

Healing Damaged Emotions

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Basic Principles

God heals damaged emotions

Psalm 34:17–18; Psalm 146:7–9; Psalm 147:3

For individuals or churches to flourish, they must be emotionally healthy.

Emotional healing is painful. But better to endure a short period of intense honesty, pain, and healing than a lifetime of emotional or physical sickness.

Emotions can be harder to heal than the body. The body doesn't talk back.

Emotional problems do *not* mean someone is unspiritual. He or she is wounded and needs healing.

Physical sickness often has emotional roots.

Emotional issues can lead to physical sickness.

Where do you carry your tension?

When that part gets tense, you know you have to do something.

Trying to overcome or ignore emotional damage by appearing “spiritual” or “holy” actually makes the problem worse.

In true spirituality and holiness, problems will be addressed through healing and spiritual disciplines.

You will surely reap what you sow (Galatians 6:7-8). (Repentance can break the cycle.)

Know who you are in Christ: a child of God who is loved (1 John 3:1).

Past memories affect the present. An incident may have happened once. But like a DVD that was filmed once then played back many times, memories affect us every time we remember them.

Wilder Penfield's 1951 discovery: Every experience is stored in the brain, including feelings.

Basics in Healing Damaged Emotions

Forgive others (Matthew 6:12, 14–15)

Unforgiveness is emotional cancer.

Unforgiveness is like drinking poison and waiting for the other person to die.

Let go of vengeance and put everything in God's hands (Romans 12:17–21).

When you forgive someone, you set a prisoner free.

Then you discover that the prisoner was yourself.

Three big points in forgiveness:

- God

- Others

- Self

Repent of sin (Acts 8:22–23)

If a person is demonized and the demon is cast out, it will return if the inner problem (that allows the demon entry) is not dealt with (Luke 11:24–26).

Get rid of the garbage and the rats are easy to get rid of.

Change wrong thinking to right thinking (Matthew 22:29).

Particularly distorted concepts of God and of ourselves.

Foundational principle: Expect and follow the Holy Spirit's leading (John 16:13).

This is not counseling. It is God bringing healing at a person's deepest level.

Intergenerational problems

Families

Churches

How do we know we're healed?

Initially, when we recall a previously painful memory and it has no effect on us.

Fully, when we are able to speak about it and minister to others.

Ministering Healing for Damaged Emotions

Love the person to whom you minister. Ask yourself how you would want to be ministered to. Minister that way.

Share hunches or words of knowledge tentatively or as questions.

Steps in healing damaged emotions:

1. Bless the person and ask the Holy Spirit's guidance
2. Interview
3. Tentative diagnosis and prayer strategy
4. Pray (This may take hours.)
5. Post-prayer counseling / discipleship

Avoiding problems

Avoid taking another person's burdens on yourself.
Don't drain others or allow others to drain you.
Our job is to minister. God's job is to heal.

Trust is absolutely important.

It sometimes helps to work in teams.
Men on men / women on women / or in a mixed group.
One person may minister while the other intercedes.

The person undergoing healing must do his or her part.

- confession
- forgiveness
- letting go
- homework
- spiritual disciplines

If they do not do their part, they don't really want to be healed.
Some people need the attention or like being cared for.

Healing Damaged Emotions: Suggested Methods

Pure and simple forgiveness

Romans 12:19–21

“That person doesn’t deserve to be forgiven!” That’s true. None of us do.

We forgive to

1. Obey God.

2. Free ourselves from spiritual prison.

Homework:

Make a list of all the people you need to forgive.

Go through old photo albums. They may trigger buried memories and emotions.

Read or listen to books or recordings related to healing or to the specific problem.

When dealing with memories, do not address every one. Focus on the big, representative ones. The others will take care of themselves.

Replay the memory—and bring Jesus into it

Ask the Holy Spirit to bring to the person’s mind something He wants the person to deal with.

Prayer should be free flowing and conversational: Ask the person what’s going on, guide them, and speak to God as is appropriate.

Replay the painful memory (or whatever it may be). Have the person describe it in detail.

Acknowledge Jesus as being in the picture, often as suffering with the person, or perhaps offering mercy, forgiveness, etc.

Have the person respond appropriately.

Role Play: Sometimes it helps to play the role of, to represent, someone the person is forgiving.

Or use an empty chair in which you imagine the offending person sitting.

Speaking in first person can be far more immediate and powerful than third person.

Sometimes it helps to speak as God's representative to directly speak a biblical word of forgiveness or encouragement to the person.

Breaking the chain of generational sin

Place the cross between the person being prayed for and the ancestors.

Affirm the blood of Jesus to cleanse all the person confesses.

Name each pattern of sin—describe it, call on the Lord to destroy it.

Call upon Jesus to destroy and transform through the cross all patterns of sin.

Rebuke the powers of darkness and call upon God's protection and blessing.

Often times you may not be sure about what to do or pray.

Follow your hunch of what you think the Lord may be leading you to do.

Err on the side of making sure.

Err on the side of grace.

The best single volume on healing damaged emotions, a must-read for anyone serious about doing it:
David Seamands, *Healing of Memories*. Victor Books, 1988.