to heal the woundedness.

Engaging God: Ask the Lord to reveal to you if you are using busy-ness to distract or escape the pain of your woundedness.

STRATEGY #7 - Satan will try to keep you in bondage to any UNFORGIVENESS by triggering your FLESHLY RIGHTS.

This strategy is crucial because Satan knows very well unforgiveness greatly hinders the flow of Christ’s life in us. He knows unforgiveness is like a poison that creates internal bondage and external fleshly behaviors such as anger, bitterness, etc.

One of the ways the enemy tries to keep us in bondage to unforgiveness is to tempt us to live from our “fleshly rights.” I define fleshly rights as:

Fleshly behaviors that create TRIGGERS inside you to justify your anger, bitterness, or unforgiveness as well as justifying your right to express these to the ones who have wounded you.

Here are some examples of fleshly rights concerning woundedness:

I have the fleshly right to:

- not forgive my offender
- reject my offender
- be angry and bitter towards my offender.
- not love my offender.

Satan will use wounding events to trigger your fleshly rights. He will do this by bringing the event to mind; reminding you of all the pain the person inflicted on you; and repeatedly stirring up your right to be angry, bitter, unforgiving, etc.

Engaging God: Ask the Lord to show you where Satan is “triggering” your fleshly rights to be angry, unforgiving, rejecting, not loving, etc.

DAY TWO

Ultimately Satan Wants to Persuade You That Your Healing is HOPELESS

As Satan employs these seven strategies, his ultimate objective is to convince you to give up the hope of ever be healed. This is one of the reasons many people, including Christians, commit suicide. They become so hopeless that they believe their healing will never take place and so see no need to continue living. But even if you are not tempted to take your life, living in hopelessness can be a living hell. Hopelessness and despair are two sides of the same coin.

Four Key Truths Concerning Satan, You, and Your Woundedness

Now that we have looked at some of Satan’s strategies, let’s turn the corner and look at four key truths concerning Satan. Here is the foundational truth we need to start with.

1. Satan Has Been DEFEATED

Satan was DEFEATED at the cross.

“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall crush you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.” Genesis 3:15

In Genesis 3:15 above, when God was speaking to Satan after the fall of Adam and Eve, He said, “He shall crush you on the head.” “He” in this verse refers to Jesus and the crushing of Satan’s head refers to the ultimate defeat of Satan that would take place at the crucifixion of Christ. One of the glorious results of Christ’s death on the cross and His resurrection was Satan and his demonic forces were defeated once and for all.

Question: How may it change how you view Satan’s involvement in your woundedness if you truly believed he has been defeated?

Engaging God: If you struggle with believing Satan and his demonic forces have been defeated, ask the Lord to persuade you of this truth.

2. You Have the HOLY SPIRIT’S Power Over Satan in You

Since we are fighting an unseen enemy, we can’t possibly fight Satan and his demonic forces. That is why we see in the following verse that we need a power greater than our own to defeat Satan and his strategies.

*“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that **the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves.**” 2 Corinthians 4:7*

Not only do we need a power greater than our own, Jesus said He rendered Satan powerless in Hebrews 2:14:

*“Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death **He [Jesus] might render powerless him [Satan] who had the power of death, that is, the devil.**” Hebrews 2:14*

What does this verse mean for you and me? It means as we walk by faith, we are walking in God’s power over Satan. Another way of saying this is Satan is a “toothless” lion when we depend upon, rest upon, and draw upon God’s power. We see this truth confirmed in 1 John 4:4:

*“You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because **greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.**” 1 John 4:4*

Since you, as a Christian, contain all of the Holy Spirit’s power, you can walk in dependence on that power to defeat every one of Satan’s strategies to keep you in bondage to your woundedness.

Question: How might it change how you view Satan’s involvement in your woundedness if you truly believed you have the Holy Spirit’s power available to you every moment to defeat Satan?

Engaging God: Seek God to persuade you in a deeper way that you have available to you at every moment the Holy Spirit’s power over Satan.

3. God Will Protect You From Satan Through the ARMOR of Christ

*“Put on the **full armor of God** so that you [in God’s power] can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.” Ephesians 6:11*

The moment you are saved, God makes His spiritual armor available to you. Your spiritual armor is Christ Himself. However, you have a choice to either put on the armor or not. As you walk in moment by moment dependence upon God, you are wearing (and have the full protection of) His armor.

However, when you choose to walk in fleshly independence apart from God, then you, in effect, have taken off your armor. God’s armor can no longer offer you protection against Satan and his demonic forces. Therefore, it is crucial you continue to walk by faith so the armor of God will continually protect you from the “fiery darts” of Satan. We see this in Ephesians 6:16:

*“... above all, taking the shield of **faith** with which you will be able to **quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.**” Ephesians 6:16*

Question: How might it change how you view Satan’s involvement in your woundedness if you truly believed you can put on the armor of Christ and resist the fiery darts of Satan?

Engaging God: Seek God to give you a greater desire to walk in His spiritual armor so you will be able to withstand the fiery darts of the enemy.

4. As a Result, You No Longer Have to SUCCUMB to Satan’s Strategies to Keep You in Bondage to Your Woundedness

*“The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.
The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.” Romans 16:20*

*“Submit therefore to God. **Resist the devil and he will flee from you.**” James 4:7*

If Satan has been defeated and you have the Holy Spirit’s power over Satan and you are putting on your spiritual armor, then you no longer have to fall for any of his schemes to keep you in bondage to your woundedness. You can choose to walk in the Spirit’s power over Satan. The key truth concerning this point is this:

**God wants to move you from just KNOWING the truth about
Satan’s schemes to BELIEVING God’s truth and CHOOSING
to walk in His truth and power MOMENT by MOMENT.**

As we have discussed before, knowing the truth intellectually doesn’t necessarily mean we believe the truth. We need the Holy Spirit to renew our minds to believe and choose to walk in His truth and His power over every strategy of Satan.

Question: How might it change how you view Satan's involvement in your woundedness if you truly believed you no longer have to be defeated by Satan's schemes?

Engaging God: Seek the Holy Spirit to further persuade you of the truth that you no longer have to succumb to the schemes of Satan. Ask God to persuade you that Satan's schemes of lies and deception are no match for the overcoming power of God's truth.

Based on these truths, let's look at some practical examples of steps of faith that will engage the Holy Spirit's power to thwart the strategies of Satan.

Your Part in Defeating Satan's Schemes to Keep You in Bondage to Woundedness

1. Be VIGILANT concerning the schemes and strategies of Satan.

"Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." 1 Peter 5:8

We have already discussed several of Satan's strategies. The key in dealing with his strategies is **spiritual vigilance**. I simply define spiritual vigilance as being spiritually aware and sensitive to the Holy Spirit's revelation of Satan's schemes. As we abide and depend on Christ, He will be our vigilance to reveal and expose any of Satan's schemes against you.

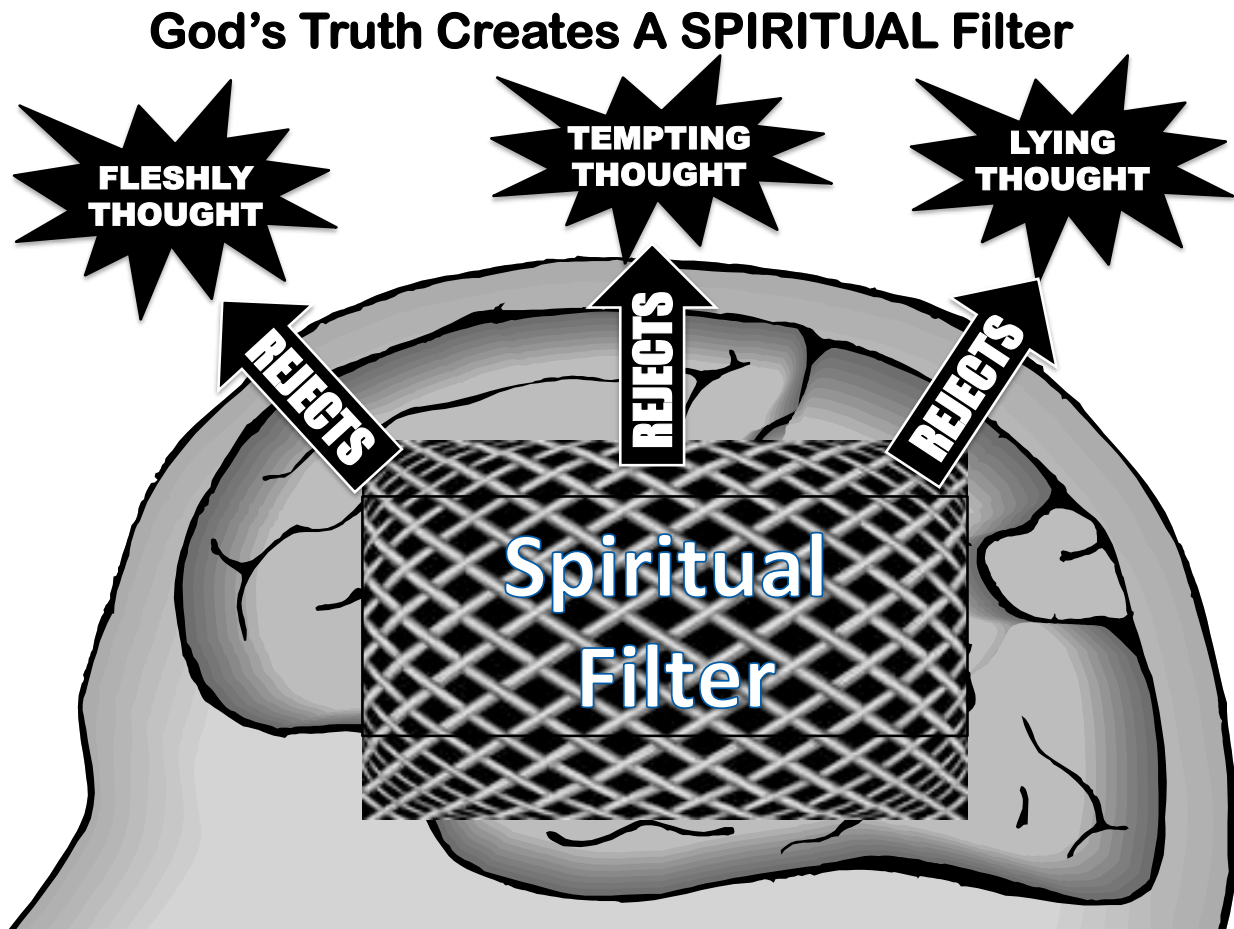
Engaging God: Ask Christ to be your spiritual vigilance in order to discern where Satan is working in your life.

2. LEARN the truth about Satan from God's Word which develops your spiritual FILTER.

"For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart." Hebrews 4:12

Learning God's truth will build what I call a "spiritual filter" in your mind. As you learn the truth, and receive revelation from the Holy Spirit about the truth, your spiritual filter will grow. As it grows, you will be able to more clearly discern God's truth versus your false beliefs. You will also be able to discern whether your thoughts are from the Lord or are from Satan.

Below is an illustration of a spiritual filter rejecting thoughts inserted by Satan.

