

General Topics :: Healing the soul

Healing the soul - posted by John173 (), on: 2007/7/28 13:33

My dear brethren,

It has been quite some time since I have joined in here at SI. I began praying the "whatever it takes" prayer some time ago. This came about on the anniversary of the sinking of the titanic. I know this because of a thread on this subject that lead to a member website, that lead to a link to the testimony of the wife of the former owner of the Dallas Cowboys. (<http://www.annemurchison.com/testimony.htm>) Read it here.

As a result of this prayer I began experiencing some extreme inner battles. My purpose here is not to detail my own journey, but rather, to share a "revelation" concerning healing. It was so immediate that I was compelled to grab paper and pen and write it down before I lost the urgency.

My favorite scripture passage is the following:

Eph 3:14-21 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, **That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;** That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,
Unto him glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end.
Amen.

The following is what I wrote (almost) verbatim.

"Wounds, emotional wounds from deep in our past become unacknowledged festering infections buried in our soul. Our loving Heavenly Father longs to heal these wounds and set us free. But just as an infected cut is very painful to touch, the very thought of touching upon this internal pain is so fearful that we run from it. In essence it can cause us to become spiritually skittish and avoid the inner work of healing the Holy Spirit wants to do.

For those of us who truly desire to walk in the fulness of God's ways, bearing eternal fruit, being Spirit filled/lead etc, It is absolutely *imperitave* that this pain buried in our soul be removed.

The method God uses to accomplish this is not pleasant. Hence the reason why so many sincere Christians don't seem to grow beyond a certain point. Inner healing requires spiritual surgery. The Holy Spirit, as surgeon, using the scalpel of the Word of God, begins to cut right to the core, seperating soul and spirit. As He does this, we begin to see not only the pain we feel, but more importantly we also see our own culpability for it. This is painful in and of itself, for we come to understand that the pain we feel is actually caused, not by the actions of someone else or some ancient event, but by our own response to it. Healing can only occur when we *repent* (often in tearful anguish) for our sins of harboring bitterness and unforgiveness. When we confess *our sin* God is faithful to forgive us and to *cleanse us from all unrighteousness*."

In His Love,

Re: Healing the soul, on: 2007/7/28 15:41

Thank you Brother for this message from the heart.

Been there and know exactly what you are talking about!

I still have further to go...

In Him

Jeannette

Re:, on: 2007/7/28 16:10

Thank you for this post John.

Thank you for your reply LittleGifter.

I just read LiveForGod's thread on the Devotional Thoughts forum entitled God's Message to Woman and it does bring tears to your eyes.

I hesitated to post to it because of that.

The depression thread brought out a lot of what folks are going through and one felt, condemned one way or another, no matter how they posted, because we've lost the heart of GOD with the fear of "man's psychology".

What a tender heart HE has. Knowing every pain we've experienced from the womb on.

What a gentle shepherd He is.

Some of us have been through the extreme excess of discipline in our childhood and since, but when a kind word is spoken, like LiveForGod's post ... you respond immediately with desiring to be that one who's example was used in posts like that.

To beat us into submission is not how a Shepherd works. He leads by walking ahead and calling the names of those of His own flock.

GOD help us to be more merciful with each other and even with ourselves, when we feel that someone has taken the rod of correction, thinking it is from Him and beat sheep into what they think is God's Image.

Instead of patiently working with people, we excommunicate them either by our words or our actions. Jesus left the 99 to get that one that strayed. GOD forbid that we should have the heart of the elder brother.

Little Gift, that you are.

'Bless' you brother John. Weep with those who weep.

Re: Healing the soul - posted by John173 (), on: 2007/7/30 9:10

Thanks dear sisters for your replies,

I grieve somewhat that the body of Christ would rather argue over finer points of doctrine than openly discuss matters of the heart. As I read the scriptures I see that many of the instructional passages pertain directly to interpersonal relationships. Both of the over-riding commandments are specifically relational. Love God, Love your neighbor. What is love if not relational?

The thing that people seem unwilling to acknowledge is that old wounds impact our ability to love.

May I ask all who read this a question? In your opinion, why is it that we are so quick to debate our views on Calvinism or post/pre-trib rapture, while threads pertaining to the inner life seem to go nowhere?

What I am attempting to discuss here is the issue of emotional pain. What part does it play in the life of a Christian, in the life of the Church?

Your thoughts on this would be greatly appreciated.

In His Love,

Doug

Re: - posted by BrokenOne (), on: 2007/7/30 20:39

I recently went through a very difficult time as well. As I look back on the experience, it was years of not dealing with emotional "stuff" by taking it all to Jesus (and choosing to live in denial of those emotions), that compounded and made me vulnerable to anorexia as a way of escape when it all became unbearable. But finally dealing with the pain drove me to the feet of Jesus. And as I sat at His feet, He would give me songs of healing and freedom, that I would sing over and over through many, many tears. I experienced the very real tenderness of the Lord towards His hurting ones. It was surgery – but it was so very gentle.

As a believer I don't think that my life should be governed by my emotions or that I should use my emotions to excuse any area of un-Christlikeness in my life. But neither should I try to pretend that I don't sometimes hurt. After all,

For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:15-16

So I come to Him in my weakness, and receive His strength and healing.

Thank you for sharing so openly Brother.

Danielle

Re: Healing the soul - posted by John173 (), on: 2007/7/31 9:13

Sunday afternoon I went out to lunch with a brother from church. I was attempting to go beyond the cordial Sunday morning handshake greetings and form the beginnings of a relationship with a little more depth.

I did most of the talking, sharing some of my story and being open and honest about some of the struggles I've gone through in my faith. I've always believed that friendship can only occur when we allow some degree of vulnerability to be part of the equation.

At the end I mentioned that I had hoped to hear some of his story, apologizing to some degree for dominating the conversation. His comment was that all his "stuff" was in the past and there was no point in rehashing any of it. His countenance was closed and distant.

The Apostle Paul does indeed state that he "forgets what is behind, and presses forward toward the higher calling in Christ," so I understand how we can come to this conclusion.

But what happens when that past has caused us to shut down emotionally? What happens when we won't let people get close to us? As Christians we are called to love each other *fervently*. As I go through life I find so little warmth in the way the brethren relate to each other, so little compassion, but rather a carefully held distance.

The sad reality is this brother is currently separated from his wife. All the fault does not lay at his feet, but I can't help wondering if his belief that the past has no bearing on the present hasn't played a significant role in this relationship's decline.

I truly believe that many many well meaning Christians have "emotional hang-ups" that they haven't confronted because "the past is the past." As I stated in my first post, old wounds tend to get sore, just as an infected cut. It isn't surprising that we deny the existence of this pain. However, if we sincerely desire to obey God and seek to become as Christ-like as possible, doesn't it follow that we must remove every hindrance?

I continue to desire dialogue about this area. What place does emotional healing have in the body? How does one help

others "open up". What do you believe are God's method's for removing these types of hindrances? Do you agree or disagree with my comments?

In His Love,

Doug

Re: Healing the soul - posted by John173 (), on: 2007/7/31 9:36

Isaiah 61:1-3 "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me,
Because the Lord has anointed Me
To preach good tidings to the poor;
*He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives,
And the opening of the prison to those who are bound;*
2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord,
And the day of vengeance of our God;
*To comfort all who mourn,
3 To console those who mourn in Zion,
To give them beauty for ashes,
The oil of joy for mourning,
The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness;*
That they may be called trees of righteousness,
The planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified."

This scripture reads like a mission statement of Christ's incarnation and ultimate sacrifice. Notice how much of it concerns emotional distress?

In His Love,

Doug

Re: Healing the soul, on: 2007/7/31 11:08

Hi Doug,

In your original post, I noticed the emphasis on our own grievous reactions to the hurts others have inflicted on us.

I wanted to draw your attention to the truth that unless we had first been hurt, we would not have had any grievous reactions. (Btw, 'grievous' is someone else's word, which was borrowed by Leanne Payne in her major book 'The Healing Presence'.)

However, your insistence on the reaction made me feel this was more of a word from the Lord to us than many a post may be, and I would see where it led. For this reason, as much of my testimony in this area is in the public domain, I won't share it here.

The word 'denial' is key, though, as many have been taught a number of worldly proverbs on this matter, which are not compatible with the scripture you posted when apposed to this topic.

They are

'Least said is soonest mended.'

'You should never speak ill of the dead.'

'What the eye don't see the heart don't grieve o'er.'

This brings me to the much misunderstood sentence in the Ephesian letter, which is almost universally taken out of context by those who use it to justify their denial of another's pain.

Ephesians 5:12

For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.

Those who use the above verse conveniently forget several points.

First, it is preceded by

7 Therefore do not be partakers with them.

8 For you were once darkness, but now *you are* light in the Lord. Walk as children of light

9 (for the fruit of the Spirit *is* in all goodness, righteousness, and truth),

10 finding out what is acceptable to the Lord.

11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose *them*.

Then, v 12 is followed by

13 But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light.

14 Therefore He says:

"Awake, you who sleep,
Arise from the dead,
And Christ will give you light."

15 See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise,

16 redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

17 Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord *is*.

EDIT: I've rephrased the following for clarity.

This letter was to the church which is recorded in Acts 20, *after* receiving the Holy Spirit, as finally realising they *still* needed to renounce deeds of the past, and did so publicly with a massive communal bonfire.

So NOW when Paul writes, he says.... you shouldn't be talking about *these things* - ANY MORE.

Also note this was about sins of the flesh mature adults had committed. It was not about any sins which had been committed against them.

Now, I would exhort that if a person has never disclosed hurt or pain, this scripture does not apply.

I would also exhort that their first port of call is the Lord.

Lastly, if pain has been harboured since childhood - maybe it didn't 'hurt' back then, or so it seemed - there may be a need for a parental sort of listening by another believer. But neither is the 'listening' for everyone, nor is the 'telling' for every hurting soul.

end of edited portion

There is huge emphasis in today's preaching / teaching which puts all the onus on the believer for anything wrong in his life. It's his fault.

He is not supposed to feel any pain, because Jesus (he is assured) healed him in the Atonement. For the record, I believe this applies to the believers own sins *only*, and not to sins committed against him by another - or his grievous reaction to those sins.

He is also instructed regularly of the value of living in a state of repentance for his human sinfulness. Wrongly, he concludes then, that if he is struggling with any thing at all, it's because he hasn't repented.

Here is one last worldly proverb.

'Children bounce back!'

As a child who had enough 'stuff' eventually not to be able to 'bounce back' one last time, I am eternally grateful for the children's charity who had as one of *its* worldly proverbs:

'Just ask. It saves a lot of guesswork.'

I have more to say, but this is enough for one post.

