

Bringing our Wounds to the Cross

By Marion Dicke

A man's spirit sustains him in sickness, but a wounded spirit who can bear? – *Proverbs 18:14*

A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones. – *Proverbs 17:22*

It is not unusual, following a traumatic incident, for past wounds which have not been fully healed to be brought to the surface. These wounds can be many and varied: for example, identity issues, feelings of rejection, pain from previous abuse or trauma, unresolved grief and loss issues, deep-rooted fears, resentment and unforgiveness. One way we try to cope with these issues, is by blocking out or by denying the intensity of the pain. While the surfacing of this pain may seem overwhelming, it is actually an opportunity for God to work in the deep places and wounds of our hearts and to bring us to a place of healing and hope.

Following is a list of steps which will help you move toward that place of healing. It may be good to enlist the help of a friend who can prayerfully support you during the process or who can covenant to pray with you for your ongoing health and wholeness.

Steps Toward Healing

(Adapted by Dicke from Rhiannon Lloyd, 1999)

1. Directly face the pain. Healing begins by identifying the source of the pain and being able to put into words the hurt caused by the pain. Scriptures are full of examples of God's children who cried out with gut wrenching need and honesty in times of pain. (David, Elijah, Job, Jeremiah, Hannah) Jesus Himself did not attempt to deny or cover up His emotions and expressed deep anguish, sorrow and disappointment on several occasions.

Sometimes it is helpful to write down on paper all one is feeling and sensing: memories, emotions, dreams, disappointments and disturbing thoughts, which will not go away.

2. Bring the pain to the cross of Jesus. Realize that Jesus not only hears and understands our pain and hurts, He carries them for us. Picture yourself taking, one by one, the hurts, emotions and issues that you have identified and either nailing them to the cross or laying them at the foot of the cross.

Remember Jesus willingly and lovingly accepted to carry these for you.

He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering.
Like one from whom men hide their faces. He was despised and we esteemed Him not.
Surely He took our sorrows, yet we considered Him stricken by God, smitten by Him,

and afflicted. But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed. – *Isaiah 53:3-4*

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. – *Hebrews 4:14-16*

Record my lament; list my tears on your scroll – are they not in your record? – *Psalms 56:8*

The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. – *Psalms 34:18*

3. Allow Jesus to speak words of comfort and healing. Spend some time in silence listening for His voice and allow Him to speak directly to you and to the issues which you brought to the cross.

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. – *Matthew 11:28-29*

The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn and provide for those who grieve in Zion – to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. – *Isaiah 61:1-3*

But I will restore you to health and heal your wounds. – *Jeremiah 30:17*

He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. – *Psalms 23:2-3*

4. Allow God to reveal any destructive strategies or ways you have responded to the pain that that are not pleasing to Him or that create distance from Him and lay these at His feet. These might include such things as bitterness, resentment, strongholds, false guilt, shame, wrong beliefs, or unforgiveness.

One of the things, which may need to be identified, is what Curtis and Eldredge refer to as the “message of the arrows.” These are “*words that have been spoken, repeated a thousand times, and they play like a recording in our inner thoughts: “stupid,” “incompetent,” “ugly,” “unlovable,” – the list goes on and on. There are images too, scenes from our lives which speak more loudly than words. . . Deep within the poisons stay, poisoning our self-perceptions, until someone comes along with the power to take them away, free us from all the false selves we use to weather the world’s weather and restore us to our true identity.*” (Sacred Romance, p. 86)

Neil Anderson talks about the concept of strongholds, which he defines as “*negative patterns, which are burned into our minds either through repetition over time or through one-time traumatic experiences.*” Anderson goes on to say that “*Once a stronghold of thought and response is entrenched in your mind, your ability to choose and to act contrary to that pattern is virtually nonexistent.*” (Victory over the Darkness, pp 160, 164)

Strongholds may include such things as inferiority, hostility, manipulation or need to control, sexual bondage, eating disorders, and deep-rooted fears.

Surely you desire truth in the inner parts. You teach me wisdom in the inmost place.
Cleanse me with hyssop and I shall be clean; wash me and I will be whiter than snow. –
Psalms 51:6-7

Then you shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free. – *John 8:32*

We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. – *2 Corinthians 10:5*

See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many. – *Hebrews 12:15*

5. By God’s grace, both receive and extend forgiveness. Nowhere is Christ’s work on the cross more significant than in the area of forgiveness. It is because He Himself took on our sins and the sins of the ones who have offended and wronged us that we have the power and the capacity to forgive. Because Jesus has already paid the price for our sins, we can also freely receive the forgiveness He offers.

The act of forgiving is also however, a deliberate and intentional process. (See Ken Williams’ “Steps to Forgiving” in *Sharpening Your Interpersonal Skills*, or Neil Anderson’s “Twelve Steps to Forgiveness” in *Victory over the Darkness*, pp 203-205).

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And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins. – *Mark 11:25*

Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. – *Colossians 3:13*

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other just as in Christ God forgave you. – *Ephesians 4:32*

6. Continue to allow God to daily renew your mind through the truth of His word and His love. The healing which we have received has to be appropriated as we daily discipline our mind to think and live the truth. While it is true that Satan has been defeated, he will once again try and attack us in areas in which we have been previously vulnerable.

What are specific verses which I need to commit to memory – those that speak to me powerfully of the freedom Jesus has procured for me or of the love and acceptance with which He regards me?

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. – *Romans 12:2*

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things. – *Philippians 4:8*

The Lord your God is with you, He is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing. – *Zephaniah 3:17*

7. Reach out and bless others. God calls us to a life of blessing and wholeness. One of the rich benefits and privileges, which comes from finding healing and wholeness at the cross of Christ, is our ability to look beyond ourselves and to reach out to others in need. We can do that through praying for and coming alongside others and helping them find the same health and healing which we have found. This may even include those who have previously wronged us.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort that we ourselves have received from God. – 2 *Corinthians 1:3-4*

Brothers if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. – *Galatians 6:1-2*

After Job had prayed for his friends, the Lord made him prosperous and gave him twice as much as he had before. – *Job 42:10*

Therefore confess your sins to one another and pray for each other that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. – *James 5:16*