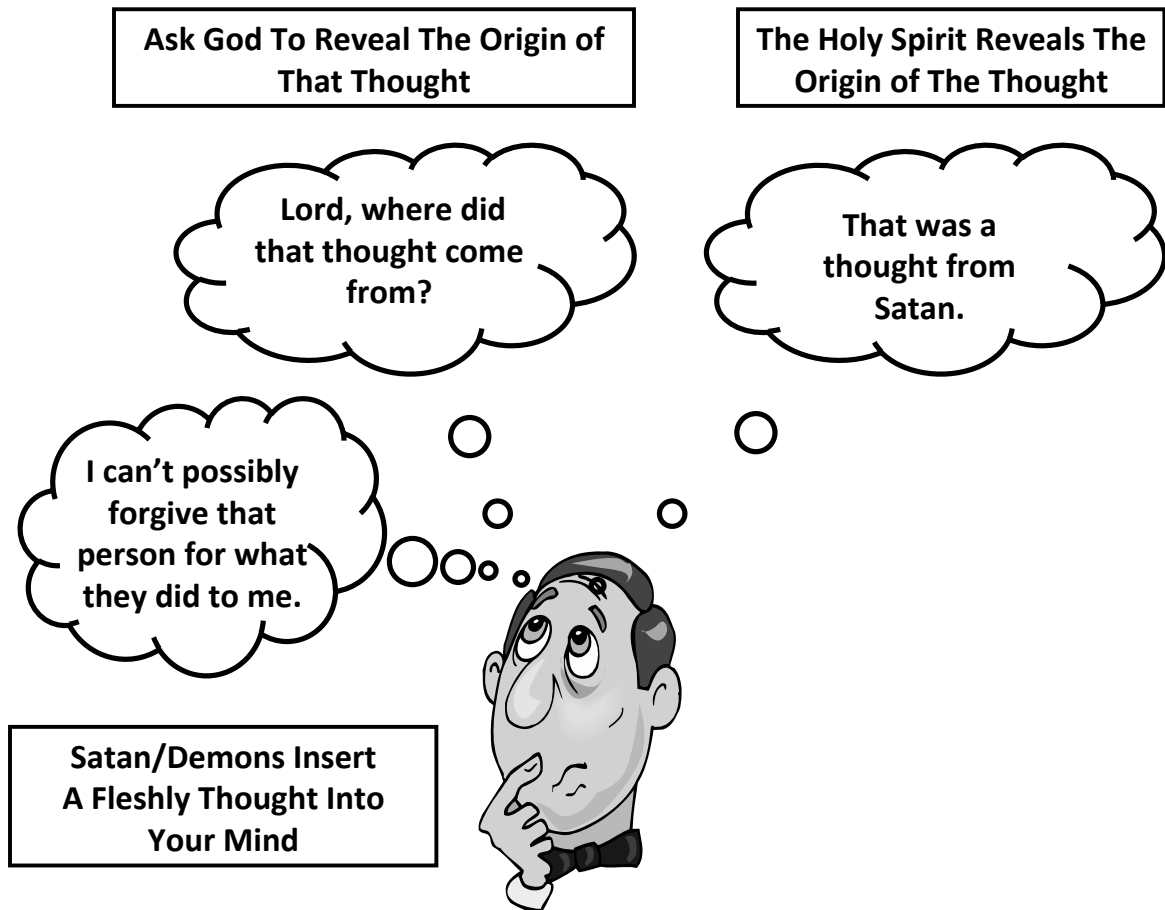


Engaging God: Seek the Lord to build a “spiritual” filter as you learn the truth from God’s word so you will be able to discern the origin of your thoughts.

3. Ask the Holy Spirit to REVEAL to you if the thoughts you are thinking are of Satan.

*“Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but **test the spirits** to see whether they are from God.” 1 John 4:1*

In these next three points, I would like to give some practical examples of engaging God to deal with thoughts that come from Satan. Let’s assume you have the following thought: “I can’t possibly forgive that person for what they did to me.” Before you act on that thought, ask God to tell you the origin of that thought. Listen closely to what the Holy Spirit reveals to you. The following is an illustration of what this may look like:

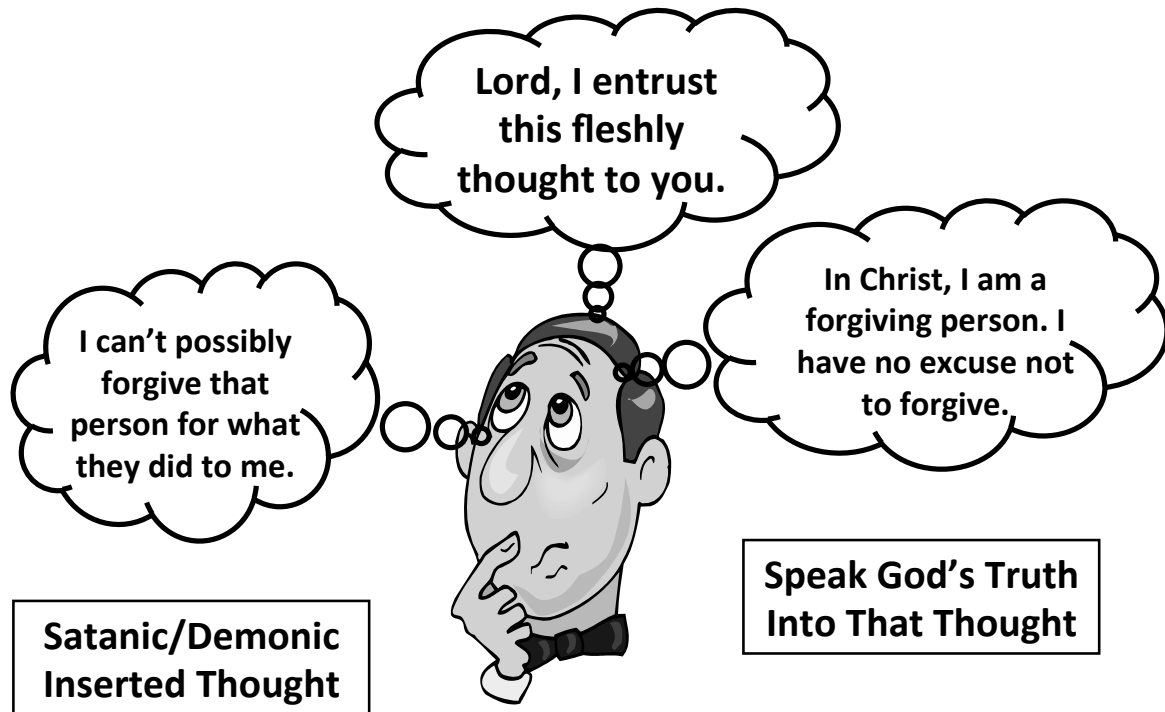


Engaging God: Develop a habit of asking the Holy Spirit to reveal the origin of your thoughts, especially, your lying, tempting, doubting, fleshly and self-condemning thoughts. Ask Him to expose those thoughts that are coming from Satan and teach you to mentally “flag” suspicious thoughts that produce negative emotions as likely coming from the enemy.

4. ENTRUST the Satanic-inserted thoughts to God, and SPEAK God’s truth against those thoughts and take them captive.

Once the Holy Spirit reveals to you that the thoughts are coming from Satan, entrust those thoughts to Him to take captive. Entrusting your thoughts to God means you are not taking ownership of those Satanic thoughts. Then, speak God’s truth against those thoughts. If they don't line up with God’s truth then reject them. Below is an illustration of this truth.

**Entrust Satanic/Demonic Inserted Thoughts
To God For Him To Take Them Captive**



5. If the Satanic inserted thoughts continue coming, KEEP drawing on God's POWER to remove those thoughts.

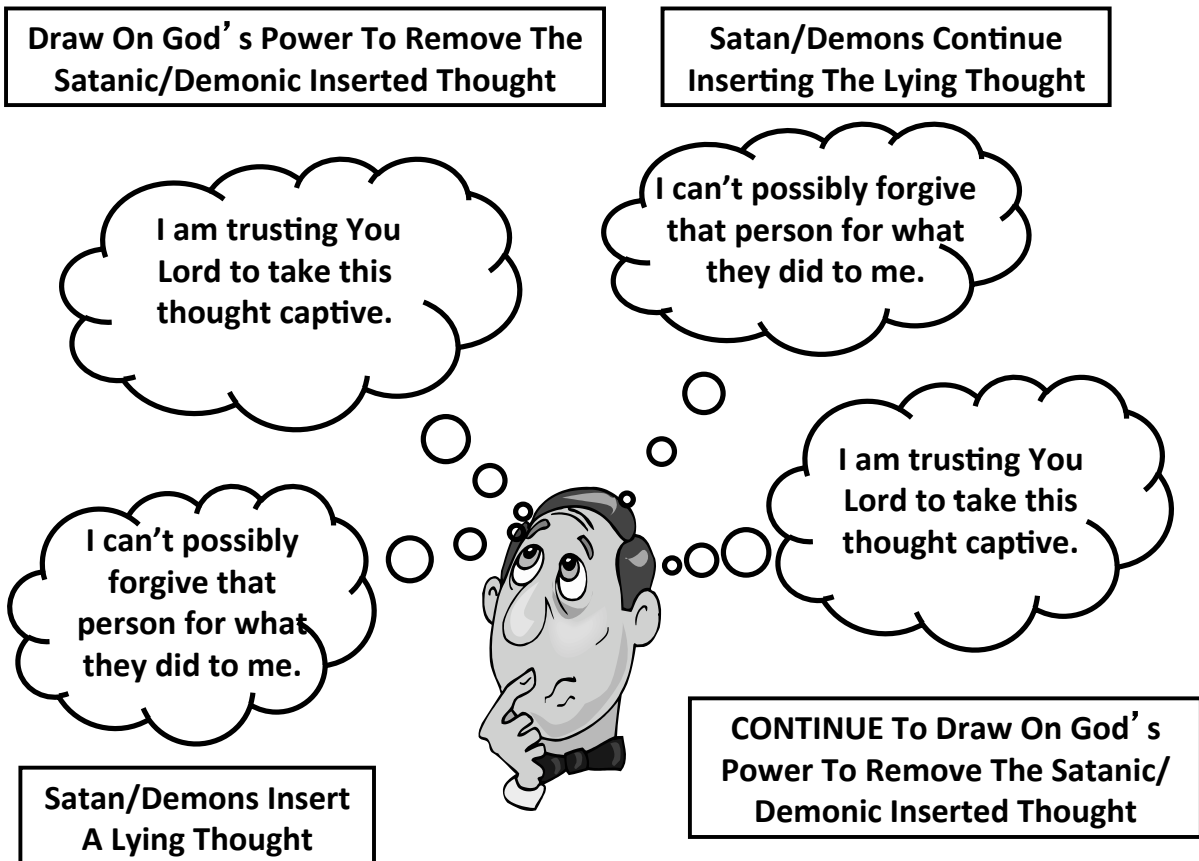
"Submit [keep submitting] therefore to God. Resist [keep resisting] the devil, and he will [eventually] flee from you." James 4:7

Many times Satan continuously assaults you with the same thoughts concerning your woundedness. Why?

Satan will CONTINUOUSLY bombard you with recurring thoughts concerning your woundedness to WEAR YOU DOWN so you will eventually GIVE UP and TAKE OWNERSHIP of those thoughts.

Because of this satanic strategy, you must persist in drawing upon God's power to remove those thoughts. That is why I added in James 4:7 that submitting and resisting are continuous actions when it comes to engaging God to take your thoughts captive.

We must see this as a constant battle because Satan will not give up easily when it comes to your thought life, especially in areas of deep-seated false beliefs attached to your woundedness. Here is an illustration to make this point:



It may take some time before Satan FINALLY gives up, so continue to seek God to REMOVE any Satanic/demonic thoughts.

DAY THREE

Steps of Faith in Dealing with Satan's Strategies

What I would like to do in this section is to restate Satan's strategies; share the truth concerning that strategy; then give a practical example, followed by other examples of what steps of faith may look like in dealing with Satan's strategies.

STRATEGY #1 - Satan will INSERT unbelieving, doubting, tempting, fleshly, and condemning THOUGHTS to pull you back into your prison.

The Truth: Through the power of the Spirit and through God's truth, you can take every thought captive.

*"We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are **taking every thought captive** to the obedience of Christ." 2 Corinthians 10:5*

Example: Let's assume you are being tempted to seek revenge on some level against your mother who wounded you.

Steps of faith: “Lord, I am being tempted to retaliate in some way against my mother. I am asking You to take that tempting thought captive and move me away from seeking that revenge.”

STRATEGY #2 – Interpreting messages you heard from family members, friends, etc.

The Truth: Regardless of how the enemy has helped you misinterpret the messages from others, the Lord promises to renew your mind to the truth.

*“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the **renewing of your mind**...”*
Romans 12:2

Example: Let’s assume that as a result of Satan’s influencing you to misinterpret your messages when you were young, you have a false belief that God is like your angry, abusive and controlling father. What is an example of a step of faith to draw on the truth of Romans 12:2?

Steps of faith: “Lord, I am putting my earthly father’s face on Your face. Renew my mind to the truth that unlike my earthly father, You are for me and love me unconditionally.”

STRATEGY #3 – Satan keeps replaying past wounding events in your mind to reinforce the walls of your prison cells.

The Truth: Since you have the mind of Christ, you can draw on His discernment to recognize when Satan wants to replay your wounding events and then choose not to allow him to do that.

*“... we have the **mind of Christ**.” 1 Corinthians 2:16*

Example: Let’s assume you were physically abused as a child and that Satan keeps replaying those wounding events in your mind. Let’s look at a step of faith to engage God with His truth.

Steps of faith: “Lord, I am asking you to BE my discernment so not only will I be aware when the enemy is replaying those events in my mind, but I will know I can say, ‘no’ to Satan when he tries to replay those events.”

STRATEGY #4 - Once you start down the path of spiritual healing, Satan will pull out ALL stops to RESIST you and DRAG you back to prison.

The Truth: You have God’s power within you to withstand Satan’s attempts to cause you to resist God.

*“Submit therefore to God. **Resist** [in the Spirit’s power]
the devil and he will flee from you.” James 4:7*

Example: Let’s assume you are seeking the Lord to renew your mind to the truth that you can be set free from anger towards the one who caused your woundedness, but Satan is thwarting your efforts.

Steps of faith: “Lord, I am trusting in Your power to break the resistance Satan is trying to create in my faith walk.”

STRATEGY #5 - Satan will TEMPT you to keep using your ESCAPE MECHANISMS to try to stop or anesthetize the pain.