Re: - posted by John173 (), on: 2007/7/31 13:12

Hi Dorcas and thanks for your thoughts,

I didn't mean to say that the original source of our pain wasn't due to someone else sinning against us. Only that the ongoing pain that we still feel results from us harboring unforgiveness/resentment/bitterness etc.

This understanding came as the result of some anguished prayer over my own inability to cast off some of the pain from my past. I had discovered that I still had a deeply buried and mostly ignored/denied inner RAGE! It came bubbling out one day (fortunately I was alone) and I knew if I was ever to grow more in Christ that I had to confront it. I wept bitterly before the Lord, beseeching Him to show His deliverance.

At some point I remembered the testimony referenced in post one. She talked about grieving over the pain, but also about repentance. It just came so clear that it was my sin now for hanging on to the anger. I cried out in repentance and have discovered an amazing freedom when thinking about those old sources. Now I can "forget" the past and press on toward that higher calling...

Because of my awareness of how deeply impactful our actions can be upon another human heart, I have come to define sin, at least in part, as those actions and/or attitudes that cause harm to another (or oneself). I believe, because God is love, that this is how and why God classifies something as sin.

Note that I did not say actions that cause pain. Sometimes pain is good. My behind sure was in pain every time I got spanked as a child. There is also a biblical proverb to the effect that "faithful are the wounds of a friend."

As far as telling someone else about our hurt, detailing whatever awful things we may have encountered, I am not so sure it is necessary. The Holy Spirit is also called the Counselor. He knows all too well of the source of our bitterness and will help us to see it if we are willing to look. "Search me O God...and see if there be any way of pain in me."

Time constraints are upon me so I must go for now.

YO MEN! WHAT SAY YE? So far there's been responses from...Jeanette, Annie, Danielle and Linn. What gives? I know y'all have an opinion!

Blessings to all,

Doug

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2007/7/31 13:53

Hey bro,

Quote:

I truly believe that many many well meaning Christians have "emotional hang-ups" that they haven't confronted because "the past is the past."

Well, I think we understand that we are hung up, not because the past is in the past, but because it is very much with us today. We are reluctant to face either our sin or our hurts, because we do not believe there is a sufficient answer for either in Christ.

The problem can be aggravated by two kinds of (well-meaning)counselors.

1) Those who are quick to remind one another of the law can be doing more harm than good. The law can raise a dead conscience, but it cannot deal with the old man. We must allow one another to enter into the rest of Christ's righteousness...specifically sharing into the death and resurrection as described in Romans and Colossians. Notice that it is the old man that must be allowed to be crucified...the cross is first for sinners. It makes no sense to insist that you must be resurrected first before going to the cross of Christ...yet many preach exactly this sequence today. I believe the result of this is not only are some sinners prevented from entering in...but also some believers are also prevented from entering into His rest.

2) Those counselors who paint a picture of healing wherein we become 'whole' in ourselves. My fervent belief is that, we cannot tell people they will be whole as the secular counselors describe wholeness...that is to become self-sustaining. You can always tell when a well meaning Christian has been influenced by spiritless counseling, when they describe wellness as self-sustaining. Instead the Christian finds their only wholeness in abiding with Christ. If we would try to walk on our own...with no more need for the forgiveness of God to cover our shameful mistakes, we are working contrary to the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Like Jacob, our limp is a reminder of our encounter with God.

Too many times we try to talk people out of their sorrow. The truth is that a man resting in God can say yes to the acknowledgment of his own sin, and can accept the consequences of failure, even from others, giving him not a sentimental view of these things, but a clear eye on right and wrong without self-righteousness. Our mistakes can be "acquaintances with sorrow" allowed by God. They have been allowed by God to take away our illusions of the riches of this world. (At least we can believe Romans 8)

As a result, we cannot over-labor the law or over-trust secular counselors. Though they both may have some compassionate techniques, and good intentions, by their nature, can only stir up pain or seek to heal pain. Neither can invite the old man and his sins to be crucified in Christ and therefore cannot be concerned with seeing a broken man resurrected in Christ Jesus.

Only the broken man can find rest in God. (Brokenness does not mean lying in self-pity which is ultimately rooted in pride, but in giving up on all hopes of self-righteousness...something only the Holy Spirit can work into a heart.) True rest does not try to 'get over' past mistakes, but instead recognizes that they have been used by God to help the soul become more dependent on Christ's righteousness and His life, for which all men would otherwise remain ignorant of their desperately need. Indeed, it is the work of the Holy Spirit to take away our illusions of self-sufficiency, both spiritually, and I believe emotionally. Peace through self-sufficiency is indicative of both the law and secular counseling in themselves. Yet any peace that takes us away from utter dependency in Christ, both emotionally, and spiritually, remains delusional.

The true abiding peace we look for is beyond the power of the fair law or well-meaning secular counseling. It is found only in abiding with Christ. Yet many of us who believe still do not abide...why?

Just my 2 cents bro. The issue we face is not that we need some additional healing outside of the original Gospel...but that the circumference of the Gospel as we understand it needs to be enlarged so as to include a reckoning not just for the world's sins...but for those sins that I have done and have been done to me.

MC

Re: Healing the soul, on: 2007/7/31 15:40

John173 said

Quote:

-----the ongoing pain that we still feel results from us harboring...

Hi Doug,

I stopped short of mentioning this dynamic in my first post. I have posted your point about it being a sin to hold onto one's pain, before, here on SI. No-one commented specifically. I've also said many times here, that the Church is weak because saints are unwilling to address inner pain.

Pastors / churchians / Christian 'counsellors' (both untrained and, sadly, some even *trained*) whose personal pains may have been more survivable than the pains of those they counsel, may well-meaningly direct people to the kind of coping mechanisms (for that is all they are) that they themselves unconsciously employed.

This, and other terminology in the US with which I'm not familiar, as MC has pointed out, can never lead to true healing in Christ.

A while ago I discussed the terms being used in a workshop in a church in Australia, with a sister who was attending those workshops for survivors of sexual abuse in childhood, and was horrified at the language which laded guilt on to the survivor for having 'chosen' to be abused! :-o Many other things were wrong with that programme.

My own experience of being counselled by a professional who knew what I needed to *hear*, changed my attitude completely to non-Christians in this field. But, he was sympathetic to faith in God and never tried to make me to give it up nor treated it like a defence mechanism. He merely said it is ok to be 'not ok'. Even Christians can have unhealed pain which will only go away if it is addressed. He understood how difficult it is for evangelicals to admit to inner pain, but of course, since this was his field of work, he also knew that evangelicals are just ordinary people who have had the same childhoods as other ordinary people, but made different choices further along the way. He in no way disparaged my faith in God for healing, but as I'd tried to deal with my pain the way I was *brought up to deal with it* - that is, not the way God wanted to deal with it - I was just as stuck as the next person who'd reached that point when it was impossible to hold it in any longer.

I've come to understand that that *breakthrough point* of the pain, is a gift from God, to turn us to Him more completely. But at the time, it felt like a severe failure.

I do know there are people who refuse to go there, and who would rather not lose face before the world, than to go through with God and yield Him up their innermost heart. Of course, that need for controlling one's own destiny, is a typical feature of hurting people. If only they realised what a giveaway it is, perhaps they would be more willing to go it alone with God at a deeper level of trust. They would find Him truer than they ever had thought possible.

EDIT: I do apologise for sounding patronising here. *OF COURSE* I was *very controlling*.... and this was one of the first things I had to give up to the Lord, because I *did* want to go through with Him, *whatever the cost*.

Re: - posted by John173 (), on: 2007/7/31 17:56

Compton,

Wow! You have added some worthy thoughts to this issue. All I can say is Amen and Amen. I was making the basic assumption that what you have written was understood here at SI. I'm glad you made your point so succinctly, as I recognise now how much it needed to be said. Indeed, what is in my heart is to find a way to help people discover just how truly awesome is that inner life when we surrender completely to the cross and find that we didn't lose our life but found it. This is, as you said, the only true wholeness and source of healing.

Blessings in Christ,

Doug

Re: - posted by John173 (), on: 2007/7/31 18:27

Hi Linn,

My apology to you, but try as I might I couldn't get the slightest whiff of your being patronizing. :-o You'll just have to try harder!

Alas, there are so many different approaches out there that attempt to find a solution to this arena of inner pain. Rightfully, conservative Christians have turned away from these secular approaches but in so doing have failed to seek out how to minister to the hurting via God's method's. This is the age old problem of the baby and the bathwater. I so long to get ahold of God's heart in this matter. To then impart the incredible depth of His love to others and watch them blossom into true Oaks of Righteousness.

This is why I wanted to open this discussion. I have a degree of understanding in this regard, yet feel I have so much to learn. I know one thing, I learned more by going through this than I ever would have by reading a book. I glean a little as well from those (like yourself) who have also had these struggles and have come through by God's hand.

2 Cor 1:3-113 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. 5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ. 6 Now if we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. 7 And our hope for you is steadfast, because we know that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also you will partake of the consolation. 8 For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. 9 Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, 10 who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us, 11 you also helping together in prayer for us, that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the gift granted to us through many.

This passage gives me great comfort in knowing that there is purpose behind the pain and suffering. That we may give comfort and hope to those still afflicted.

Bless you sister,

Doug

Re: Healing the soul, on: 2007/7/31 19:40

Doug, thank you. (Don't try too hard on that search for patronisation... ;-) please!)

I wrote screeds earlier, but wanted not to dump it all in one unpalatable lump. Already I wonder if I have too much to say and am encouraged that maybe it is worth saying anyway...

You know, I've veered away from recent discussions on SI about psychology, because I made a discovery during my own journey with God... that within the Bible, laid out for us to analyse as 'the way' He deals with man and men, is the only psychology which works, with the least harm done. I say 'with the least harm done' because it is clear that sometimes harm was done to them through God's dealings with them. 'I wound. I heal...' However, these were both marks of His love, and nothing less.

Quote:

-----I know one thing, I learned more by going through this than I ever would have by reading a book.

Exactly. And if we / people remember this during their dealings with others, they will pull through better with effective prayer support (by which I mean prayer with and from those who *believe* in healing).

Hurting people also need appropriate direction towards opening themselves to God in a *real* way, even if it is just by opening the door of their inner being by a 1 mm crack. I think that's pretty much how I had started out at first.

But (some years) later, (as I've shared in other threads), the Lord arranged for three separate preachers to visit my church. They didn't know each other, or that their text had been preached recently. It was from 2 Corinthians 1, on the comfort of God. By the third exposition, (some 12 weeks after the first one), I had a palpable ache inside, which I just knew I had to address before I went home...