The Truth: The one true Way of escape from your woundedness is Jesus, The Way.

*“... I am **THE WAY**, the truth and the Life....” John 14:6*

*“No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation **will provide the way of escape** also, so that you will be able to endure it.” 1 Corinthians 10:13*

Example: Let's assume your escape mechanism is _____.

Steps of faith: “Lord, the pain is too great. I want to escape by _____ but I am asking You to transform me so I will no longer go to _____ to escape or anesthetize my pain.”

STRATEGY #6 - Satan will tempt you to STAY BUSY in order to distract you from dealing with your woundedness.

The Truth: As we walk in a moment by moment dependence on Christ, fixing our eyes on Jesus, then we will not let Satan distract us with busy-ness.

*“... **fixing our eyes on Jesus**, the author and perfecter of faith....” Hebrews 12:2*

*“Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to **stand firm against the schemes of the devil**.” Ephesians 6:11*

Example: Let's assume Satan continually tempts you to use busy-ness as an excuse not to seek healing.

Steps of faith: “Lord, you have revealed to me I am falling for Satan's temptation to use busy-ness to keep me from seeking You for healing. I am asking You in your power to move me away from this distraction and give me the willingness to seek You to be healed.”

STRATEGY #7 - Satan will try to keep you in BONDAGE to any UNFORGIVENESS you have towards the one(s) who wounded you.

The Truth: As you realize and walk in the truth you are a forgiving person in Christ, the enemy will no longer be able to keep you in bondage to unforgiveness. We will look at the issue of forgiveness in greater depth later in this lesson.

*“Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, **forgiving each other**, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.” Ephesians 4:32*

Example: Let's assume Satan is constantly strategizing to keep you in the bondage of unforgiveness towards your brother who molested you.

Steps of faith: “Lord, I am continually being tempted not to forgive my brother for what He did to me. I am asking You in your power to set me free from the bondage of unforgiveness towards him and teach me to act out of my heart of forgiveness towards him.”

Personal Note:

I don't know your spiritual background but I do not talk to Satan or his demons directly. I believe that is God's job. I believe our part is to engage God and His power in order that He will rebuke and deal with Satan and his demonic forces. We see an example of this in Jude 1:9:

“But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not himself dare to condemn him for slander but said, ‘The Lord rebuke you!’”

Summary

I hope this will make you aware of some of the strategies of the enemy to keep you in bondage. We need to be aware Satan will pull out all the stops to keep you in the prison cells of your woundedness. Before we leave this topic, I want to give you one more key truth:

Key Truth: Keep in mind that even if Satan did not exist, we would still have the flesh within us to accomplish the same objectives as the enemy. However, since Satan and the demonic exist, it is crucial to our healing process to learn the truth about Satan's schemes and engage God to thwart those schemes.

PART TWO: FORGIVENESS

Forgiveness and Healing

“Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.” Colossians 3:13

The issue of forgiveness is paramount to the healing process because most people's woundedness was created by others. This is why I want to spend the rest of this lesson on this subject. Let's begin by looking at three types of forgiveness:

- **Forgiving the person(s) who wounded you.**
- **Forgiving God**
- **Forgiving yourself.**

Before we talk about forgiveness, let's look at unforgiveness and the consequences of continuing to live from it.

A. UNFORGIVENESS

1. What is UNFORGIVENESS?

Unforgiveness results when you:

- **take ownership of someone else's offense** towards you with the result that
- **you engage your flesh** which says, “I don't have to, or I don't want to, forgive that person.”

Taking ownership of someone else's offense towards you simply means you receive that offense and allow your flesh to act on it.

Some examples of offenses would be:

- Verbal and non-verbal words of rejection, anger, guilt, shame, condemnation, etc.
- Abuse (sexual, physical, emotional, and/or verbal).
- Lack of being valued, loved, and/or accepted in the ways you expected or needed.
- Adultery.
- Abandonment.

Question: Can you think of someone in your life who has offended you and then you have taken ownership of that offense? Write that person's name down and the way(s) he/she offended you.

Question: What feelings come to mind when you think about that person and what he/she did to offend or wound you?

Engaging God: If no one immediately comes to mind, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal if there is anyone you can't bring to mind that you have not forgiven.

2. Unforgiveness Leads to Exercising our FLESHLY Right NOT to Forgive

Concerning unforgiveness, we can move from not wanting to forgive to what I call a "fleshly right" not to forgive. In other words:

***When someone offends you, wounds you, or sins against you in some way,
you BELIEVE you have the RIGHT NOT to forgive them.***

When our flesh has been offended, it often must fight back. It is like a prosecutor who builds a case against the person who has wounded us. As a result, the flesh demands, justifies, and defends its fleshly right not to forgive the offender.

Over the years, my flesh continued building a case against my abusive dad and why, because of that abuse, I had the right not to forgive him. The longer I spent in unforgiveness, the more reinforced my fleshly right became.

Before we go to the next section, I would like to ask you a question.

Question: Do you have the right to **not** forgive your offender? _____

3. REASONS Why We Feel or Believe We Have the Fleshly Right Not to Forgive

The following are some examples of reasons why we feel or believe we have the fleshly right not to forgive.

1. This person does not deserve forgiveness.
2. This person has ruined my life.
3. Forgiving this person makes me look weak.
4. This person has to pay for my woundedness. They need to be punished.
5. If I forgive this person, it would mean I'm overlooking or condoning their offenses towards me.

Questions: Are you holding offenses against anyone? If so, do any of the reasons given above apply to you? Please write those reasons down. Are there any other reasons not listed above that you believe or feel are justifications for not forgiving your offender? Please write those down.

Question: Do you believe that in God's eyes you have the right not to forgive that person for any of the reasons you listed?

4. What Are Some of the RESULTS of Unforgiveness?

Unforgiveness is like living in a toxic waste dump because its toxicity is destructive both to you and every one around you. Below are some of the short and long term results of unforgiveness.

If we choose not to forgive, what will be some of the consequences?

- a. In your mind, you continue to think and rethink about the wounding events and the person(s) who offended you.
- b. Emotionally it can cause stress, anxiety, and even depression.
- c. It can lead to unresolved frustration, anger, and bitterness towards your offender.
- d. You continue to take ownership of offenses from the person(s) offending you.
- e. It opens you up for Satan to gain a foothold and, eventually, a stronghold in your life.
- f. On some level, it will poison every one of your relationships.

Question: Are you experiencing any of the consequences listed above due to your unforgiveness? Please write those down. Write down any other consequences you are experiencing due to your unforgiveness.

Engaging God: If it is not readily apparent what your unforgiveness is causing to you or through you to others, ask God to reveal that to you. Seek God to show you what your life would be like if you were willing for Him to free you of unforgiveness.

5. Unforgiveness Eventually Builds a “WALL” Between You and the Person You Have Not Forgiven.

When you build a brick wall, you have to do so one brick at a time. Imagine each offense being a brick. When an offense occurs between you and another person and is not dealt with, then brick by brick a wall is being built between you and them. The longer you live in unforgiveness, the higher and thicker the wall becomes.

Engaging God: Seek the Holy Spirit to reveal to you if you have built a wall between you and another person due to past offenses.

6. Your Unforgiveness Leads to Your Being CONTROLLED by Your Offender.

Your unforgiveness means that every time you think of your offender, you have recurring negative fleshly thoughts and emotions associated with your wounding events that keep you in continual bondage to them. In a sense, that person has control over you because of your unforgiving thoughts and emotions towards him/her.

This is like being permanently shackled or chained to your offender. As long as you continue in unforgiveness, you are shackled to this person and dragging him/her around with you wherever you go. You are choosing to keep the wounds and pain fresh when you won't let go of the offender through forgiveness and move on.

DAY FOUR

7. Unforgiveness Effectively CUTS off the Flow of Christ's Life in You and Through You.

I believe the most damaging consequence of unforgiveness is it effectively cuts off the flow of Christ's life in you with the result you experience the “death” talked about in Romans 8:6:

*“The mind set on the flesh is **DEATH**....” Romans 8:6*

What does the word “death” mean in this passage?

“Death,” as it applies to unforgiveness, is the result of the flow of Christ's life being effectively CUT OFF in you and through you.

By way of a reminder, here are some examples of Christ's life that are available to you:

Unconditional love	Victory	Worth	Acceptance	Faith
Freedom	Patience	Strength	Peace	Power
Forgiveness	Understanding	Security	Fearlessness	Wisdom
Discernment	Adequacy	Humility	Christ-confidence	Boldness

Righteousness
Hope

Selflessness
Gentleness

Rest
Control

Compassion
Faithfulness

Courage
Joy

Why is the consequence of unforgiveness the most devastating to your walk in Christ? Because you have effectively cut off the flow of all of the above characteristics of Christ's life in you. In other words, your unforgiveness hinders the flow of Christ's freedom, victory, forgiveness, etc. in you and through you.

Let's look at this truth in light of the branch-vine example used by Jesus in John 15. In this passage, you are the branch and Jesus is the Vine. As long as there is no unforgiveness (or any other persistent sin you are hanging onto in disobedience to Christ) in your heart, then there is an ongoing flow of Christ's life in and through you. However, when you choose not to forgive someone, then you have effectively cut yourself off from the flow of Christ's life.

Let me give you an example to further explain.

The truth is that you have in you, through Christ, all of the Spirit's power. However, if you choose to live in unforgiveness, you effectively cut off the Holy Spirit's power to overpower your flesh and Satan. Not only that, you have limited the very power that is going to set you free from your unforgiveness, heal your wounded heart, and transform you to live with an attitude of forgiveness towards your offender. Therefore, we must take a long look at this consequence of unforgiveness because of the damage it can do to our spiritual progress and transformation.

Question: Are you able to see how serious unforgiveness is in relationship to Christ's life flowing in you?

Meditate: On the truth that your unforgiveness creates "death" in you because it stops the flow of all of those characteristics listed above.

Engaging God: Ask the Lord to reveal to you in a deeper way the death that is created when you choose to live in unforgiveness.

8. Ultimately, Unforgiveness IMPRISONS You.

When you have an attitude of unforgiveness toward someone, you have placed yourself in your own prison. Since you have effectively limited Christ's life and power flowing in you, the result will be you build a prison made up of walls of anger, bitterness, and unforgiveness. Here is a further problem:

***The LONGER you live in unforgiveness, the more FORTIFIED
and REINFORCED your prison walls become.***

Question: Have you realized before now that the only person imprisoned by unforgiveness is the one who is not forgiving? It is like drinking poison and expecting your offender to die.

Engaging God: Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you if you have any unforgiveness in your heart or if you are holding on to any offenses against anyone. Seek Him to bring to mind anyone you are avoiding or have a grudge against because they hurt or offended you in the past.

9. Finally, Unforgiveness Results In HARDENING YOUR HEART Towards God.

Just like false beliefs about God can harden our hearts towards God, unforgiveness will result in the same thing. If Christ's life is no longer flowing in you and you continue to reinforce your prison walls, then you will move further and further away from God and His healing power.

Consequently, unforgiveness is not only toxic to you and those around you, it DISTANCES you from experiencing God and HARDENS your heart towards Him.

Question: Do you feel your unforgiveness is creating a greater distancing between you and God? If so, in what ways is it creating a distance from Him?

I hope this section on unforgiveness has given you a clearer picture of unforgiveness and the consequences that result. Now, let's look at what God's truth has to say about forgiveness.

B. The TRUTH About Forgiveness

I believe there are four key truths that are crucial in understanding forgiveness. Let's take a look at them.

1. Truth #1 – GOD Will Deal with Your Offender. Your Part is to Forgive.

“Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord.” Romans 12:19

The temptation of your flesh is to retaliate or get revenge on your offender. This will not lead to forgiveness. It will only lead to more sin and a greater resistance to the work of the Holy Spirit to heal you. Remember, there are always consequences of sin, so your offender does not get off the hook if he/she is not repentant. There is a price to pay but that price will be determined by God and not by you. Believe me when I say this, God does not condone what happened to you and there will be consequences. Therefore, leave your offender in the hands of God and move towards forgiveness, not revenge.

2. Truth #2 - In the Midst of Your Sin God Forgave You UNCONDITIONALLY

"And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions" Colossians 2:13

God did not wait for you to confess and repent of your sins before you were forgiven. His forgiveness took place over 2000 years ago on the cross, long before you ever had the chance to repent of your sin. Your flesh recoils at this truth because it demands your offender confess and repent before you offer forgiveness. Where would we be today if God dealt with us in the same

way? The good news for you and me is that God's forgiveness is unconditional. The same applies to you and forgiving your offender.

Your forgiveness is UNCONDITIONAL in that you forgive WHETHER or NOT your offender ever repents of his/her offenses against you.

Question: If you are struggling with this truth, is it possible you are believing your forgiveness of your offender is contingent upon his/her repenting to you first?

Meditate: If this truth is a struggle for you, meditate on Colossians 2:13.