And that was the beginning. Straight after 'church', I made a bee-line for an elder who seemed to be aware someone needed to speak to him. Unknown to me, he had intimate knowledge of aspects of hurt which were relevant to my history, and there began to put some context to parts of my past which were a great surprise to me.... I mean.... I had thought I was '*normal*'. :-? LOL

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2007/7/31 20:16

Doug,

As you hinted at below, this thread, and any conversation regarding "healing" in the church often reveals a gender gap. To put it frankly, women own this topic. I think it's how the question of 'healing' is framed around pain instead of character.

Our 'wellness' isn't measured by our feelings, emotional or psychological, but by our character. I say that as one of the more 'sensitive' men you'll ever know! ;-)

Quote:
-----And that was the beginning. Straight after 'church', I made a bee-line for an elder who seemed to be aware someone needed to speak to him. Unknown to me, he had intimate knowledge of aspects of hurt which were relevant to my history, and there began to put some context to parts of my past which were a great surprise to me.... I mean.... I had thought I was '*normal*'.

You see sister, this is a concern to me. I too have had people presume to see my inner pain, even in the form of 'a word of knowledge.' I was annoyed, but not surprised, because people who specialize in inner healing also believe everyone needs it. However, I couldn't allow them to penetrate me in this invasive fashion. It seemed...well unhealthy.

I'm not dismissing any one's pain, but if we think we can groom our inner-selves, extracting all the bad stuff and leaving only the good, we are only going to be frustrated. (One sister recently described the sensation of trying to scrub clean a dirt floor...) At the risk of sounding glib, we can't be fixed...we need to be replaced with Christ Jesus in our character, and this is a transaction that modern counseling is not set up for.

About the gender gap; many women...and a few men in leadership...think they can repair men with nursing which is often the worst medicine. Instead men must be disciplined and trained by other men who are stronger, smarter and more mature than they are, both in physical and spiritual things. Mentorship is the 'healing' ministry men need for their shriveled hearts. This guidance is the love men ultimately respond to...and all the clinical insight into a man's soul won't replace the lack of mature friendship and manly instruction in the Church. Rugged and selfless discipling relationships between loyal men, is the prescribed way of Godly manhood, and a motherly method of inner healing that causes men to become introspective victims is simply unhealthy and fruitless.

Blessings,

MC

Re: - posted by John173 (), on: 2007/8/1 10:22

Compton, you wrote-

Quote:
-----About the gender gap; many women...and a few men in leadership...think they can repair men with nursing which is often the worst medicine. Instead men must be disciplined and trained by other men who are stronger, smarter and more mature than they are, both in physical and spiritual things. Mentorship is the 'healing' ministry men need for their shriveled hearts. This guidance is the love men ultimately respond to...and all the clinical insight into a man's soul won't replace the lack of mature friendship and manly instruction in the Church. Rugged and selfless discipling relationships between loyal men, is the prescribed way of Godly manhood, and a motherly method of inner healing that causes men to become introspective victims is simply unhealthy and fruitless.

My brother, I agree and disagree with you when it comes to men and healing. Men have a biological difference from women in our brain structure. While in the womb, the brain develops the same in both genders for a while, but at some point prior to birth the male fetus will develop and release testosterone. This hormone actually "washes" the brain and destroys many of the inter-connective tissue between its two halves. This accounts for women being more 'in touch' with their emotions. In men, these differing aspects are compartmentalized. This does not mean however that emotional issues can simply be ignored. Men get wounded just as much as women, but due to this brain structure have a much tougher time comprehending the nature of its impact. Unacknowledged wounds often become something akin to a sub-program governing our responses to situations and relationships. This in turn impacts our character.

Our society teaches men to have a tight reign on their emotions. But this tight reign often closes us off from experiencing the fullness of God's love and the fullness of Christian fellowship. If we are closed off in this way, how can we then fully bear the fruit of Godly character?

I agree with you that overcoming these issues is not a matter of being nursed with excessively compassionate coddling and incessant introspection. For years this has been my own error, it led to self pity and excuses. Some degree of introspection is necessary. Enough to discover those underlying issues and confront them. Without this our hearts will continue to be scaled over with a subconscious self defense mechanism. If I keep you at arms length, you can't hurt me etc.

I am still wrestling with just how to help people, especially men, toward God's version of wholeness and emotional health. Without this inner wholeness though, I am convinced that Godly character is impossible.

Thanks again for participating in this thread, your perspective is invaluable.

In His Love,

Doug

Re: Healing the soul, on: 2007/8/1 14:09

This is tricky.... I want to reply to MC's post, as it gives (me) an opportunity to more finely divide between thoughts I've shared / tried to share elsewhere.... but Doug.... I can't leave this statement of yours till then.

I fear I'm about to ramble, but... I hope, not to no avail.

Quote:
-----Without this inner wholeness though, I am convinced that Godly character is impossible.

'impossible' is too strong a word here, brother.

Godly character is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, whether the brother (as we are talking about men) has fully investigated his inner pain or not.

But, I would agree there is a strength of spiritual character which develops as healing progresses, *because*, as you say, that shielding from new hurts is now unnecessary.

I don't mean the pain of spiritual assaults is then not palpable, but, its effect is far less crippling to the one who is more healed, than to the one who is unhealed. I'd go so far as to say that somehow God protects unhealed brethren (to a certain extent) from being completely destroyed. But part of His strategy is to lead them as their Shepherd, in safe paths of righteousness, according to their deepest desire for fellowship with Him and of pleasing Him.

I'm sure there are some whom God heals by a more circuitous route, almost so that they don't have to have big crises of confrontation with their pain. That is His goodness to them. These honest men (and women) will work hard to comply with all scriptural constraints, and God will honour their application to His word.

But, there are many wounded souls who believe they are more godly for their unhealed woundedness, who sort of wear it like a badge of spirituality that they hurt. They go through the motions of forgiving and repenting and God gives them a clear conscience and a measure of peace. Really I don't believe this is enough nor the full extent of His ability to release them from inner pain - which ability is ENTIRE.

I need to be careful not to generalise too much here, but the difference I see with this interpretation of the issues, is that those who believe they are to bear this historic pain (some carry it to almost celebrity status) tend towards re-naming this unwillingness to yield it up to the Lord as 'suffering'.

There is so much more I'll save the rest for now.

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2007/8/1 20:54

Well Doug and Dorcas,

you have endured my strongest comments regarding this subject with patient grace. :-) Thanks much...I just felt I needed to establish the context I am speaking from.

I also wanted to extend my understanding for those who have given and received counseling.

Quote:
-----I am still wrestling with just how to help people, especially men, toward God's version of wholeness and emotional health. Without this inner wholeness though, I am convinced that Godly character is impossible.

My first reaction to this statement is to gently challenge the biblicalness of the phrase "inner wholeness." However, I would like to temper my suspicion because it's more than likely we do not have an agreed upon definition of this phrase.

Having offered that small disclaimer, I simply do not see a disparity between 'inner wholeness' and Godly Character, as if one can come without the other...anymore than fire can come without heat and water can come without wetness. We are talking about the power of Godliness after all.

Now perhaps the phrase, "Godly character", is also suspect ...conjuring fears that I expect men to wipe the blood off of their fattened lip and to keep fighting the good fight like automatons without feelings.

Yet, from my own personal experience I do not believe this. There was a time when I was hurt, and hurting, so desperately, that I wondered if I was going to lose my sanity. I felt as if my soul was like a fish wounded by a shark, trailing a red cloud of blood behind as it floated sickly through life. I felt as if no one around me noticed my wound...except maybe the predators!

Much of my pain was caused by poor moral choices. Yes there were corrupt people in my life who hurt me. But in truth I was often attracted to corrupt people...because I believed their ways could help me more than God's ways.

There came a point where I realized how deeply my own corruption, my own sin was hidden in my heart, and sought out the mercy of God. Indeed, He was waiting for me...before I called he was answering! He poured his abundant grace upon me, and in the desert there flowed in me a revival that I can honestly say has never stopped running through my heart, cleansing and refreshing.

Yet, alas...I learned that a Christian who has made poor moral choices will never be at peace no matter how much counsel

seling and forgiveness he receives... until he becomes more like Christ in those areas of sin. Forgiveness, and justification is a sure foundation but everyone, who is in Christ, must put on the New Man or be miserable. We mercy givers want to short-circuit this path...we hand out our emotional coupons to hurting brothers, but the Lord does not honor our misguided bargains. He gives these hurting men more than forgiveness---he gives them the fruit of the Spirit...he gives them peace and longsuffering, integrity and honor, contentment, and love for others before themselves. This fruit, which is given freely in His son, is the only wholeness there is...and holding out for some other wholeness is merely a continuation of the self-interest that got us hurt in the first place.

We Christians are told to put on the New Man as if we can already. This way of moving forward in Godliness is the path to 'wholeness', and not the way of holding back, waiting and hoping for a wholeness outside of Godliness. Some of our brethren do seem too crippled to even begin to walk this path...but we must encourage them to have faith that God does indeed call the lame to leap like a deer.

Quote:
-----But, there are many wounded souls who believe they are more godly for their unhealed woundedness, who sort of wear it like a badge of spirituality that they hurt.

Yes, many wounded souls claim to be (edit: lonely and spiritual) out in their wildernesses. Pride is the consolation of many wounded people. But wounded souls may be tempted by other comfort sins. Some give their hearts for the love of money and others medicate themselves with pornography. Now should we say that the cure for these "addictions" is professional counseling but not Godly discipleship? Many in the Church today answer yes!

And in saying yes, I think we are seeing that counseling and inner healing has replaced loving discipleship in the western Church. This is perhaps the simple point I am trying to make.

I appreciate sharing these things here,

Blessings,

MC

Re: Healing the soul, on: 2007/8/2 20:26

Mike thank you.

Quote:
-----I appreciate sharing these things here,

As you see from the time it is late and still I have not replied to your previous post, but I do want to do so, though I'm not sure whether I'll manage tomorrow.

Perhaps that will be better, as I should be more focused by then.

But tonight, I will look at what I'd already written and not posted, and decide whether it could be placed here, without causing distraction.

Re: Healing the soul, on: 2007/8/2 22:00

Hi Doug,

I wanted to comment on something you've said. I know you are rolling it all together because it is now crystallised out in your mind.

But I want for the sake of those who don't know you or other parts of your story you've shared on SI, to remind you how

slowly you've come to these understandings, and how many times it has been God Himself interacting with your heart, mind, soul and spirit, through tears and trials, dryness and refreshments, that you can be sure.

I would not take issue with your list. You said:

Quote:

-----unforgiveness/resentment/bitterness etc.

But I would temper it thus: that people who have been harbouring inner pain for years, may not be able to distinguish one aspect of their pain from another, through having learned to live with it till they are numb.

I know this was true of mine. God Himself undertook to heal some of that 'pain', without my ever knowing what it was about - or *feeling it*. Other pain, He had to convey to me by gradually giving me back enough feeling to label it, so I could pray constructively.

Unfortunately, *some* Christians who think they know something about what is necessary for someone else to 'do' to be healed, are often armed with words like you used above, at the very *beginning* of their encounters with a brother or sister who *does need healing from the Lord*, but could not cope with all of it at once.

To a person who has already been hurt more times than they can count, and who can't feel most of how that affected them originally any more, this kind of analysis offered prematurely, is terrifyingly unnerving.

In fact, *unless* it is left to the person in need, to set the pace of these spiritual transactions, yet more harm can be done - not by the doctrine itself, but by turning it into a system applied externally..... when truly only the Lord is able to unravel it in the right sequence, each individual's hurts and painful reactions.

The counsellor has to understand that the Lord Himself will give the revelation to the person, just as He did to you, and just as I have also had, with an indescribable precision of touch, which is perfectly accurate in the Spirit. How the Christian responds to these revelations and how long it takes them to come to the Lord with the necessary petitions or repentance, is between that person and the Lord. Sometimes they do need a Christian facilitator, and sometimes they just need to have someone on call, to reassure them there is a way through.

The other thing which can happen when a person starts to deal with 'stuff', is that God can *seem* very far away ... even, *non-existent*. I found it helpful to know this loss of perspective is 'normal' and of course God hasn't changed or disappeared.

This tests one's faith, but it may be one reason that Christians hold on to pain for long enough to establish in their own understanding a meaningful relationship with God which they can trust, *even when* there is less of His tangible presence than they are used to.

Is this making sense?

Re: Healing the soul, on: 2007/8/2 22:03

Continuing a thought from an earlier post...

Additionally, 'the Church' is weak because not addressing inner pain renders the individual believer less strong to deal with the sins active in his own life. But, any denial of past hurt means this endless loop of compensating for pain *by sinning*, just goes on and on.

I believe this is what you allude to, Mike, in your last post here:

Quote:

-----Yes, many wounded souls claim to be (edit: lonely and spiritual) out in their wildernesses. Pride is the consolation of many wounded people. But wounded souls may be tempted by other comfort sins. Some give their hearts for the love of money and others medicate themselves with

pornography.

Those who do *not* appear to compensate with sin, do compensate for their pain in other ways.

Please note: I think I can make this claim *only* because certain pain remained from my childhood. But, I can also testify that certain *sin* in childhood, was clear to me at the time, and I repented then and was forgiven then. What I'm trying to convey here is the that stuff which was not dealt with yet, will hang around until it is. This is a fact, whether it is acknowledged or not.

Taking into account what you said about the New Man, Mike, I believe this is a fair solution to simple innate sin, which you also mentioned here:

Quote:

-----Notice that it is the old man that must be allowed to be crucified...the cross is first for sinners.

But, many also are confused about the reason for their failures. They cannot (I could not) distinguish a sin to which they are attached because it's a coping mechanism from a pain started by someone else, or, they are solely responsible for repenting and stopping it because it's their full responsibility to do so.

In the end, I concluded after my own many years of struggling against sin, that those who *want out* of the cycle, will find it in Christ the Door. Those who do not make this choice, get what they want also: bondage.

However, in saying this, I also acknowledge that a Christian who is going on with God, who discovers a pain they had not acknowledged previously, may well be able to receive healing directly from God, without 'counselling' from another human (Christian or not).

I don't want to divert on to whether it is *such* a sin to hold on to one's pain, that one will forfeit one's salvation, *but*, it is plain in the New Testament that certain lifestyle sins will disenfranchise the believer of eternal life. That is, they will never see the kingdom of God *within them*, if they don't battle to set it there through the power of Christ's dealings - which, as Doug posted early in the thread, includes 'healing the broken-hearted'... and I don't believe this refers only to failed romances....

Mike, I know I haven't done justice to all you've shared and I apologise. Maybe it's not necessary, but I do have more to say....

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2007/8/2 23:47

Quote:

-----I can also testify that certain sin in childhood, was clear to me at the time, and I repented then and was forgiven then. What I'm trying to convey here is the that stuff which was not dealt with yet, will hang around until it is. This is a fact, whether it is acknowledged or not.

We may be saying pretty much the same thing, and the largest gap being in our terminology. And I trust that 'dealing' with sin involves more of the cross than the couch. ;-)

Quote:

-----Mike, I know I haven't done justice to all you've shared and I apologise.

Well, please endure just one more rant here, and then I'll sit the bench for awhile. I just want to make sure my earlier comments aren't interpreted as hard-nosed condemnation.

If you read only one post from me this year...read this one!

All in all, my contribution to this topic is to insist we don't accept a secular vocabulary assuming one can be 'whole' before they grow in Christ. I am not including true mental or chemical illness here. And I do recognize that many people have

found psychological relief in a variety of ways without putting on the Lord.

Yet, even healthy Christians are never really healthy in themselves, but only as they abide in Christ. This is not a merely comforting but powerless platitude, as if we can sing about wanting more of the Lord on Sunday, but then throughout the week being lost unless we can medicate our pain with scientific counseling.

I was listening to a nice song this morning during my commute...they sang "All we want is you Lord". I wonder if the writer of that tune understands that the love of the Lord isn't just a psychological pill to make you feel better...if we would have more of Jesus' life in us, we would have more of his character. His character is his peace and joy, his release from fear and concern we so desire. Indeed...it is misguided to even pray to have more peace or more joy, or more forgiveness or more longsuffering, because these things are only faceted descriptions of Jesus. Instead, we pray to simply have Jesus.

So we cannot expect the Holy Spirit to 'medicate' us, if we are holding back from our "imitation of Christ" (Thomas A Kempis) This type of thinking is, I believe, is futile.

Jesus offers us to partake of his divine nature, but his offer seems unreal to us in the face of 'modern' methods. We tend to be fascinated with man's theories of the unconscious, of behaviorism, or some new psychoanalytic method. Our faith in God is sincere enough, but it's orientation and activities are not towards putting on Christ, but in clinical psychology, trying to detect that exact sensory stimuli that damaged us long ago allowing us to track our behavioral reaction ad nauseum...all the while the horizon we seek is just beyond the next session.

Now to make matters complicated, many clinical methods do indeed produce some good results. But isn't this always the way it is with man's cleverness? God's way is like the staff Moses throws down becoming a serpent, and soon man is throwing down his own staff which also turns into a serpent. God offers us a chance to be delivered, and man imitates this offer with behaviorism.

But it is Jesus that delivers us. There is no psychological relief in Christ, but actual relief from the deceitfulness of sin both as a sinner and as a victim...and only this relief can bring the 'wholeness' that many counselors dream about for their patients.

I realize many counselors loathe or pity this type of faith. Oswald Chambers, in reference to Isaiah's prophecy Look to me and be saved for I am God! asserted, "Look to God and you are saved!" Not, look to God and then do this or that, but the moment you see the Lord you are saved! And we all know of Job's change from pitiful lamentation to exclamation, "Before I heard about you with my ears, but now I see you with my eyes and despise myself!"

I believe there is a difference between being damaged, with the hopes of being repaired...and being finally broken with only the hope of being replaced. Counselors can repair damaged people...but Jesus replaces corruption with glory.

Until we see just a wee bit of God's glory, we will continue to be at the mercy of our corruption. We can point out that it is not our corruption that hurt us so, but the fact remains that all of it is corruption. The crimes come against us and then the unforgiveness and fear comes out of us. Even if we do try to avoid evil, it still gets ahold of us...sometimes as little helpless children. We are all ruined, both the predator and the victim.

O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

Notice that, in Romans 6, Paul says that Jesus died unto sin, which is quite a different thing than dying for sin. If I am crucified by the sins of this world and you tell me Jesus died for those same sins of this world, then I am a thankful, but wounded observer. But if you tell me that Jesus died unto sin once and for all, and that now he is risen incorruptible for ever and living for God...and more incredibly I am invited to share in his death, and his resurrection, and incorruption...well then now you've got my attention! Now I'm more than a thankful observer of Jesus' victory,... now I am a participant in that victory! Now you've explained to me how God intends to set me free from the poison of unforgiveness, of bitterness, of wounded pride, or hopelessness. These things simply do not exist in the nature of Jesus! And glory to God, I have been allowed to put on that nature! This is what the song means Glory divine, Jesus is mine!"

Like I said Dorcas, I suspect we are talking about some of the same things here. I can understand if you say that God used secular counseling to help you be free...but I must adamantly reject the notion that the wounded Christian is dependent on clinical psychology, in order to be free in Christ. The gospel is not the pursuit of godliness by any means available...it is the power of Godliness;)

All that is needed is faith and obedience to split the Jordan. See Jesus, turn to Him, and you are saved. This is not dreadful condemnation but wonderful mercy.

MC

Re: - posted by John173 (), on: 2007/8/3 0:28

Dear brother and sister in Christ,

Words will fail to convey how richly blessed I am in reading your comments.

As you may remember, when I first joined SI I mentioned having gone into real estate. After clinging to it for nearly a full year I have realized it isn't meant to be, unless the Lord does something startling in the next few weeks. As a result I have taken a job driving a dump truck. It's 10-11 hours a day, 6 days a week.

I dearly want to continue in this discussion as it is very close to my heart. I've always hated seeing wounded souls. When I was in seventh grade I wanted to become a psychiatrist because they helped people get better (or so I thought when I was 13 and lost). Hopefully I will still find time to participate. Tonight I am worn out and fear that any effort to address this topic would come out as gibberish.

Mike, I did want to comment that I agree more and more with you re healing/wholeness/character. As for the term "inner wholeness" I borrowed it from what many have termed 'psychobabble'. I think I was trying to say that God wants us to be healthy individuals, both physically and mentally, encompassing all aspects of our created being. That is not to say fixing the old man up so he feels better, but rather, knowing the fullness of who we are as that new creation in Christ. This idea is expressed by Paul in 1 Thess 5:23 "Now may the God of peace Himself *sanctify you completely*; and may your *whole spirit, soul, and body* be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

In His Unsearchable Love,

Doug

Re: Healing the soul, on: 2007/8/3 10:12

Hi Doug,

Thanks for letting us know your schedule. I also will be busy for a few days but will complete posting what I'd already written with additions today, before I reply to Mike.

Hi Mike,

Quote:
-----We may be saying pretty much the same thing, and the largest gap being in our terminology. And I trust that 'dealing' with sin involves more of the cross than the couch.

Dealing with sin - my sin - your sin - involves *only* the cross.

The 'dealing' which leads to the kind of healing Doug is talking about, is with Christ as the great Physician, not as the Representative Man.

OF COURSE He is much more than either of these, but, His healing exploits in the New Testament cannot be *dismissed* as many Christians attempt.