Engaging God: Seek the Lord to persuade you your forgiveness towards your offender must be the same unconditional forgiveness the Lord has extended to you. Remember, He will forgive your offender through you if you seek Him to do so.

3. Truth #3 – God's Forgiveness is COMPLETE.

“It is finished.” John 19:30

*“...having forgiven us **all** our transgressions” Colossians 2:13*

When Jesus said on the cross “It is finished,” He was saying, “I have paid everything in full.” This means past, present and future sins have all been paid for. Accordingly, as Christ has totally forgiven you, so should you totally forgive your offender. To confirm this truth, look again at the last part of Colossians 2:13.

Meditate: on John 19:30

Engaging God: Seek the Spirit to transform your heart so you can totally forgive your offender.

Remember: Forgiveness is an act of obedience to Christ and not based on feelings which likely will come later than the act of forgiveness. You may also need to repeat the exercise of forgiveness if there are multiple, deep and/or persistent woundedness caused by your offender. Persevere in forgiving your offender in Christ.

4. Truth #4 - Since God Forgave You, He NO Longer Holds ANY Sin Against You.

“He has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west.” Psalm 103:12

*“I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and **remembers your sins no more**.” Isaiah 43:25*

*“... **having canceled out the certificate of debt** consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and **He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.**” Colossians 2:14*

When we read the passages above, we can see God has not only removed our sins, but He also no longer remembers them. In other words, He no longer holds the offense against us.

If you were deep in debt to your creditors, how would you feel if you got a call from a friend saying he/she has totally paid off your debt? Joy? Freedom? Relief? We should feel that and even more towards the Lord because He totally canceled our debt of sin. He will never hold your sin against you. How do you think this applies to the debt created by the person who wounded you?

Because God has totally canceled your debt, then you are to CANCEL (forgive) the debt that was created by the person who wounded you.

Meditate: on Psalm 103:12, Isaiah 43:25, and Colossians 2:14, above, and think about the truth that the Lord totally canceled the debt of your sin and how that should affect your attitude towards your offender.

Engaging God: If you are struggling with totally forgiving your offender, ask the Lord to transform your heart and give you the willingness to forgive. Seek God to reveal the truth that God, Himself, will forgive your offender through you if you ask and trust Him to do so.

C. What Are the RESULTS of Forgiveness?

Now that we know some of the key truths about forgiveness, let's explore some of the results when we do forgive.

1. First and foremost it RESTORES Christ's life flowing in and through you.

*"I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, **he bears much fruit**; for apart from Me you can do nothing." John 15:5*

*"He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From **his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.**' " John 7:38*

We said earlier that unforgiveness effectively cuts off the flow of Christ's life in you. Conversely, forgiveness allows the flow of Christ's life, love, acceptance, etc., to continue flowing in and through you.

2. Forgiveness TEARS DOWN the walls of your prison and sets you FREE.

*"... you will know the truth, and the **truth will make you free.**" John 8:32*

*"It was for **freedom that Christ set us free**; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery." Galatians 5:1*

Just as unforgiveness built the walls of your prison, so forgiveness will tear your prison walls down and set you free. Your freedom will come in two categories: What you will be free FROM and what you will be free TO. Let's look at some examples of both.

You are free FROM

- Bondage and death caused by your unforgiveness.
- The frustration, anger, and bitterness towards your offender.
- The pain associated with your woundedness.
- Having to hold the offense(s) against your offender.

You are free TO:

- Love your offender with Christ's love.
- Experience Christ's life in and through you. (i.e., His peace, rest, etc.).
- Have compassion for your offender.
- Be used of the Lord to move your offender to repent of his/her offense.

3. Forgiveness allows you to DIE to your fleshly right not to forgive.

*“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and **dies**, it remains alone; but **if it dies, it bears much fruit.**” John 12:24*

The “death” referred to in this verse, as it relates to forgiveness, is a turning away or realizing the death your fleshly right not to forgive produces. Therefore, as the Lord transforms your heart to forgive your offender, you will die to or move away from wanting to exercise your fleshly right not to forgive.

4. Forgiveness will be part of the HEALING

Forgiveness is an essential key to healing. We said earlier that forgiveness opens the way for you to be able to experience the flow of Christ's life in you. It also opens the door for the Holy Spirit's power to flow in you to begin the healing process. Therefore, the longer you stay in unforgiveness, the longer it will take you to heal.

5. Forgiveness sets the stage for RECONCILING the relationship with your offender.

*“If therefore you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way; **first be reconciled to your brother**, and then come and present your offering.”
Matthew 5:23, 24*

When it comes to reconciliation with your offender, forgiveness is the first step. Reconciliation involves both parties so if your offender is not willing to reconcile, then reconciliation won't take place. However, if you are walking in Christ's humility and forgive your offender, God honors that step on your part in restoring the relationship.

If you have forgiven your offender, but you have not reconciled, then I would encourage you to pray for reconciliation. I have personally witnessed a number of circumstances where the person who was wounded prayed for their offender and reconciliation took place. It is nothing short of supernatural but it can happen.

Now that you have a better understanding of forgiveness towards others, let's look at two other areas of forgiveness: forgiving God and forgiving yourself.

E. Forgiving God

You may be struggling with forgiving God for what He allowed to happen to you. Just to reiterate what I said in the previous chapter on woundedness and our concept of God, the key is that God allows man's free will to function. Because of the evil nature of mankind and the

influence of Satan, terrible things can and do happen. We can try to hold God accountable for those terrible things, but this is what He has allowed. However, you do not have to be held hostage to the woundedness He allowed. You can seek Him to give you the willingness to forgive Him and allow Him to heal your woundedness.

Note: God is not the source of, nor does He initiate, the evil things that happen in this world. But God has the ability to bring good out of the bad things that happen to us, including our woundedness, if we let Him.

Engaging God: If you struggle with forgiving God, seek Him to give you the willingness to do so.

F. Forgiving Yourself

You may be able to forgive the person who wounded you and God but you can't forgive yourself. You may have to forgive yourself because you may be holding yourself responsible for the wounding event. This is especially true when you were too young to understand that what happened was not your fault.

If that is where you are, please go back to the section in this lesson titled: **The Truths About Forgiveness**. Please read and pray through these truths again keeping in mind that since God forgave you, you can forgive yourself.

Engaging God: If you struggle with forgiving yourself, seek the Lord to give you the willingness to do so.

DAY FIVE

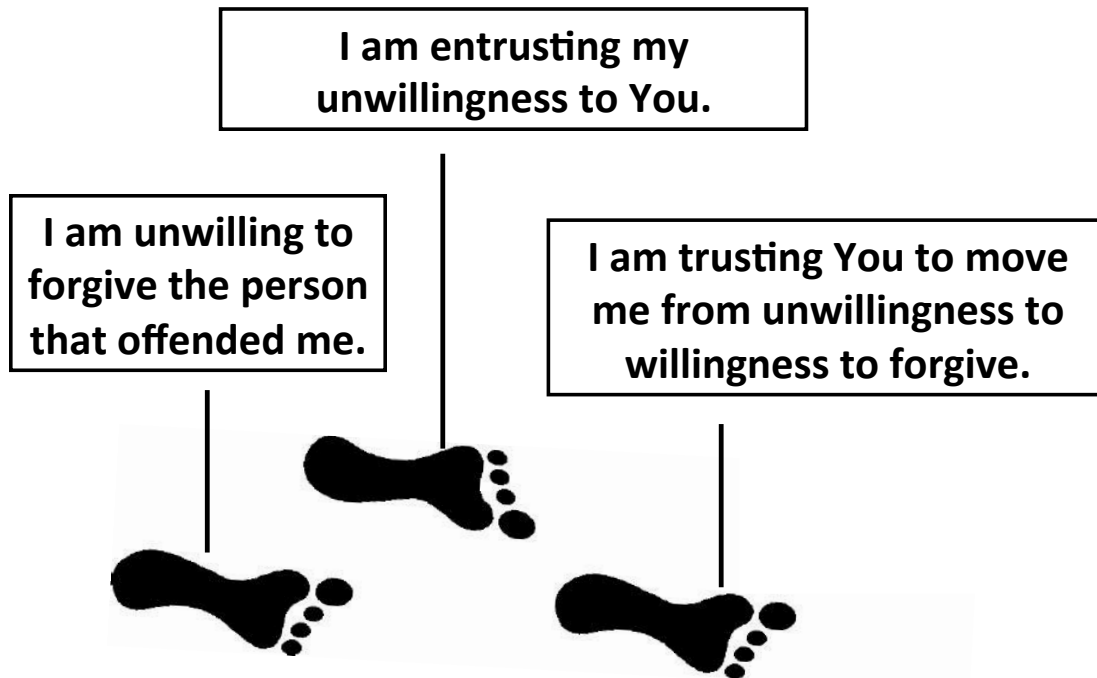
Steps of Faith Concerning The Forgiveness Process

Example #1: Let's assume that you are unwilling to forgive the person who wounded you.

The Truth: God knows you are unwilling and He is the only One who can transform your unwillingness into having a willing heart to forgive your offender.

Steps of faith: "Lord. I can't forgive this person for what they did to me. I know that I have no excuse for not forgiving but I simply am unwilling to do so. I am asking you to transform my heart so that I will be willing to forgive."

The following diagram illustrates other steps you could take if you are unwilling to forgive.



Example #2: Your flesh is persuading you that you have the right not to forgive.

The Truth: God completely forgave you for your past, present and even future offenses towards Him. (i.e., sin). Therefore, since He forgave you unconditionally, then you have no right not to forgive.

Steps of faith: “Lord, continue to remind me that you extended me unconditional forgiveness so I have no right not to forgive. Remind me that you went to the cross for me so that I have no excuse for not forgiving.”

Example #3: You are saying to yourself, “If I forgive this person they may think that I am overlooking or condoning their sin.”

The Truth: God never condones or overlooks sin and neither should you. However, forgiveness does not in any way mean that you are overlooking or condoning their sin. In addition, you do not have to concern yourself with what your offender thinks. Your part is to forgive. Also, remember that God will deal with your offender’s sin. Since there are always consequences to sin, God will repay your offender.

Steps of faith: “I am afraid that if I forgive, I am telling my offender that I am overlooking their sin. Lord, persuade me that is a lie, that my part is to forgive, and that you will deal with my offender’s sin.”

Example #4: You don’t feel like forgiving.

The Truth: Forgiveness is a choice not a feeling. If you are walking in the power of the Holy Spirit, you can choose to forgive whether you feel like it or not.

Steps of faith: “Lord, I don’t feel like forgiving _____ for what they did to me. I am asking You to give me the willingness to choose to forgive even though nothing in my emotions agrees with that choice.”

ACTS Versus ATTITUDE of Forgiveness

*“So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a **HEART of forgiving each other**, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.” Colossians 3:12b, 13a (Emphasis mine)*

People have told me they have forgiven their offender. However, that does not mean they have an attitude or a heart of forgiveness towards that person. You see, there can be an “act” of forgiveness towards someone in a moment of time for the wounding event they caused. In my case with my dad, there were several “acts” of forgiveness as the Holy Spirit would bring to mind specific events that I had to forgive my dad for.

Depending upon how deep the wound is, obtaining an “attitude” or a heart of forgiveness may be a much longer process. God’s ultimate objective is to transform you so that you will have an attitude of forgiveness. Let me give you an example of what I mean.

A man was sharing how three men in his life rejected him in different ways. He told me that he had forgiven them, but every time that he or I brought them up, it was, for him, like sticking a knife into that wound and feeling the pain all over again. What I concluded was that even though he had extended acts of forgiveness towards them, he did not have an attitude of forgiveness because his woundedness had not yet been healed. This brings us to a key truth concerning an attitude of forgiveness:

An ATTITUDE of forgiveness takes place when the woundedness associated with the wounding event(s) has been HEALED.

Think about this: If your woundedness is not healed, you will have to forgive over and over again every time that person or the offense comes to mind. Therefore, God wants to heal you so that person no longer pushes your buttons of unforgiveness.