The other main comment I'd like to make for readers is my disuse of the word 'psychology' - the study of the soul - because of all the preconceptions it seems to have for those who have good reason not to be seen by a secular therapist and good reason to believe God is able to do better.

Let me give my very simple definition of the word 'science'. It is: the exploration, objective analysis and honest description of creation.

I realise this leaves out the enormous chunk of *making things* with those basic discoveries, and of inventing ways of using them as part of subduing the earth.

I also realise that ruthless exploitation goes on, rather than stewardship.

But, going back to 'the soul', I believe that God knows what 'the soul' is and how it works, and He is the arch-psychologist in His dealings with man.

For instance... I don't know if you'll follow me here but... please try.... I once heard a preacher say something like this: if you find you keep walking into the wall, try the door handle next time.

In other words, the wall is not going to yield. This doesn't mean there is no way through it, but, we have to adjust our approach to the wall, to find its weak point.

It's like this with God. There is a way. Jesus. And God does not make any allowances for those who try to go some other way.

He has already given us all the direction we need to get where we need to go, and if anyone is going to change, it's us, not God.

That's His knowledge of 'the soul', in action.

In a different sort of scenario, you can see the same thing all through the Old Testament, when Israel was not being obedient. God did not budge. Eventually, for that time, those people had received a final warning, and they reaped the fruit of their choices; often painful.

We could reclassify walking into the wall (because of not looking for the door, not seeing the door, choosing not to try the door, finding it shut and being unable to open it seemingly... etc) as 'painful'. Maybe even self-destructive in the case of some persistent offenders.

But God is kind and tender-hearted to heal these pains, even if they are caused by our own stupidity, stubbornness, blindness, ineptitude, prior conditioning and so on, once we ask Him.

If the pain has been caused by someone else leading us into danger, wounding us, leaving us for dead, imprisoning us, cheating us, betraying our trust, physically damaging us, God holds that person responsible for those damages - in Christ. Here we can find the place of forgiving the other party. But, that forgiveness is not a source of healing for our woundedness, except as we have been responsible for holding on to it after we see the alternative God offers.

And then there remains the pains which were inflicted on us. These are not healed by our forgiving of the perpetrator of them.

These are the pains which Doug is talking about, which separately permit us to approach the great Physician for as many consultations as are necessary, till we have received those healings.

They may be of spirit, mind, soul or body or all of those.

But laid out like this, I hope it is easier to see that the expectations of some Christians - that once a believer, a hurting person should be able to recover the losses accrued over years of coping with pain, at the instant of believing in Christ for salvation - are somewhat unrealistic.

I don't believe Jesus needed to die, to claim some new power from His Father, to be able to do these kinds of healings.

This is why I dispute the assertion that 'ALL healing is in the Atonement'.

I believe that the life of God demonstrated by Jesus, IS health to our marrow - health to our soul - healing to the wounded spirit - and that's why *this kind of healing* can be appropriated only as we enter His presence.

Perhaps this is where your terminology and mine finds agreement, but, I will continue to assert that God does not hold a person's sin against them if they come to Him for healing, even though this is the next transaction they must do with Him through Christ.

And therefore, to hold a person to the condition of accepting Christ as Saviour, for healing, is not biblically supportable as a truth.

It is GOD who convicts of sin, and we all know what a blessed release there is to come into agreement with Him over it, and to repent and be healed and forgiven of it.

But, this IS a separate issue many times, for a person who is carrying historic 'psychological' (meaning, impacting his soul) pain.

I found that God understands that. And wished that Christians understood it as well as He.

This is a separate aspect of Redemption.

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2007/8/3 11:26

Quote:
-----I hope it is easier to see that the expectations of some Christians - that once a believer, a hurting person should be able to recover the losses accrued over years of coping with pain, at the instant of believing in Christ for salvation - are somewhat unrealistic.

It is completely unrealistic.

But I believe most 'counseling' could be given through biblical discipleship by a more mature saint who has walked with the Lord.

Quote:
-----I don't believe Jesus needed to die, to claim some new power from His Father, to be able to do these kinds of healings.

I don't know why you would insert some new notion that I never implied here sister. I was simply referring to Paul's gospel in Roman's 6. Jesus took upon himself the sin of the world and took it to the grave with him. He himself, as you said was not sinful, nor did he need 'new power' (sic) to live unto God. But he was our scapegoat. The life he lived before the cross, he opened to us through the cross.

Quote:
-----This is why I dispute the assertion that 'ALL healing is in the Atonement'.

Again, you know better than this. Be careful not to dismiss the what has been available to the saints for 2000 years because of your personal experience with modern counseling.

I learned alot from playing basketball in High school. I learned the value of hard work, and caring about my team, and of learning to lose gracefully and often. ;-) Does this mean that all people must play basketball to learn these things? No...it only means that in my youth the Lord was close enough to me to use the things in my life for reasons of his own.

Please do not so easily rephrase me with such a cheap parody. "ALL healing is in the Atonement'."

The issue is here is that it is in taking on the life of Christ that a person is made healthy. (Tolerate my use of the word healthy here for a second...) You are and I are not healthy and no counselor will ever make us healthy because they aren't healthy either. Jesus is the only one who is healthy...and it takes years of discipleship...not counseling....to grow in grace.

Am I against clinical counseling? Only against it's elevation. I know most of clinical counseling has been around for less then 100 years...and I also know Jesus has been delivering people for about 2000 years. Judging from the mental health of modern man, I would say that the ancients were closer to the truth then we moderns.

Now, I do not wish to slight you either. It may be that we are closer then we sound here. We have talked about similar subjects before with much benifit for myself. So I will be quiet now and listen for a while to see if you can explain why a science that is less then 100 years old is vital to the health of the Church. ;-)

Bless you sister,

MC

Re: Healing the soul, on: 2007/8/3 14:11

Dear Mike, :-)

If I'm not mistaken, this

Quote:

-----It is completely unrealisic.

is the first time in this thread you have acknowledged a difference between psychological pain (meaning of the spirit, mind or soul - which includes the effects of unresolved physical pain) and sin.

Quote:

-----Please do not so easily rephrase me with such a cheap parody. "ALL healing is in the Atonement'."

I apologise unreservedly for this impression. I was not (in my mind) attributing *to you* this doctrine, but rather trying to explain clearly why I don't accept it. You have come very close to implying, though, that there is no healing *before* the cross.

Quote:

-----I don't know why you would insert some new notion that I never implied here sister.

Again, the logical conclusion of your thesis so far, is that we *must* have passed through the cross in order to receive healing. I am not pressing you to agree to my thesis, but I am trying to clarify mine.

My point is that neither Jesus *nor* those He healed in Israel had passed through the cross. His LIFE was sufficient. His COMPASSION was sufficient. While we need to be regenerated *to offer the same ministry* to others, He did not. That's all I was saying.

Why?

Because the burden Christians put upon hurting people to commit themselves to Christ, requires they somehow separate their sin from their pain and repent first as a precondition for healing. This precondition is not in the Bible.

The ministry of Jesus, the disciples, the seventy, and that which was taken on by Paul and the apostles after Pentecost,

was as written. But what is passed on as received wisdom amongst Christians today, differs considerably.

I'm challenging this, to return it to the biblical pattern. More faith needed? Hearing God's word in each situation where prayer may be offered, needed? *Of course*, if we are to minister as the apostles ministered.

Quote:

-----You are and I are not healthy and no counselor will ever make us healthy because they aren't healthy either.

Mike, I wonder if you've been reading my posts with it in mind that what you've just refuted, is what I believe?

Quote:

-----Jesus is the only one who is healthy...and it takes years of discipleship...not counseling....to grow in grace.

I don't dispute this with regard to growing in grace. But that's not the issue, is it? I have not implied anywhere that a person cannot go directly to Jesus, THE Counsellor, to hear His word bring them inner health and life more abundant.

Quote:

-----Am I against clinical counseling? Only against it's elevation.

I hope that no-one reading my posts thinks I've been *elevating* 'clinical counseling'. I've hardly mentioned it!

Quote:

-----So I will be quiet now and listen for a while to see if you can explain why a science that is less than 100 years old is vital to the health of the Church.

If you are teasing me, that's ok.... because I don't think I've said this either. I have no dispute with the ministry Jesus has given to saints across the years. However, there must be many believers who have laboured under misinformation about the availability of His healing power.

I don't know how the Lord will view this in the end... the hurt person's lack of seeking Him, or the misinformer's unbelief?

I'm really not sure how it has crept into church teaching that a person must wait till they die physically to be relieved of their inner pain. This is not a part of the gospel I recognise.

On your question about science, I don't approve of the experimentation that has been done with lives, hearts, minds, spirits and souls, in the name of atheistic psychology. But, perhaps it is worth remembering that many people go that way, because they are hoping not to deal with their sin. Worse, psychologists tell them they don't need to. I recognise this as a serious flaw in the past thinking of the psychological sciences. I also acknowledge that until quite recently, 'religion' was considered to be a defence mechanism (that is, (simplistically), one layer deeper than a coping mechanism).

This may be true on one level, in that it *is* a layer which must be looked at. But the person who KNOWS GOD has nothing to fear from a psychologist, because God hijacks the process as soon as an honest client 'sees' in their spirit, the truth (the kind that Doug alluded to earlier) which enables them to pray constructively, thus abandoning the formal therapeutic process for as long as he needs. EDIT: or for ever.

contd.

Re: Healing the soul, on: 2007/8/3 15:10

Hi Mike, (too long... I know :-()

I'm wondering.... have you replied in this thread with preconceived ideas on the use I think therapists can be to a Christian, making assumptions - like that I would trust them more than God's word to my understanding, or that I would put myself *under* their care to such a degree that they had control of me, or that I would relinquish my right to veto what didn't ring true... I don't know... any of that in what you imagined I think....? It feels like it.

Or, that I think any of these is required of a person who makes a conscious choice to pick the brains of an experienced professional, to help them get a handle on how to describe their malaise to God? It feels like it.

God has always been very definitely in my thinking about therapy and therapists, and believe me I was very against the m... until I met a couple of *good* ones, and heard about more.

What I do now 'know' about clinical counseling from listening to these good ones talking, is that the more it has represented the tenderness of Christ to its clients, the more it has been successful, and the more *these methods* have been held up as 'best practice' to other clinicians.

There is another aspect to modern *holistic* therapy which is helpful, namely a recognition of the *limitations* of clinical therapy as a replacement for the roles of parents, grandparents, siblings, teachers and advisors and other naturally occurring components of the community within which children should grow up.

However - and this is important - that recognition that the clinician *is dealing with the trail of lacks and compensations which arose from the community in which the child did grow up*, enables him to present what the client most needs to hear as a priority, *much more in the way that Jesus spoke to the woman at the well*, than as an inquisitor in the culture of traditional 'psychotherapy'. (Horrors!)