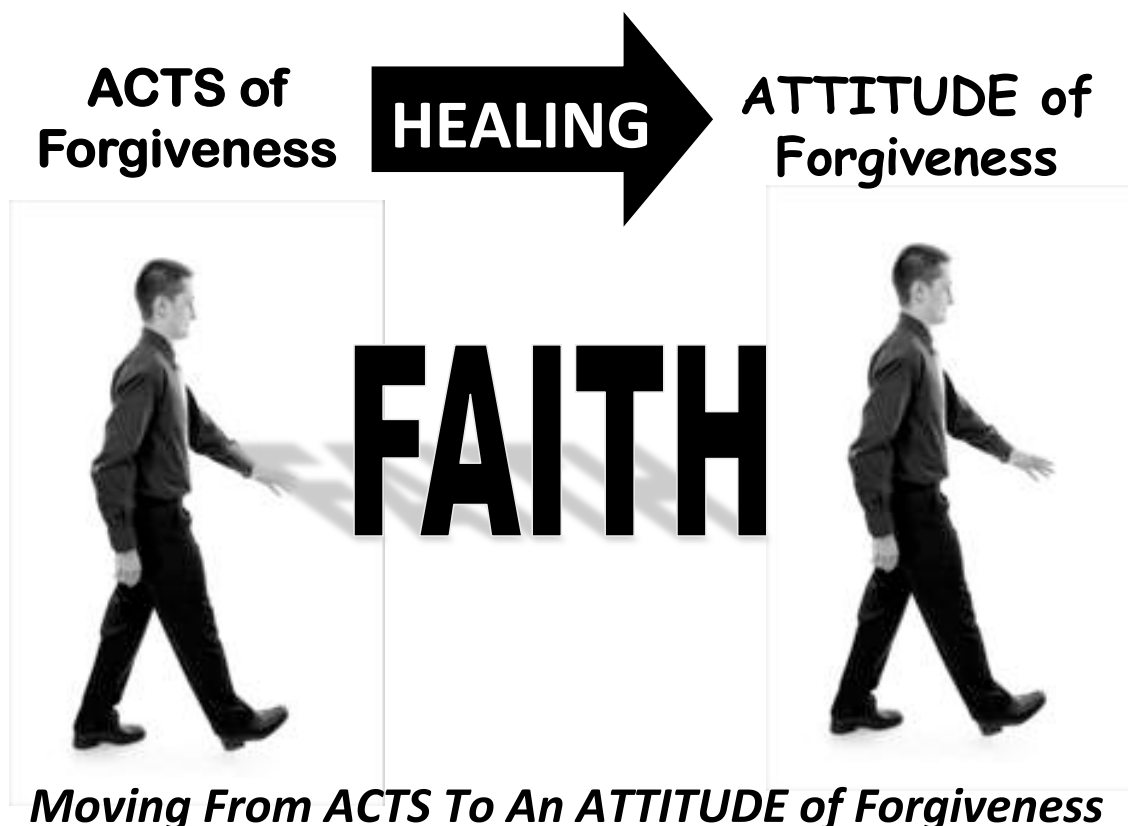
This is one of the great freedoms of unforgiveness. Over time I experienced this with my dad. Even though I had forgiven him, it took the Spirit some years to heal me from that woundedness. The result is that I can think of my dad, and I no longer harbor unforgiveness toward him. In fact, it freed me up to eventually love him even though he passed away prior to my healing.

Consequently, even though you may have made acts of forgiveness, an attitude of forgiveness may be a longer process because healing may be an extended process. Another way of looking at a heart of forgiveness is in Matthew 18:21,22:

“Then Peter came and said to Him, ‘Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?’ 22 Jesus said to him, ‘I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.’” Matthew 18:21,22

What is Jesus telling us in this verse? Is He telling us that we are to forgive only up to 490 times? I don't believe so. I believe what the Lord is pointing out is that we are to live from a Christ-like attitude or heart of forgiveness. This attitude will come when the healing is complete.

The illustration on the next page reveals how initially there must be acts of forgiveness which eventually lead to healing of your woundedness resulting in an attitude of forgiveness.



Summary

I pray that this section on forgiveness, at the very least, gives you an understanding of how seriously God takes this issue of unforgiveness and forgiveness. However, even more important than an understanding, I pray that you have taken steps of faith in order to move from acts of forgiveness to the freedom found in an attitude of forgiveness.

Juli's Journey To Forgiveness

This is a testimony by a lady named Juli that I believe will impact you in a profound way, especially if you have had trouble forgiving your abuser/offender. Here is Juli in her own words:

"The sexual abuse began when I was age 5. My parents had divorced at the age of 4. I still remember standing at the front door, looking out of the glass crying, 'Daddy, don't leave. Come back. Come back.' He did not come back. When my mother remarried a year later I thought, 'Maybe this daddy will love me. Maybe this daddy will take care of me.' This other daddy was broken and angry and would not know how to take care of me, and so began the secret story of abuse.

“My stepfather was abusive in many ways – physically, verbally, mentally, and sexually. Both my mother and stepfather were alcoholics, so I lived in a world of uncertainty at best and in darkness, isolation, and secrecy every single day. I felt so much shame, unworthiness, and abandonment, and I felt that I was all alone. I believed that I was a failure and that I was not worthy to be loved. I believed that I must be very bad (I felt so bad, and I believed that I was bad). In addition, there was self-protection, unforgiveness, and fear. One of my ways of escape was excelling in school. I received various awards and accomplishments and had wonderful friends while keeping my secret hidden from everyone who knew me.

”In my sophomore year in college, it was time - time to tell the truth - time to uncover the horror and the lies that we all had been living in. I will never forget going home to confront my mother and stepfather. As we sat to talk, I actually thought, ‘Now we will get some help and counseling. Now they will admit what has been going on, and we will begin to heal as a family.’ All of the years of pretending that someone would actually care for me came to an end as they denied the truth. My stepfather said, ‘Well, if anything did happen, it is your fault.’ Instead of my mother coming to protect me, she accusingly looked at me saying, ‘Well, is it true? Did you provoke him?’ My heart shattered, my life unraveled, and I clung to Jesus, the only hope and love I knew through some of the darkest days that I have known.

“I married, and as I held my firstborn daughter in my hands, I heard the Lord sweetly whisper, ‘This is how beautiful you are to me. This is how precious you are to my heart.’ Through the love that I had for my daughter, God continued to open up my heart to His unfathomable love and grace and mercy to heal my broken life. I began to grasp that Jesus is my life. He is my hope, my strength, and my resurrection. Jesus is the truth that I had longed for all of my life. I would not allow my stepfather to see my children (I had two more daughters) until he admitted the truth and sought counsel. This did not happen. It would be 7 years after my first daughter’s birth until I would see my stepfather again.

**“My sister called me one day (she was my stepfather’s daughter with my mother) in tears telling me that he was very sick and most likely was dying. At the time I was living in Dallas, and he was in a care facility in Austin. I just happened to be going to Austin that weekend and said that I would go see him for her. My first reaction was what I thought was righteous anger and vengeance for the pain and destruction that he had caused me all of those years. And so the Lord and I went to battle for my heart once again.

“Most often the Shepherd’s voice is so kind and tender when He speaks to me. This time He was firm and unrelenting. He showed me a picture of the Grand Canyon, and my stepfather and I were standing on opposite sides. He said, ‘There is only one difference between Joe and you, and that is the blood of my Son. That is the **only** difference. Do you really want him to be eternally separated from My love?’ The battle raged in my soul. How could I forgive Joe? How could I release the weight of suffering that I had carried for so much of my life? Yet, when the battle was won, my heart was surrendered, and I went to see Joe in obedience to the Lord with resolution that I did not want him to be separated from God’s love.

”It was a short visit. I was only there for about an hour. When I walked into his room, my arms shot up above me, and I embraced him in a hug (much to my surprise)! We chatted about everyday things. I told him about my children, our marriage, and the life that I was living. When I left, I told him that I loved him and that I would pray for his healing and wholeness. As I walked out, my emotions were all over the place. There was peace, tears, ambivalence, and relief that I had gotten through our time together.

”Three weeks later I got the call from my sister that this time he truly was dying. He wasn’t expected to make it more than 3 days. She was flying in from Colorado. I knew that I would go sit with him until she got there. I did not want him to die alone. This drive to Austin was much different. The first time I went out of obedience to the Lord. This second time I went out of love for Joe. I pleaded with the Lord to bring Joe to Himself. ‘Please let him come to know Jesus before he dies,’ I cried out in hope and anticipation.

”Upon entering his hospital room, I was filled with an unexplainable peace. I felt that the Lord was asking me to sit there and wait. So, I took Joe’s hand in my hand. And I waited and waited, until he woke up and began to speak. He admitted what he had done to me all of those years. He spoke the truth – something that I never thought that I would ever hear. He asked for my forgiveness. And then he told me the most stunning part. He said that when I went to see him three weeks earlier, he knew that God would forgive him. It was my going in obedience to love that opened his heart to the heart of God.

”He had a son, my brother, who died at the age of 8. He knew what it was like to lose an only son. He said that God’s only Son was enough - enough for his own forgiveness and healing and wholeness. God’s Son Jesus was enough to forgive him and bring him into peace with His Father. I believe that Joe had been in the very presence of the love of God those last three weeks. Jesus and His blood, His life, His love, and His resurrected power is enough. Jesus is enough for Joe. Jesus is enough for me, Jesus is enough for us all.

”The next day my sister arrived, and I helped her out in any way possible. In a few days it came time for me to go. By now Joe was going in and out of consciousness, so I walked up to his bed, kissed him on the forehead with his eyes closed, and I quietly said, ‘It is time for me to go now, Joe, but I will be back. I will celebrate our reconciliation at your service and will celebrate what our good God has done! And some day, I will see you in heaven, and we will know each other as we truly are.’”

“As I finished speaking, Joe woke up, completely present, sat up in bed, took my hand in his, looked me clearly in the eyes and said, ‘May God bless you, may He bless your family, and may you always be one with your children.’ Power fell in the room with a palatable force. Joe had not been sitting in a men’s bible study learning that he was to bless his children on his death bed. I believe that either that was the very voice of God speaking through Joe, or that he was speaking to me a blessing from heaven itself. The man who had cursed me since I was 5 years old, blessed me in his passing.

”This extraordinary gift of what transpired those last three weeks is what finally opened up the gates of my heart to receive more healing from the Lord’s hand. Through counseling, prayer, the love of family and friends, weeping and more prayer, counsel, and the Word, I can honestly say that the abuse that I experienced has no hold on me. It neither defines me nor imprisons me.

”The compassion of the Lord took my broken heart and made it whole. The Holy Spirit is the wisest, most Wonderful Counselor. I believe and know and have experienced that I am His beloved in whom He is well pleased. The Lord delights in me. He has never left me nor forsaken me. God is my good, good Papa. Jesus is my Life. He is my healing. He is my redemption, restoration, and hope.

This is a testimony of God’s great and glorious love - of His forgiveness and pursuit of His people for their good and for the glory of His name. Amen!”

LESSON SIX

Engaging God To Heal Your Woundedness

Final Key Truths

DAY ONE

PART ONE: Engaging God to Heal Your Woundedness

I hope these last three lessons have not only given you a deeper understanding but have given you a desire to take steps of faith. I would like to share with you some practical truths on engaging God to heal your woundedness. I am not providing a checklist or a list of steps but practical truths I believe will help you in seeking God for your healing.

Please don't just read through these truths, but rather seek the Spirit to tell you which of these truths apply specifically to you. Jesus says He is THE Way (John 14:6). When it comes to your healing, the Spirit has an individualized pathway to healing designed specifically for you. Accordingly, as you go through these truths, let Him be the one who leads you and guides you on His specific pathway for your healing.

1. OPEN the door of your heart and invite God IN to begin the healing process.

*'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and **opens the door**, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.'* Revelation 3:20

*"The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me. Because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; **He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted**, To proclaim liberty to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind."* Luke 4:18

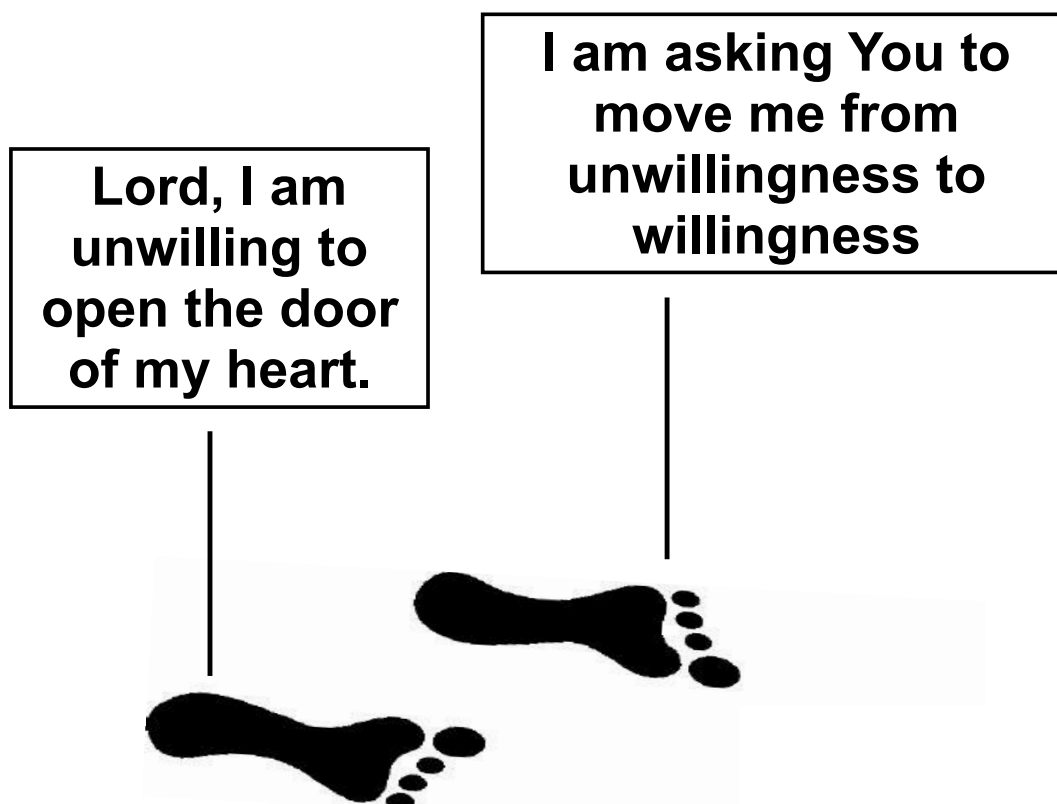
Some people have told me that God is not able or willing to heal them of their woundedness. That simply is not true. The Lord knocks and will keep knocking on the door of your heart. The question is: "Are you willing to open the door of your heart and let Him in to heal?" If you are willing, go to the door and let Him in. If you are not willing, ask Him to give you the willingness to let Him in because there can be no healing unless you allow the Spirit in to work in your heart. Jesus is asking you the same question he posed to the man at the pool of Bethesda:

"...Do you want to get well?" John 5:6b

The Lord IS willing to heal.
Are you WILLING to let Him?

Step of faith if you are willing: "I am inviting You in Lord, to begin the healing process."

Below are some steps of faith if you are not willing to invite God into your heart to heal you.



Engaging God: Take the initial step of faith by opening the door of your heart to the Holy Spirit and let Him begin the healing process. The Lord is **always** willing to heal when we open the door and trust Him to act. Ask God to show you whether you may be reluctant to be healed because you are familiar with your pain; get attention for it; are afraid that God will not really heal you and you don't want to feel rejected or unloved by Him; or it seems like too much work.

2. If you feel you can't open the door because you FEAR there may be more pain if you do, then seek Christ to BE your COURAGE.

*"But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, **'Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid.'**"*
Matthew 14:27

"Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful." John 14:27

You may hear the Lord knocking, but you don't answer the door because you fear re-experiencing the pain of your woundedness or feeling additional pain that you believe may come with the healing process. If this is true of you, seek God to remind you that you have been carrying your pain way too long, and if you continue carrying it, it will only get heavier and more unbearable. Seek Him to exchange your fear for His courage.

Step of faith: "Lord, I fear opening the door because I don't want to re-experience the pain of my woundedness or feel additional pain that may come during the process of healing and freedom. I am asking You to BE my courage and persuade me I have nothing to fear. Remind me that on the other side of any pain I may experience will be divine healing."

Engaging God: Seek the Lord to give you the willingness to open the doors to your rooms of woundedness. If you are fearful of doing so, ask Christ to be your courage and walk through each step of the process with you.

3. Ask God to SEARCH your heart to expose any BURIED woundedness or to address some SPECIFIC wounding event or false belief.

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way.” Psalm 139:23, 24

“Examine me, O LORD, and try me; Test my mind and my heart.” Psalm 26:2

Asking God to search your heart is one of the greatest forms of humility and transparency. When you ask God to search your heart, you are giving God permission to:

- a. **Expose or reveal some area(s) of woundedness you think you have “hidden away” or repressed so deeply that they are no longer in your conscious memory.**
- a. **Reveal to you the ways that you have tried to cope with, deny, escape from, self-protect, or insulate yourself from your pain.**
- b. **Reveal to you some of the areas in your life where your woundedness is creating “death” (i.e. anger, bitterness, unforgiveness) in you and to those around you.**

Step of faith: “Lord, I may have buried my woundedness. I am asking you to reveal those “buried” areas and begin healing them.”

Step of faith: “I am asking You, Lord, to reveal the ways I am trying to cope with and escape my pain, and the “death” it is causing me and everyone around me.”

Engaging God: Ask the Lord to search your heart, and if you are unwilling to do so, ask Him to give you the willingness to let Him do that..

4. EXPRESS to God how you HONESTLY feel about your wounding events.

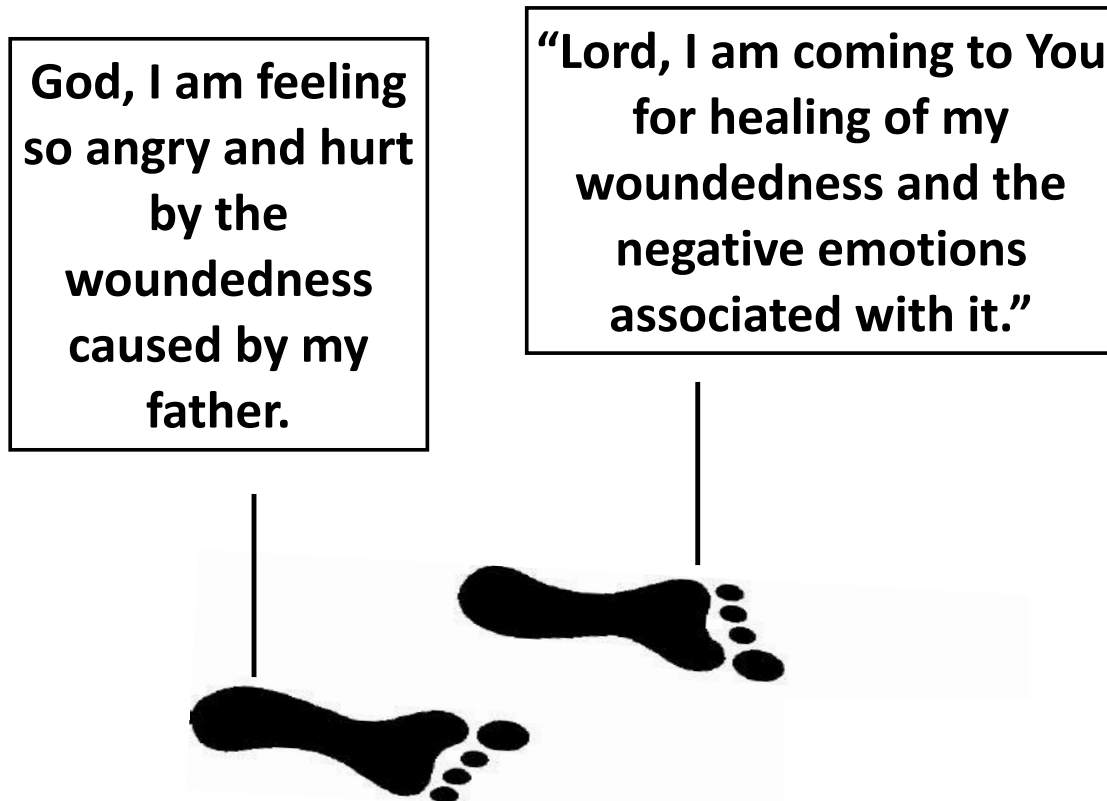
“How long, O LORD? Will You forget me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me? How long shall I take counsel in my soul, Having sorrow in my heart all the day? How long will my enemy be exalted over me?” Psalm 13:1, 2

When you read through the Psalms, you see David repeatedly crying out to God about his pain and how his feelings about God. It is okay to be honest with God. Sometimes we are hesitant to share with God how we honestly feel because we fear His discipline or punishment. You don't have to fear verbalizing your feelings because He already knows how you feel. He has known how you feel for an eternity. He does not judge, punish or condemn you for being open and honest with Him.

You can get angry with God, shake your fist at Him, and even ask the “why” questions. He fully understands because He knows our human-ness. I think it is important to do some “holy” venting. I believe that this venting is a necessary part of your healing process.

Step of faith: “Lord, I have to be honest with You. I am angry at You for letting this happen to me. Thank you for hearing the pain of my wounded heart.”

Below is another example of steps of faith in being with God about your feelings.



Engaging God: If you are experiencing woundedness, take a moment and simply tell God how you feel about your pain, your doubt, your unbelief, etc. Don't hold back. Let Him know what you think and how you feel, including even your negative feeling about Him. Your “holy” venting never changes His love for you, plus you may never fully appreciate how much He loves you until you risk being honest with him about your anger or other negative emotions towards Him.

DAY TWO

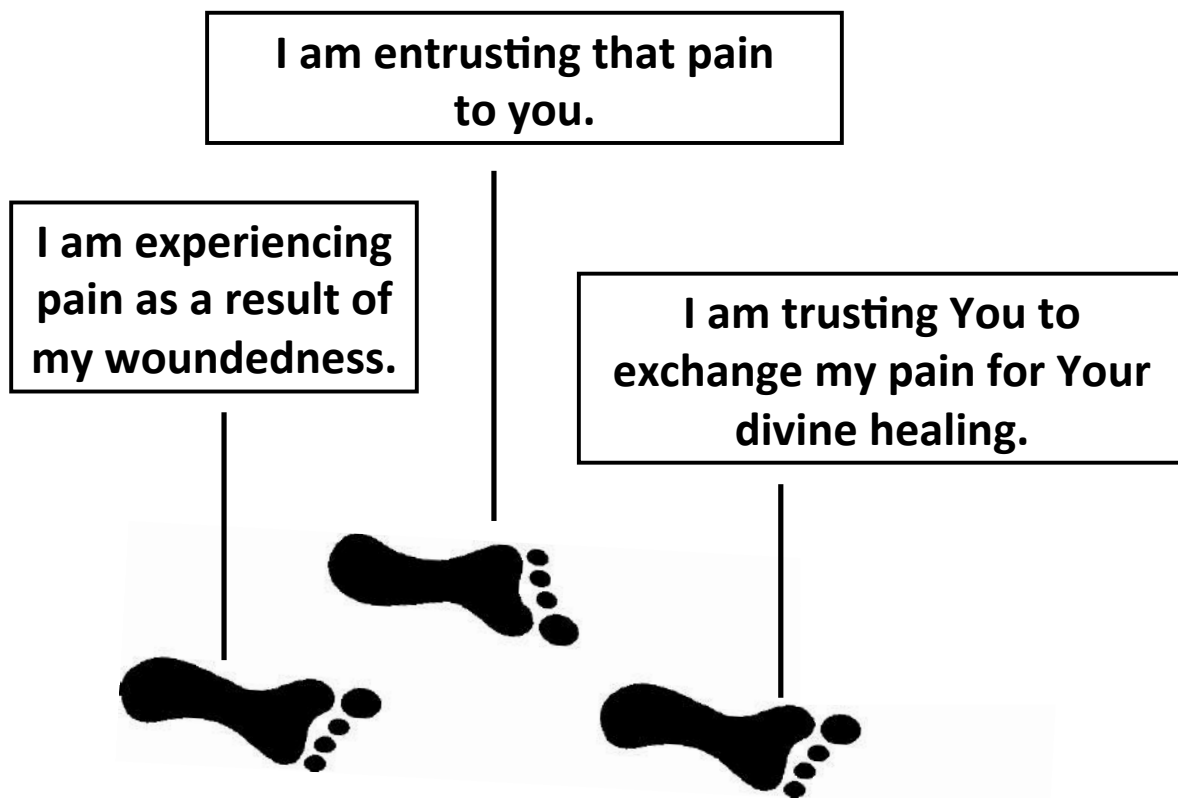
5. ENTRUST your pain to God.

*“and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, **but kept entrusting Himself to Him** who judges righteously.” 1 Peter 2:23*

Entrust in context of healing means:

***Giving over to God the PAIN associated
with your woundedness.***

You see, if we hold on to the pain or try to compartmentalize, deny, anesthetize, escape, etc. the pain, then it will continue to prevent us from God's healing hand. Therefore, every time that you feel the pain, give it over to God in that moment. Sometimes the pain will come in waves, and you will have to keep entrusting the pain to Him until it subsides. Let's look some steps of faith concerning entrustment.



Engaging God: Every time the pain comes to the surface begin entrusting that pain over to God. It will be difficult at first because you want to hold onto the pain but it will be easier each time you entrust it to God.

6. Learn to take EVERY thought associated with your woundedness CAPTIVE

"We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ." 2 Corinthians 10:5

Part of the healing process and the renewing of your mind includes dealing with the recurring thoughts and feelings associated with your woundedness. I would like to share a few truths about taking those thoughts captive.

a. THINK about what you THINK about.

*“Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith.
Examine yourselves....” 2 Corinthians 13:5*

Do you think about what you think about? If not, you are probably not filtering your wounding thoughts. If you are not filtering your wounding thoughts, it is because you are not questioning them. Rather, you are taking ownership of those thoughts.

If this is true for you, begin examining your thoughts by asking God to show you the source of those thoughts. Was that thought from your false beliefs associated with your woundedness? If you are not examining your thoughts, you will automatically take ownership of those recurring thoughts associated with your woundedness.