In this way, for instance, *correct* counselling (of victims of sexual abuse in childhood) has changed dramatically in a very short time (20 years), such that a client need never describe an assault unless he wants to, because there is no need - if the clinician is listening properly, and *not* asking totally unnecessary questions.

I am not and have not advocated that this kind of therapeutic procedure is a substitute for the work of God in a life, have I? Nor have I implied the work of God can be evaded, and the same results obtained.... as I don't believe it can.

But, I do know that many Christians are fobbed off with what amounts to 'Peace! Peace! When there is no peace!' by *Christians*, and this is a scandal within churches.

One of the reasons it exists is because of the taboo created round anything relevant to Eph 5:12. Another is the lack of true community in Christian circles. Another is the rigour of the schedule of church activities expected to be complied with (or risk having your salvation questioned)! Another is the ignorance of older survivors who believe these things don't get fixed till we die - because that's what *they* were taught. Another is the sheer shame of admitting to a need for inner healing amongst those to whom one has never mentioned inner pain previously. Another is the violent verbal reactions of those church members / leaders who do not take their own inner pain to Jesus, and honestly believe whatever it is doesn't matter, can and should be borne silently, and reject any suggestion their stance is not biblical.

I suppose I'm saying that the people who've received their profoundest healing from the Lord, are the ones who attract others who need it. But, they may not have 'permission' to minister - even to suggest that the biblical account suggests healing is possible - so, the needy person does what is expected of him... goes away quietly and cries alone, usually pleading for the Lord to save him (because the weight on him is to 'repent' or 'die to self' and 'to sin'). He has still not heard that healing is available from the Lord. He still may not know that this is what he needs.

As in other aspects of the gospel, if the word is not spoken out loud, it cannot be quickened by the Spirit to theirs, nor can they respond.

It's difficult to explain to someone who's never had the perceptual disorientation which arises from inner pain.

I'm chewing on the term 'inner wholeness', and for the moment think it must be relative - apart from the Spirit, which brings us the completed work of Christ, as far as our Father is concerned, and which completeness we must believe.

I think also, I would separate 'Godly character' completely from 'inner wholeness', in that one can be doing everything right yet still be carrying old unresolved inner pain, through no fault of oneself, which would be relieved upon asking Him, for no other reason than His love.

However, as you have repeatedly remarked, and Doug stated back at the beginning, there is - or may be - a place for the cross as the pain becomes understood - if we have built a defence (against the pain) on false premises -- such as bitterness, unforgiveness, vengeance, anger... the list goes on.... or any ungodly attitude, which once we recognise it, must be discarded as soon as possible.

I don't think anyone is exempt from this, but in so saying, I am *not* saying that the *reasons* for wrong attitudes are always due to unrecognised or unacknowledged inner pain; only that the amazing lack of attention to inner pain within churches, suggests it may still be lingering unnecessarily.

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2007/8/3 19:54

Dorcas,

There was quite a bit to talk over from your last two posts.

In answer to your question...yes, I am loaded with preconceived ideas...everytime I talk to people I discover yet another preconception lurking in me. Thank you for challenging me here.

I do not wish to focus too much on disagreements. There is more we understand here in each other on than not. Your experience with these things is very beneficial to me. As usual, you are a pleasure to exchange ideas with. There is always a blessed sincerity in your posts, and I so appreciate the way you know how to challenge others hopefully without showing disrespect or cynicism.

(Edit:simplified...)

Dorcas, and Doug...suffice it to say we can appreciate the words to the Hymn I need thee every hour.. My only generalized comment is that I do indeed believe that all of our hurts can be ministered to by the Lord. I know we all feel this or we wouldn't be going to Him for our every need. He has been sheltering his fragile but overcoming saints ever since the beginning.

Blessings,

MC

Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2007/8/4 10:55

Quote:
----- For those of us who truly desire to walk in the fullness of God's ways, bearing eternal fruit, being Spirit filled/lead etc, It is absolutely imperative that this pain buried in our soul be removed.

Is it really? Can we not be used by God even in our woundedness - even in some way - even when the hurt comes back - - even if we can't ever rise to the calibre of people like Jonathan Edwards, and other giants who didn't have the baggage to deal with that some of us have had and still have?

I stumbled across this thread today - perhaps as an ordained response to my prayers this morning. Over the past few

weeks various events, challenges and responsibilities have had an accumulative effect on me – I find myself facing an overwhelming sense of inadequacy, drained, crushed - I'll admit, mostly due to the incomplete "healings", trends engrained early in life - rubbing shoulders with others who are wounded and messed-up.

Quote:

----- The thing that people seem unwilling to acknowledge is that old wounds impact our ability to love.

Here I am MOST willing to acknowledge this. Yet, after several years of divine "surgery", I am asking, why do some "adhesions" remain. I do not believe that it is because of stubborn refusal. It is a thorn. I am an unfinished divine project.

In fact, this morning, in frustration and anger, and distraught over my own "dysfunction", I cried out to the Lord for help. I realize that I don't have what it takes to get me through some thorny challenges facing me – yes, even tomorrow (Sunday).

Amazingly, already today, God overruled on my behalf, regarding a few of my concerns. That is leaving me weeping with joy. I can't; but God can!

There is a lesson in all this: just when we think we are finally healed, God increases the grade of the mountain slope, and our climb is steeper. And, alas, we are again faced with our unhealed "spots". We see others climbing past us – effortlessly. But we stagger.

One thing that my "handicaps" do for me is bring me back to my Lord, over and over again. And if that is one reason why God keeps me limping. I'd like to be totally free to love totally. And yet, I'd rather have a limp that than take off – soaring without God – only to crash later.

May God love others through this cracked vessel – all those messed-up people with whom I rub shoulders these days – who draw energy from me - who need to see the evidence of faith in action.

Quote:

----- All that is needed is faith and obedience to split the Jordan..

.... And yet, the Israelites could hardly boast about their faith and obedience. It was God's mercy.

Diane

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2007/8/4 11:43

Sister Diane, you made a great spiritual observation here:

Quote:

----- There is a lesson in all this: just when we think we are finally healed, God increases the grade of the mountain slope, and our climb is steeper.

I have also discovered this truth. If you are a choice servant of God, He will continue refining and revealing, revealing and refining the innermost and it can feel as though we never have rest. Like you said, as soon as we think we are healed and the temperature is finally decreasing, the mountain slope is once again inclined and the furnace is fired up.

Quote:

----- I realize that I don't have what it takes to get me through some thorny challenges facing me; yes, even tomorrow (Sunday).

You are in a blessed place when you can realize and accept this. To come to this point of acknowledgement is divine rest. I will even go a bit further than you have -- I will finally admit that I don't have what it takes to get through *any* of the thorny challenges facing me. I can't subsist on yesterday's Manna meal; it's already festering worms if I'm trying to preserve its freshness *outside* the holiest of holies.

Quote:

-----And yet, I'd rather have a limp than take off – soaring without God – only to crash later.

Me too. I am well acquainted with crash landings after flying solo. I have learned there is more liberty behind the bars of Christ's strength than roaming the world in the freedom of my own self-sufficiency.

Quote:

-----And yet, the Israelites could hardly boast about their faith and obedience. It was God's mercy

A few years ago, I would have argued this with you. But not now. The more I yield to God, the more I come to the end of my strength under the crushing burden of divinely-prescribed trials, the more I am convinced of absolute grace through faith and prostrate myself beneath the mercy of God. I've learned to do this with broken legs, broken wings, often not able to even lift my eyes to heaven, but only able to smite my breast and breathe in my soul: "O, be merciful God, to me a sinner." And God shows His mercy. This, to me, is a greater experience than seeing the dead raised, a mightier miracle than perhaps seeing thousands fall down under the preaching of a Whitefield or Wesley or Finney. It is the all-encompassing and sole-sustaining glory of salvation revealed from the Depth of Mercy to my own molting spirit. In truth, nothing else will keep me; it is by grace alone that I continue to stand, and I have come to cherish the awesome mercy of our God more than anything else in this world.

Brother Paul

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2007/8/4 11:59

Quote:

-----All that is needed is faith and obedience to split the Jordan.. Â.... And yet, the Israelites could hardly boast about their faith and obedience. It was God's mercy.

Trusting in the help of God (The sufficiency of Christ) is the only faith and obedience I am referring to. Mercy and obedience (according to faith in that mercy) are not at separate poles. We are all imperfect, but we all must keep walking up the steep grade as you say.

Obedience, and even holiness still has a place in the New Testament Christian's life...even the hurting ones. Our 'obedience' doesn't earn us salvation...but the Lord's grace is sufficient for us to keep moving on in spite of our failures and pain. When we cultivate an obedient heart, flawed and immature as we are, we have a testimony that our souls are free of the burdens of sin. The Christian has a "righteousness" that is indicative from the Gospel, but also one that is imperative of the Gospel all at the same time. I have tried to insist on one without the other for years...with little success.

This is why we always come back to the person of Jesus. He has sorted these things out.

I find we are speaking too many generalities, and then applying them to specific circumstances the other isn't aware of. "Pain" to one person comes from their victimhood, and to another person it comes from their corruption within. "Obedience" to one person leads to life...and to the other it leads to condemnation.

I'm familiar with how bewildering the swirl of all these feelings, doctrines, and consequences can become when trying to sort out life. I am not indifferent or insensitive to any point of view, because I often hold all of them at the same time! Alas, our moral and spiritual compass needle is spinning in trying circumstances!

I believe we feel, or have felt, pretty much the same way about these things. In my clumsy way I want to see Jesus as an eternal and present anchor for my soul, a benchmark for my conduct as a brother, and a father to me, a father with sons and daughters of his own. My behavior and life has contradictions to all those descriptions...but I believe them nevertheless.

But I do not espouse hopeless ideals to the people in my church. In fact, if we hold onto hopeless ideals we may avoid church because ideals don't do very well with real Christians. (Some of us know all too well the burden of looking for ideal people...)

Yet, in the forum here, we can only talk in ideals in our text. The textual fossils we leave behind, removed from the flow of the Holy Spirit, is perhaps the last dynamic a brokenhearted person needs to be exposed to. I fear this is one of the pitfalls of an internet community...tempting people to believe there are super apostles and wonder workers out there in cyberspace.

Just for the record...there are no ideal people on this side of the computer screen. (I could find multiple hostile witnesses who would happily go on record affirming this.) Indeed, I believe I have already caused someone to stumble just from the little I have said in this thread, and I am sorry for that.

When we talk about discipline we hurt those who need mercy...and when we talk about mercy we offend those who see only sin in the church. Frankly it's exhausting, when we dispute over things we all agree on. We agree on the policies of mercy and obedience, and love and holiness...it's just that our feelings and circumstances are out of sync with others feelings and circumstances in the moment.