Learn to examine your thoughts by asking the Lord where that thought came from. Here is an example of a step of faith.

Step of Faith: “Lord, I am inviting you to examine this thought and show me (or make me aware) whether this is a thought that is tied to my woundedness.”

Engaging God: Ask the Lord to reveal to you if any of your thoughts are associated with your woundedness.

b. When you recognize a wounding thought, put it on PAUSE and APPLY God’s truth to it.

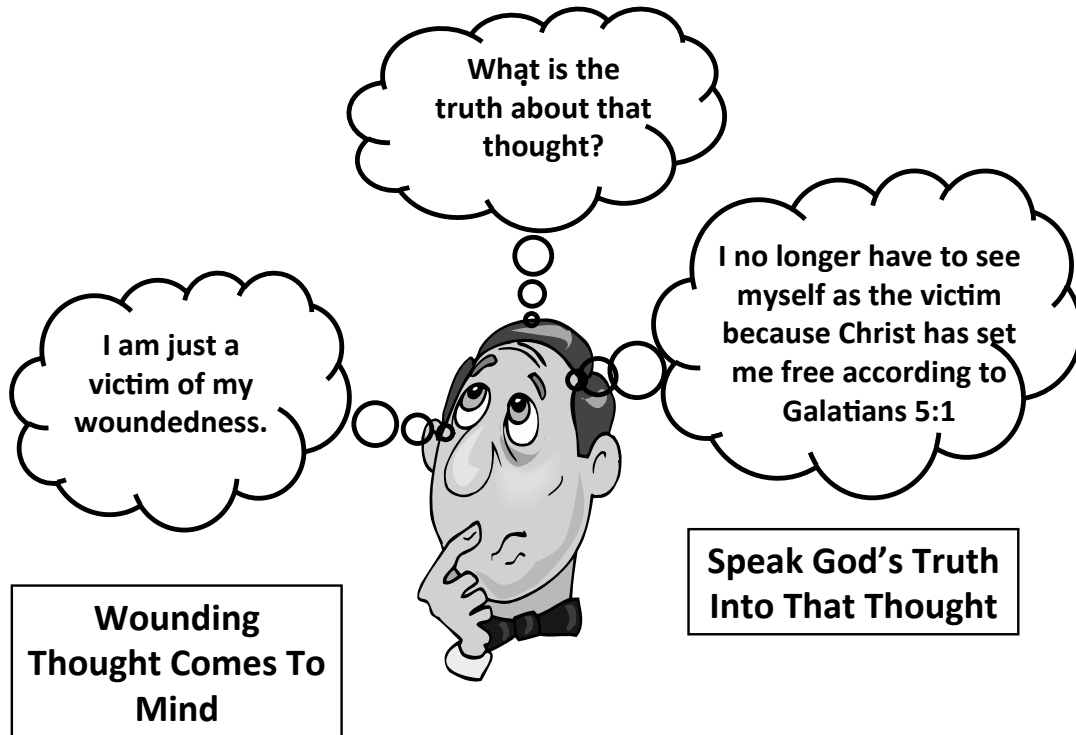
*“But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, **He will**
guide you into all the truth...” John 16:13*

Taking thoughts captive means allowing the Spirit to put the thoughts that are coming into your mind on “pause” so you can ask Him whether it is a truthful thought or if it is a lying, condemning, fleshly, or tempting thought. I want to make the same application to wounding thoughts because with wounding thoughts come false beliefs and damaged emotions.

The key thing to remember is you have been taking ownership of your “wounding” thoughts for such a long enough time you no longer even question them. Because you have been consistently taking ownership of them, you may no longer recognize they are wounding thoughts.

Therefore, before taking ownership of a wounding thought, put that thought on pause and ask the Spirit to speak truth to you about those thoughts. If it is not readily apparent whether the thought is tied to your woundedness, then ask the Spirit to reveal to you the truth about that thought. Here is an illustration of this principle:

Suspend That Thought Or Put It On Pause



Let me give you another example. Let's assume you were wounded by the divorce of your parents. You had damaged emotions of rejection, insecurity, and abandonment. Every time your parent's divorce came to mind, you would feel these same emotions. Consequently, when that thought is coming into your mind, don't take ownership of it. Rather, put it on pause and ask the Spirit to give you God's truth associated with that thought.

One truth is that you are totally accepted and totally secure in your new identity in Christ. A second truth is that even though you felt abandoned by your parents, Hebrews 13:5 tells us that your heavenly Father will "never leave you or forsake you."

You may have to do this many times before those thoughts no longer have a negative impact on you. I would even recommend that you speak the truth out loud. I have found this a very effective way of addressing wounding thoughts. Therefore a step of faith might look like the following:

Step of faith: "Lord, I have put this thought of rejection on pause, and I am asking You to reveal to me if this is a wounding thought. Keep reminding me every time that I think this thought that the truth is that I am totally accepted in my true identity in You."

c. ENTRUST to God any thoughts that trigger your woundedness.

"Cast your burden upon the LORD, and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken." Psalm 55:22

In addition to pausing and examining every thought, every time some event or thought triggers the painful memories of your past, entrust those thoughts immediately to Christ. Do not

dwell on them for a moment because if you do, you will take ownership of them resulting in reinforcing negative feelings which allows these thoughts to continue having a grip on your heart.

Step of faith: “Lord, I recognize this thought is a wounding thought, so I am entrusting it (giving it over) to You.”

Engaging God: Begin entrusting to God every thought that comes to mind that triggers your woundedness. As you do, you will begin to realize that those thoughts will come to mind less often as a result of God’s healing.

7. In addition to entrusting your thoughts to God, entrust your wounded FEELINGS to Him as well.

*“For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses....”
Hebrews 4:15*

Arising out our wounding thoughts come wounded feelings, such as guilt, shame, or rejection. If you hold onto those feelings, they will have the same toxic affect that your wounding thoughts have. God wants you to identify those wounded feelings and then entrust them to Him. Why? Because He not only can sympathize with your pain, He will heal your wounded feelings. Here is an example of a step of faith regarding your wounded feelings.

Step of faith: “Lord, I feel so much guilt and shame over what happened to me. Persuade me that You dealt with that guilt and shame on the cross and that I can entrust those feelings to you.”

DAY THREE

8. THANK God that He is CONSTANTLY at work to heal your woundedness.

“in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” 1 Thessalonians 5:18

Two of the greatest words of faith are “thank you.” In this case, you are giving thanks to the Lord for the fact He is healing you even though there is no experiential evidence of it. It is easier to thank God once we are experiencing healing, but He wants you in faith to begin thanking Him from the beginning of the healing process.

Step of Faith: “Lord, I want to thank You for healing my woundedness even though I am not yet feeling or experiencing your healing.”

Engaging God: Develop a holy habit of thanking God throughout the process of renewing your mind to the truth and setting you free.

Key Truths About The Healing PROCESS

1. Healing is a PROCESS

When it comes to any part of God’s transforming our lives, I have learned from those people I have ministered to, they don’t like the word “process.” Why? When we seek God for healing or

anything else, we want it, and we want it now. Would you agree? We know God can and has healed instantly, but in my experience, walking with those I have counseled in healing, transformation and healing will for the vast majority of people involve a process.

When it comes to healing, the depth of the woundedness determines how long the process will take for healing. It may be a long-term process if you have been deeply wounded. In light of this, let's look at some key truths concerning God's process of healing.

2. God, for the most part, will probably NOT meet your timetable for healing.

*"For My thoughts **are not** your thoughts, **Nor** are your ways My ways," declares the LORD." Isaiah 55:8*

I don't know about you, but in my own healing journey, I've found God is much too slow when it comes to transformation. He has been consistently too slow since He has never once met my timetable for transformation or healing! It is at times like these that I realize how true Isaiah 55:8 is. My impatient feelings aside, God is God and His timing will always be perfect.

3. God's healing process is SUPERNATURAL

A key truth in understanding God's healing process is to grasp the truth that it is always a supernatural process. I define supernatural this way:

***SUPERNATURAL means that there is NO man-made
explanation for how God is healing us.***

Who can explain supernatural? It is not explainable and not understandable. We see Christ's many supernatural works in healing the leper, the blind man, and the man with a withered hand.

It is no different with your healing. You see I can't explain how the Lord has worked in my to heal me. All I know is that as I have been walking by faith, I am experiencing ongoing healing of my woundedness. Accordingly, we simply trust that God is healing even though we don't what or how He is doing it or how long He will take.

4. Early on in your healing process, you may not FEEL or EXPERIENCE God's healing.

As human beings who feel and experience life every moment, it is only natural to think that when we engage God to heal our woundedness that we will experience His work in us from the beginning. For the most part, when you engage God to heal, you may not initially experience healing. Why is that? We see the answer in 2 Corinthians 5:7:

*"for we walk by **faith** and **not** by **sight** (**experience**)."*
2 Corinthians 5:7

You see, our objective is healing. However, God has a two-fold objective. One is to teach you how to walk by faith and secondly, is to heal you of your woundedness. As much as we want the main thing to be healing, I often find that teaching you and me how to walk by faith is a greater priority with God. Therefore, we may have to "faith" it for a period of time before we experience healing.

I wish that I could tell you what the time line will be from faith to experience, but only the Spirit knows that. The good news is that if you “faith it” long enough, then you will eventually experience healing. Below is an illustration of moving from faith to experiential healing:



KEY TRUTH:

***Between the time that we start “faithing” it and eventually experiencing healing,
God is TEACHING us how to walk by FAITH.***

5. When your expectations about God’s healing process are not being met, you may be tempted to be PERPLEXED, IMPATIENT, or FRUSTRATED,

“And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:19

When your timetable or any other expectation you might have about God’s healing process is not being met, you may be tempted to be perplexed, impatient, frustrated, etc. When you find yourself giving into these temptations, remind yourself to seek Christ as your need-meeter. Let me give you some examples to explain.

When you need the following, Christ will meet your need by BEING your:

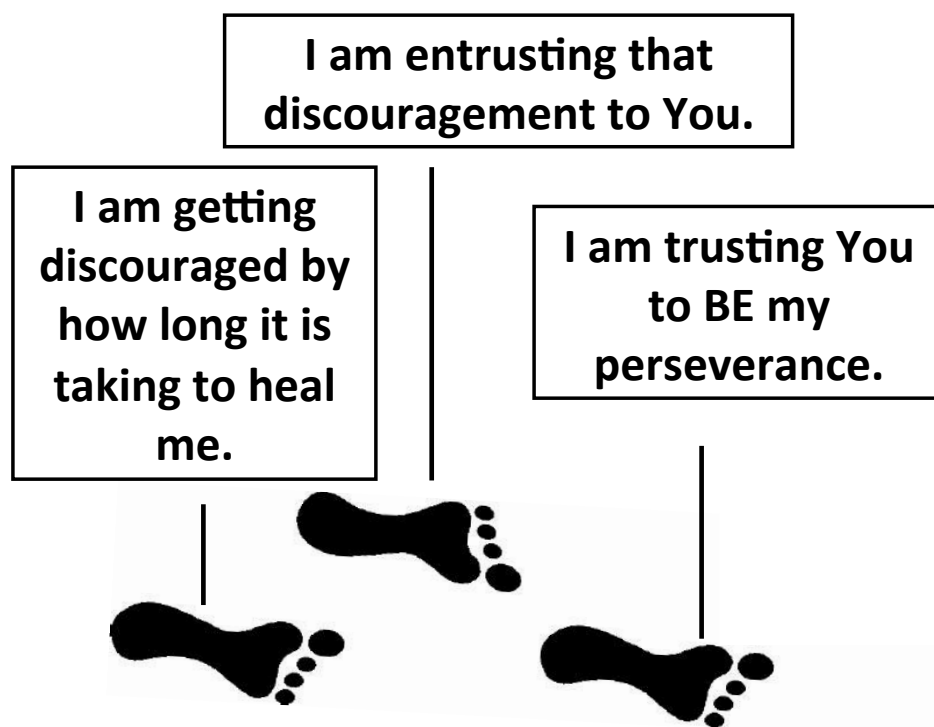
- **COMFORT** when you are experiencing pain from your woundedness. – 2 Corinthians 1:3-4
- **PERSEVERANCE** when you want to give up on God's ability or willingness to heal. – Romans 15:5
- **PATIENCE** when God is not meeting your timetable for healing. – Galatians 5:22
- **HOPE** when you are feeling hopeless about ever being healed. – Colossians 1:27
- **CHRIST-CONFIDENCE** when you have lost your self-confidence in God's ability or willingness to heal. – Philippians 1:6

There may be other needs that Christ can meet as your Source. When those needs arise, seek Christ to satisfy them. Here are some examples of steps of faith in seeking Christ to meet your needs when you get to those frustrating places.

Step of faith: "Lord, I am in pain, and I am trusting You to be my comfort."

Step of faith: "Lord, healing is taking longer than I thought. I am beginning to lose hope. I am trusting You to be my hope."

Here is a diagram to illustrate a step of faith when a need arises.

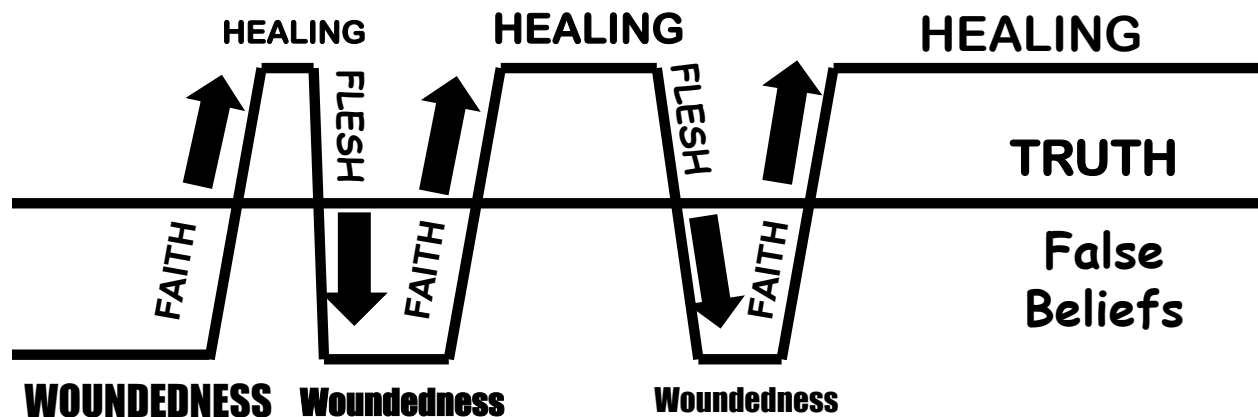


Engaging God: Seek Christ to meet the need you are experiencing in the midst of the pain of your woundedness. The key to your healing is going to Him as many times as you can with your pain.

DAY FOUR

6. Experiential healing will come INCREMENTALLY.

Moving From Woundedness To Healing



Concerning the next few points, please refer to the diagram above. What you will find as you move down the path of spiritual healing is that healing will come incrementally. It will come a little at a time. As you begin taking steps of faith, you may be living more below the line because of the depth of your woundedness. However, as you take steps of faith you will find yourself moving into a greater healing above the line as your mind is being renewed to the truth.

You will fall below the line frequently at first, but as you continue to take steps of faith, you will stay above the line longer. Why? Because with each step of faith, the Holy Spirit is renewing your mind to the truth concerning the false beliefs associated with your woundedness and you begin to experience healing through changed thoughts, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors. As a result, as you begin this journey of healing, don't stop or become discouraged when you go below the line. Simply take the next step of faith.

Engaging God: Ask the Lord to persuade you to continue walking by faith, even when you fall below the line.

7. Healing and the THICKENING of your SPIRITUAL armor

“Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.” Ephesians 6:13

I liken the healing process to thickening your spiritual armor. Remember that your spiritual armor is Christ Himself. Your spiritual armor is made up of His peace, rest, forgiveness, etc.

Early on, experientially, your spiritual armor is thin due to unbelief and is not able to withstand the “darts” of Satan, others or even your own self-inflicted darts. However, with each step of faith, your armor gets thicker because God’s truth is taking root and you are walking in a greater belief you are being healed. As it does, you will discover you are less and less taking ownership of the thoughts and feelings generated by your false beliefs and damaged emotions associated with your woundedness. Let me give you an example to illustrate.

There was a lady who was sexually abused by her father. She felt and eventually believed she was rejected and worthless. When she began the pathway to healing, the “darts” of her flesh and Satan penetrated her armor because of the depth of her woundedness and because her armor was too thin due to her unbelief. However, the longer she walked in faith, the more she refused to take ownership of the thoughts and feelings of rejection and being worthless. In other words, her armor thickened to a point where the darts of the enemy and her flesh no longer penetrated her armor. At that point, she was set free from her false beliefs and was healed from her woundedness that was caused by her father’s abuse.

Expect EARLY ON in your healing process that the “darts” of thoughts and feelings from your flesh and Satan will penetrate your spiritual armor but OVER TIME your armor will be thick enough to withstand those darts.

The key is to keep walking by faith until your armor thickens enough to where you no longer believe and feel your false beliefs and wounded emotions.

8. The JOURNEY is the DESTINATION.

I worked with a man who was a chronic worrier. His worry came out of his past woundedness from his mother. He had been a worrier for several years before he started the faith walk to healing. As we walked together, his overriding questions were: “When am I going to be healed?” “When am I going to be set free?” It was much like when we were kids on a trip, and we would ask mom and dad every five minutes, “Are we there yet?” We all want a finish line, especially when it comes to healing. But if we focus only on the destination, we may be tempted to doubt or even walk away from God along the way if He does not meet our expectations concerning His healing process and His timing.

Accordingly, it is important to focus on the moment by moment journey of healing rather than the destination. Why? We will learn to see and appreciate the incremental healing the Holy Spirit is accomplishing along the way. As a result, we can thank God every moment of the journey. It is not only a journey of healing, but one of growing trust of, and intimacy with, God.

For me, there still needs to be more healing concerning my woundedness. However as a result of focusing on the journey rather than the destination I am experiencing and appreciating God’s healing power along the journey. There are also two other key results if we focus on the journey:

***Focusing on the journey increases our FAITH and
GOD-CONFIDENCE that God is working in our lives.***

As we experience God's healing, it results in increasing our faith and Christ-confidence. (I define God-confidence as believing that God is who He says He is and will do what He promises to do because we are experiencing what God is doing in our lives.) This is so true in my journey. As I experience God's healing, it grows my faith and God-confidence towards God. As these two things increase, it spurs me to experience more healing and more transformation.

What Will You Begin To Experience As God Heals You?

Now that we understand the process, let's look at some of the things that we can expect as we are being healed.

- **As your mind is being renewed to the truth and replacing your false beliefs with the truth, you will find yourself:**
 1. Taking ownership of the "arrows" or thoughts that trigger your woundedness **less** often.
 2. You will **increasingly** be engaging the Spirit to take those thoughts captive.
 3. **More** of your thoughts will line up with the truth than with your false beliefs.
- **As your woundedness is being healed, your damaged emotions will be healed as well.** You will begin "feeling" the truth as well as believing the truth. For example, if you believe that you are unworthy due to your woundedness and your mind is renewed to the truth that you are worthy then your feelings will line up with your beliefs and you will increasingly feel more worthy.
- **You will begin to make decisions based on the truth.** By this I mean, you will no longer choose to live in denial, or stuff or compartmentalize your woundedness. You will choose to walk in the freedom that comes with believing the truth.
- **Over time, as you live more from the truth, you will find yourself living less from your fleshly behaviors and live more from your Christ-like behaviors.** For example, if you were critical or judgemental as a result of your woundedness then you will find those attitudes being replaced with a Christ-like attitude of love and giving grace.
- As you are being healed, you will experience a **growing attitude** of forgiveness toward the offender.
- You will begin to **believe the truth** of your true identity versus believing your false beliefs.
- Your **God-confidence** will grow as you experience more of the Spirit's healing. Christ-confidence is crucial to the healing process. Christ-confidence is the result of experiencing healing on some level. As you begin to experience God's supernatural work then your confidence will grow concerning God's desire and willingness to heal you.

Before I end this study, I want to share two more testimonies that I believe will increase your faith in God's ability to heal you and to set you free. The first one is based on Louis Zamperini whose story was told in the movie "Unbroken." The second is a story about a police officer in central Texas who was healed in spite of terrible abuse.

DAY FIVE

"Unbroken"- Louie Zamperini



The first story is from the movie titled "Unbroken" that came out in 2014. It was a story about Louis "Louie" Zamperini. It is based on a book by the same title written by Laura Hillenbrand. I recommend the book over the movie because the book tells the "whole" story. Louie was a state track champion in high school. He ran so well that he was able to run in the 1936 Olympics in Berlin. Even though he didn't win, he knew that his chances of winning the 1940 Olympics in Japan were within reach. However, the war interrupted that dream, and he joined the Air Force.

Louie became a bombardier on a B-24 bomber. On May 27, 1943, while on the search of a downed aircraft, mechanical difficulties caused the bomber to crash into the ocean killing eight of the eleven men aboard.

The three survivors including Louie had very little food and no water and survived 47 days by capturing rainwater and eating raw fish and birds. They had to constantly fend off shark attacks and were nearly capsized by a storm. They were strafed multiple times by a Japanese bomber.

On their 47th day at sea, Louie and the pilot were captured by the Japanese. Louie was held in captivity in three different POW camps where he was severely beaten and mistreated until the end of the war in August 1945. His primary tormentor was a prison guard nicknamed "Bird." He tortured Louis unmercifully until the end of the war.

Needless to say, Louie was not only physically wounded but soulfully devastated. When he came home, he was filled with anger, bitterness, and hatred for the Japanese (especially for "Bird"). He would have nightmares every night. In some of those, he had his hand around "Bird's" throat but could not squeeze hard enough to kill him. He became an alcoholic to numb the pain. He began to verbally, emotionally, and eventually physically abuse his wife.

She was on the verge of divorcing Louie when she attended a Billy Graham revival in Los Angeles and got saved. The change was so dramatic in her that she knew that the only hope for her husband was Christ. She almost literally dragged him to the revival where he trusted Christ as his Savior. From that point on he never had another nightmare.

However, it took God a number of years to heal him from all his pain and to give him an attitude of forgiveness. God did such a work of healing in Louie that he made a special trip to Japan to personally forgive each of his captors. Needless to say they were stunned. The only one not to receive him was "Bird." However, Louie had a letter delivered to "Bird" telling him that he had forgiven him. Louie lived until 2014 free from his wounded past.

Michael's Testimony

(At the time of this writing, Michael is a 33 year old police detective with a city which is south of Fort Worth.) Here is Michael's story in his own words:

"I had a number of violent and abusive people introduced into my life from an early age. One of my first teachers was prosecuted for sexually molesting his class. That same teacher had locked me in the classroom closet throughout the day on a consistent basis. I had a number of stepfathers since birth. One beat me with his fists repeatedly over a long period of time. I was encouraged to drink alcohol at age 10 and began heavily drinking sometime thereafter. I recall at age 6 that I wanted to murder my stepfather in hopes that it would bring the violence to an end, but I didn't go through with it.

I moved 32 times in 12 years because my stepfathers were deadbeat drug users who were forced out of several places where we lived. Both my mother and second stepfather were open about having several different affairs. In spite of these horrific circumstances, I knew that I wanted something different for my life and was determined to go to college. I got a full academic scholarship to Howard Payne University as well as making the football team. After getting my Associates Degree in Applied Arts, I went on to join the police force.

Even though I was saved as a teenager, I couldn't get past my anger. I called myself a "rage-aholic." You can only imagine the deep-seated anger that I must have felt. The Lord connected me to a man named Drew Grace about two years ago. Drew has taken a number of groups through the *Living Life From A New Source* study and the study on our identity in Christ. The Lord set me free from my anger through these Christ-life truths. Even more impactful was that I realized in a very transforming way my true identity. The statement that I made near the end of my testimony that was simply amazing was, "I can't even remember the person that I used to be."

I recently had a baby boy whose name is Cole. Because of the healing in my heart, Cole will get to experience the love (rather than the abuse) of his earthly father who was transformed by His Heavenly Father."

I don't know about you, but I believe that these two testimonies plus Juli's testimony alone should confirm to you that no matter how horrific your woundedness, God is able to heal and restore.

Conclusion

I hope the truths shared in this study have given you a spiritual understanding and foundation to motivate you to seek God to begin the process of healing. Even more than an understanding, I pray through this study God has given you hope (confident expectation) that He will heal and restore your life. It may be a journey that is difficult, but I can assure you it will be eternally worth traveling. Let me end by leaving you with some of the Lord's promises regarding your healing:

"He will restore the years the locusts have eaten" Joel 2:25

"The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me. To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim release to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set free all those who are oppressed." Luke 4:18

“He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.” Psalm 147:3

***And Jesus said to him, “ ‘If You can?’ All things are possible to him who believes....”
Matthew 9:23, 24***

***“Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,²¹ to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. “
Ephesians 3:20***

Note About Counseling

You may be at a place where you will need someone to walk with you. It may be a friend, a spiritual mentor, or a licensed counselor. If so, seek them out to walk with you in the healing process. The key to seeking counseling is that they be Christ-centered and Christ-focused. By this I mean they will always take you to God’s truth and to God as the Source, not you, to accomplish the healing.

Other Discipleship Materials

If you would like to look at more curriculum and videos offered by Christ Is Life Ministries, please go to our website listed below. If you have any comments to make about this study, please feel free to email me at the email address listed below.

Christ Is Life Ministries

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