Looking forward to meeting each of you one day dear saints. One day we will be healed, removed from corruption and...well, we'll be ideal people. We shall see him as he is.

MC

Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2007/8/4 14:08

Compton, I marvel at the way God has gifted you with an eye for antithesis/polarities and an ability to point them out without creating new polarities. I realize this can be a never-ending, exhausting task. Just when one antithesis is cleared away, we plant another. Thanks! Yes, you are right, it's not a case of mercy OR obedience, but both working together.

Quote:

----- the textual fossils we leave behind

Oh, my! .. but yes..... what we leave behind doesn't sprout, or bloom, or reproduce.

Truly, our words can be so limiting - especially "out there" in the real world. My drama children taught me a lesson this week. I was trying to instruct them with clear, simple English words - straightforward instructions. You would think that they'd understand what you mean when you say "Raise your arm", or "Turn around". But, some kids simply could not "get it", or they'd forget next time around. I don't think some even knew where their arms were.

I am thinking of a 7 yo from a home that is splitting at this moment. She may be numb. I discovered that if I literally went to the child, and literally put her body through the moves that I was trying to explain - not just once, but a few times, she would get it - and not forget. For a few of the kids, it seemed that their brains could only internalize what their body actually DID repetitively.

I see a close parallel when it comes to explaining the truths of the Lord and his instructions - especially to wounded

people, those with little experience of the love of God, and godly behaviors. We cannot assume that they are able to change their life patterns and go through the right motions, or even walk in faith, just because they've heard the teachings or instructions.

Is it not the Christian way of love to walk through some of the "steps" with the broken ones. Of course, in a culture that watches life go by from our arm-chairs, ie, the TV or discusses it on the internet, or sings it from our padded pews, there is not enough living it for real. Many are left holding a huge bag of verbal fossils and are merely tucking them away with all the rest still unable to go through the "moves" of life.

Jesus actually walked WITH the people, ate with them, went down the dusty roads with him, spit in their eyes, etc. His parables of real life situations, and even actual situations - at on-site locations helped their minds connect with less concrete (spiritual) ideas.

That makes me think about all these confused and messed-up people in my life who cannot connect with my words such as love, mercy, obedience, God, etc. How do I as a Christian help them learn the meaning of those words except by being willing to walk through life with them? Yuck. That means getting muddy feet and dirty hands. But I remember that others have done that for me, and I'm deeply grateful.

Mind you, I see value in words too, in studying people's minds and behaviours even if it may include some jargon from "out there". It helps me understand (and marvel at) Jesus' teachings and instructions and participate with the Spirit in the lives of others.
Diane

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2007/8/4 23:20

Thanks for the pick-up Roadsign. It was timely and so helpful...not a textual fossil at all.

Quote:
-----I am thinking of a 7 yo from a home that is splitting at this moment. She may be numb. I discovered that if I literally went to the child, and literally put her body through the moves that I was trying to explain not just once, but a few times, she would get it and not forget. For a few of the kids, it seemed that their brains could only internalize what their body actually DID repetitively.

I see a close parallel when it comes to explaining the truths of the Lord and his instructions especially to wounded people, those with little experience of the love of God, and godly behaviors. We cannot assume that they are able to change their life patterns and go through the right motions, or even walk in faith, just because they've heard the teachings or instructions.

How do I as a Christian help them learn the meaning of those words except by being willing to walk through life with them? Yuck. That means getting muddy feet and dirty hands.

Your reference to the children in your life reminded me of appropriate story for this thread. Pardon the details, but after reading your post, I feel these details in this little episode are very illustrative to some of the points you raised, as well as the issues this thread is about.

My wife has been carpooling some local children to biblecamp this week. One of the children, a boy, has a consistent problem with soiling his pants, and for some reason is unable to visit the bathroom, or even alert an adult. The result was unpleasant for everyone...even my cheerful wife who scrubbed and sprayed our van seats to combat the persistent odor. As you said...yuck.

Now this boy presented a dilemma to us. We are endeavoring to be witnesses to some of the families in our neighborhood. We want to convey the love of God to them...but a big boy shouldn't be soiling himself like that!

Our first solution was to approach the parents, who we count as friends, and gently explain our concern, and recommend that the child bring a change of clothes with him to camp every day. Well, his parents didn't respond and sure enough, the boy continued to soil his pants.

So my wife decided to provide some of our son's clothing.

This little story contains some wonderful illustrations of the Gospel for the hurting and brokenhearted.

First, we obviously recognize that this child shouldn't have to walk around all day in his own filth. Yet, he did not want to outgrow his condition...at least not on our time table!

Secondly, we recognized he needed a change of clothes that neither he nor his parents could or would provide.

Much like this little story, any compassion we have for broken people wearing their own misery, creates a similar delimm a for us. We want to intervene...yea even meddle in hopes of helping those whose are lost and confused, but in the process we do not want to shun them, or wound them further by being simplistic, self-righteous or unloving!

Quote:

-----We cannot assume that they are able to change...

There does seem to be a basic instinct to tell others to change their behavior...press them to reach deep inside and find the emotional and spiritual resources to change themselves. Or perhaps we might pull out our flashlight and help them look through their closet and attic for some clothes they might have misplaced or forgotten about. But they are children of Adam, and alas he does not have a change of clothes for them. All they have to wear are the soiled clothes they have on.

Thankfully, God has provided them new clothing from his son! There is a spotless robe given for all those whose only clothes are soiled and stained.

Herein lies both the indicative and the imperative of the Gospel; first we see the perfect spotless robe is provided for us as a gift but then we see we must want to be clothed in it.

And so, those of us who carry this spotless robe to sinners and to the brokenhearted are not being judgemental of their sin or indifferent to their pain at all. This clothing is all we have to offer them that will remedy their condition! Our compassion may touch them, but only clean clothing actually comforts them!

Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.
Zechariah 3

But the father said to his slaves, Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him,...
Luke 15

You, however, did not come to know Christ that way...You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.
Ephesians 4

But put on the Lord Jesus Christ,...
Romans 13

This is how I believe we move forward from sin and brokenheartedness. I certainly did not have have a change of clothes for myself. I could not change out of my sin, or my hurts...they were woven into the fabric of my soul. Occasionally I tried turning my clothes, which by the way looked pretty nice to some people, inside out in hopes of hiding some of the stains...but that didn't hide the smell. Eventually, in despair, I understood that there were new clothes available for me.

I admit there is much learning, and even revelation needed to take hold of this mystery revealed in scripture...we need to help one another understand it. We might compare this help to a parent or older sibling who patiently teaches the younger how to get dressed. This help in understanding what it means to put on Christ, in essence, is discipleship.

Of course, putting on Christ is not always as visible, and as immediate as cleaning up a little boy at a biblecamp, and training a child's will isn't the same as healing a broken heart. Nevertheless, God has provided new clothing for all of us...we need not feel dirty or naked. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted. We are learning how to wear Christ's peaceable and gentle nature daily...and perhaps assisting those brethren who have suffered injury; gently lifting their weary arms as they place this perfect robe over their bruised and broken bodies.

Blessings,

MC

Re: Healing the soul - posted by John173 (), on: 2007/8/6 22:06

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As I've read through each post here I've been a bit overwhelmed with thoughts coming and going and the desire to respond to so many comments. I will do my best to work through each post and see how far I get.

Linn wrote:

Quote:
-----Hurting people also need appropriate direction towards opening themselves to God in a real way, even if it is just by opening the door of their inner being by a 1 mm crack. I think that's pretty much how I had started out at first.

I received a PM from a brother who hasn't posted here thanking me for this starting this thread, especially in regards to helping men open up and find healing. He expressed how for years he was afraid to open the door to those painful places for fear of rejection from the body. This is a tragedy, yet all too common. I know so many people who have created an emotional wall to hide behind for fear of getting hurt further. And what of those who have ventured out and dared to be vulnerable, only to have a brother or sister fail to understand their neediness and end up adding to their woundedness.

This is a serious problem throughout Christendom, with no easy solutions. The love of God is supposed to be the distinguishing characteristic that gives silent testimony to the truth of the gospel, yet with so many walking wounded in our midst, wearing those I'm OK masks, our churches are better known for being full of phony people with shallow relationships. Ach! Sometimes I am overwhelmed by the weight of it all.

(bunny trail coming...) Which reminds me of another post that quoted... that I may know Him...and the fellowship of His sufferings. I was thinking on this recently and it occurred to me that fellowshiping with his sufferings does not (necessarily) entail physical persecution, but can also be the suffering caused by empathy for the lost souls around us and/or for those wounded souls that seem beyond our reach to heal. I literally ache inside over the state of the church, the utter loss of this society in which I live, my best friends personal trauma et al. Somehow I think maybe that this pain is almost touching the heart of God as He grieves at an even deeper level over these same things.

Mike wrote:

Quote:
-----I'm not dismissing any one's pain, but if we think we can groom our inner-selves, extracting all the bad stuff and leaving only the good, we are only going to be frustrated. (One sister recently described the sensation of trying to scrub clean a dirt floor...) At the risk of sounding glib, we can't be fixed...we need to be replaced with Christ Jesus in our character, and this is a transaction that modern counseling is not set up for.

This brings up one of those things I wrestle with a bit to understand. It is the flesh-aka the old man, that is corrupt beyond repair. Scrubbing a dirty floor indeed. But **we** are new creations in Christ. Even if it were possible to fully attain to that high calling Paul speaks about, we do not cease to exist as autonomous individuals. This does not mean that full maturity ever means anything less than walking fully clothed in Christ, and yet, the uniqueness of each individual is never written over and eradicated. There is a viable inner being that can be fixed, healed, cleansed, strengthened etc. Else how could Paul pray that the inner man be strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit? (see Eph 3)

I look at it this way: Just as a branch cannot bear fruit without having its life attached to the life giving vine, the individual branch is still the bearer of the fruit. This is one of those areas that is so delicately balanced in the infinite wisdom of God that we may never (at least on this side of eternity) fully comprehend. However, I do agree that counseling in general is an attempt to repair the corrupted old man and is therefore useless in terms of any *real* healing.

As I wrote this a thought crossed my mind. Another way of defining this 'inner health' is simply to say a fully healthy child of God is one who has received the fullness of joy, the peace that passes understanding, and the righteousness that comes by faith, in Christ, and by the Holy Spirit. This then is what healing may boil down to; coming alongside a brother/sister and helping them discover for themselves the wonderful truth of the kingdom of God.

Linn wrote:

Quote:

-----Quote:

Without this inner wholeness though, I am convinced that Godly character is impossible.

'impossible' is too strong a word here, brother.

In reviewing this statement, I think I am using the wrong terminology. To clarify, in so far as our pain causes us to run from God, to refuse to surrender to Him unequivocally, to acknowledge our brokenness and be filled from on high...in so far as this pain holds power over us, I feel it creates such a hindrance that true Godly character is impossible, at least in its fullness. It is the power the pain holds over us that must be broken, healing in these terms may be a bit of a misnomer. This holds true no matter if the source of the pain is from guilt or past hurts or even current flawed relationships.

This is not to say that someone who still has some unresolved childhood pain (for instance) cannot be filled with the love of God and walk in some measure of maturity and Godly character. For some even, the very presence of this inner pain can aid the individual in remaining humble and contrite in their walk with the Lord, but again, in these cases, the power the pain held over them has been broken, and what is left is Godly brokenness.

I think here would be a good time to interject these thoughts. I am now fully convinced that pain is inevitable in life, and that God purposely allows us to experience it. Allow me to give an analogy that I believe is from the Lord.

I spent many years of my life living in the northern California wine region of Sonoma county, which geographically lies parallel to the better known Napa county region. I learned a lot about wine during those years. California produces a great deal of wine. Some of it can be purchased by the gallon for \$5.99. The grapes used to make this swill are grown in the San Joaquin valley of California. This area has some of the best agricultural growing conditions of anywhere in the U.S. California leads the nation in agricultural output because of this vast growing region. Please note: Perfect growing conditions- inexpensive wine.

The conditions in Napa and Sonoma counties are quite different. This is mountainous land. The soil is full of clay and quite rocky. In addition, the weather during growing season has rather odd patterns. Days often reach to a searing 100-105 degrees (fahrenheit), while nights often drop all the way to the mid to upper thirties.

No one in their right mind would plant a field of corn on the side of a hill with nothing but clay and rock to subsist on, in an area that has such temperature extremes, and yet, when it comes to wine, this is the ideal place to plant a vineyard. You see, the best grapes for winemaking come from vines that are *stressed*! In addition, I find it interesting that the main thing that separates costlier wine from the jug wine is its *character*. Hmmm, interesting...

I think it's important to note here how often wine, vineyards and vines are mentioned in the New Testament. Jesus' very first miracle was turning water to wine, *very good wine* at that. Jesus used wine to represent His blood when instituting communion. There are many more examples, I'm sure you can think of several without even trying.

One final note on the things we suffer through, it is said in scripture that even Jesus *learned obedience* through the things that He suffered. How then can we expect to avoid the pain of suffering?

Mike said:

Quote:
-----Much of my pain was caused by poor moral choices. Yes there were corrupt people in my life who hurt me. But in truth I was often attracted to corrupt people...because I believed their ways could help me more than God's ways.

I think this is important and not to be glossed over. My own testimony bears witness to this. While I can point a finger at my parents divorce when I was thirteen as a major causal factor in much of my ensuing emotional trauma (oh please please feel sorry for me, please! :-?) in reality as much blame must be placed on my role in response. The anger and outright rebellion may have been triggered by circumstance, but the sin was my own. No one forced me to hang out with the druggies and take that first toke. I have to own my choices. I cannot blame my parents for my not getting a college degree or any other regret I may have. Unfortunately for many though, this need to lay blame on someone or something becomes a huge blockade in the process of destroying the power our past holds over us.

Linn said:

Quote:
-----Unfortunately, some Christians who think they know something about what is necessary for someone else to 'do' to be healed, are often armed with words like you used above, at the very beginning of their encounters with a brother or sister who does need healing from the Lord, but could not cope with all of it at once.

To a person who has already been hurt more times than they can count, and who can't feel most of how that affected them originally any more, this kind of analysis offered prematurely, is terrifyingly unnerving.

In fact, unless it is left to the person in need, to set the pace of these spiritual transactions, yet more harm can be done - not by the doctrine itself, but by turning it into a system applied externally..... when truly only the Lord is able to unravel in the right sequence, each individual's hurts and painful reactions.

When it comes to ministering to someone who exhibits obvious emotional pain, I am convinced that it must begin in intercession. You are so very right that many well intentioned people end up exacerbating someone's pain through ill timed and insensitive comments. Often times even solid biblical principles can sound like empty platitudes to the wounded. Many already know the scriptures quoted. The more I think about it, the more I am convinced that healing for these people must come from someone who has prayed a good deal for them first. When the Holy Spirit opens a door, then it is evident to the one in need that you are speaking truth to them out of a sincere love for their well being. I also agree that this process of growth is a step by step process, often taking longer than we'd like. Praise God for His longsuffering patience and grace. Phil 1:6 ..He shall continue that good work He began in you until the day of Christ Jesus.

Wow, I've only scratched the surface here. Hi Dian and Paul, welcome to the discussion! I hope others will decide to share their testimonies and insights. I truly believe this is a topic that the body needs to grow in understanding.

In His Love,

Doug

Re: Healing the soul - posted by John173 (), on: 2007/8/6 22:42

I wanted to write a quick note to those of you who *are* hurting. I am well acquainted with the extreme levels of despair emotional pain can leave you in. Please know this. NO MATTER WHAT, GOD STILL LOVES YOU. If you've come to Jesus and have been born again, He will NEVER let go of your hand. I can't begin to tell you how many times it felt like God had abandoned me. He never has. Please brothers and sisters, cry out to Him, even in your anguish, don't be afraid to weep openly before Him in prayer. He understands it all. HE is the Great Physician.

Never give up hope. If you feel overwhelmed, I encourage you to join the discussion board here. There is a section called "Miracles that follow the plow." It is specifically for prayer needs. When I first joined SI, I was going through a deep depression, despairing of life. Through this community I was able to reach out for help while maintaining relative anonymity. I

could not trust anyone I knew face to face with my pain. What I got back was some great encouragement and godly wisdom as well as without doubt some powerful intercession from some of the dearest saints on the planet.

If you want to read this pain riddled thread for yourself
(https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic_id15201&forum44) follow this link.

Again, please don't let the defeated one rob you of the joy Jesus died to give you. Reach out to Him, and reach out here if you need to.

"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.
"For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." Matt 11:28-30

In His Incomprable Love,

Doug

Re: - posted by John173 (), on: 2007/8/7 10:06

Hi Diane,

I'd like to take a moment and respond to your first post. You said,

Quote:

-----Quote:

For those of us who truly desire to walk in the fulness of God's ways, bearing eternal fruit, being Spirit filled/lead etc, It is absolutely imperative that this pain buried in our soul be removed.

Is it really? Can we not be used by God even in our woundedness - even in some way -- even when the hurt comes back.

After reading several challenges to my black and white statements about the necessity of inner healing, I've come to alter my perspective. There are many sincere Christians who have wounds buried deep in their soul. Some of it is so deep they are completely unaware of it. I do not believe ignoring painful issues is God's way. I believe that until we allow God access to those painful areas in our hearts that we are severely hindered in our ability to grow in grace. I believe that in many ways, the very process of confronting our pain is one of the methods God uses to show us more of Him. When we are willing to confront our pain, we discover not only pain from childhood hurts, but also the pain of facing our own inadequacies. But this is where we grow in grace, we cannot grow in grace without having a deeper recognition of our desperate need for it. I believe pain is one tool that God uses to teach us His ways. So, getting healed of passed pain isn't as imperative as I initially expressed. Exposing it to the light of God's love and truth, and allowing it to do the work within us God intends is. And ultimately, I do believe that God intends for us to grow in His grace to the extent that old wounds no longer hold any power over us.

In His Love,

Doug

Re: Healing the Soul, on: 2008/2/14 19:18

This is one of the oldest threads I've hoped to get back to. It is worth reading right through - which until I've done, I won't post again. For now, here is good place to start.

Doug said:

*'Again, please **don't let the defeated one rob you of the joy Jesus died to give you.** Reach out to Him, and reach out here if you need to.'*

"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

"For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." Matt 11:28-30

In His Incomprable Love,

Doug

Re: - posted by Lor_E (), on: 2008/2/14 23:17

Interesting.. When I came to the Lord years ago, I had a deep emotional issue that hindered me from believing God; one that had kept me in bondage for several years in different types of fear, victimizations, unforgiveness (even though I thought I had it put away from me), anger and a reason in my mind for my own moral imbalance.

But, just a few days after I committed myself to the Lord, I had this tremendous need to express to my husband (my new husband at that time, we had only been married a few weeks) some things I had never told anyone. I literally felt as though my tongue would not work; and though it was a great struggle, I spoke it all out, even those things I had great guilt over. He as just quiet and caring, not really ever being confronted by such a thing before.

(Confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another, that ye may be healed..)

It was a great freeing experience to me, but, it was really only the beginning..

Now, after many years, many tears, many prayers, many stumblings, many reprimands (from both the Lord and my husband), many places of feeling desperate, I can honestly say: I am utterly thankful that the mercy of God has been extended towards me in such a way that I know that I know, that regardless of any pain, or any sorrow I feel in this life, His goodness, His love, His unbounding grace is never failing!

"For we have a high priest which can not be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points was tempted like we are, yet without sin.

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and to find grace to help in time of need."

Many years ago I ran across this hymn in an old hymnal and one of the verses says this:

"Only this I know I'll tell Him all my grief, my doubts, my fears; oh how patiently He listens and my drooping soul He cheers. Do you think He ne'er reproves me, what a false friend He would be, if He never ever told me of the sin which He must see."

(I hope I didn't combine verses, it's been a long while since I've sang it and I don't have the words nearby)

Regardless of what I think, regardless of what the person next to you thinks, regardless of what the world thinks, the Lord Jesus Christ knows every single sorrow of heart that could ever enter the human soul or emotions (or whatever).

He alone knows how to pull the thorn from our hearts in order for healing to begin.

He alone pours on the healing balm in such a way, that the sweetness of His presence FAR superceedes anything heart ache world can dish out.

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment(in comparison to eternity), worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory"

Christ alone knows how to speak to us, so that in every season, every step in our walk, we can be helped, we can be a help, we can be made whole. As whole-ness is in Christ, the author and finisher of our faith.

I am thankful for the things that I have read in this posting, I know that there are many people who struggle greatly.

(Please forgive my further continuing..)

One more thing quickly.. in this world we will have trouble, we will have sorrows, we will have trials, weather from our own hand or from the hand of another matters not, the cure comes from the same source, Christ.

AND ALL THINGS, all things are meant to bring us into a place of trust and obedience to our loving and righteous Father . Who loved us so much that He sent His Son who suffered.... suffered greatly at the hands of wicked men.... suffered greatly at the hands of a friend... suffered greatly in spite of all of His wonderful works, in spite of His love.. suffered greatly FOR US.

"He was despised and rejected by men, and acquainted with grief...

Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows....

But He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities,

the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed."

"Earth has no sorrows that heaven can not cure.."

-Come Ye Disconsolate

"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of Me for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall FIND REST unto YOUR SOULS."

a sister