

# Recovering from Life's Wounds

**Treatment for yourself and others**

**by Mark Schaufler**

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**DVD and Training Workbook**

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**All scripture quotations are from the NIV unless noted.**

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# Utilizing the Video

The video part of the training is about forty-five minutes long and includes much but not all of the material you will find here in the rest of the project. It is a good introduction and visual to help with the concepts and open the hearer's heart to the topic.

You don't have to use it but often approaching a topic like this with someone else speaking helps. Since it may use much of the time you normally give to a message or teaching it would be good to expand the teaching portion of the gathering so you can give the listener a time to respond after the presentation.

Some of those present may want to deal with something right away. Others will be concerned for a friend or family member. Either way you need to allow for that. You can also use their concern for others as the introduction to the topic and the video. For example, "Today we will begin a series that helps us to help others with the wounds they have received in life. How many of us know someone who has been wounded deeply and they need some help?"

Many other problems occur when we don't deal with our wounds the best way. This will help people to learn how to deal with them, not just for the current wounds, but for a lifetime of them.

Blessing on your efforts in these areas.

Mark and the Finish-the-Race crew

# When We get Wounded, Not If

During an outreach in a local park we went around and invited everyone to come to the, *"biggest scar contest"*. Whoever had the biggest scar, most stitches, etc. won the prize. I have heard some amazing stories from people who were in car accidents, chainsaw mishaps, surgeries, war wounds, and more. Yet we were able laugh and ultimately celebrate the winner of the contest.

We could do the contest because they were healed wounds, scars, and stories. If they were fresh wounds we would have responded very differently and few people would want to walk somewhere to talk about it. If the wound had been a career-ending injury or left someone disabled, we would not be laughing at the telling of the story.

Internally it is no different. We get wounded there too. Those are the wounds of the heart that can be career-ending or disabling. Statistically, eighty percent of all people who start in ministry aren't in it five years later. The divorce rate bears out the fact that wounds in a marriage can be fatal as well. We must equip the church for a healthy future as they come to understand and use the first aid kit.

First Aid Kits  
*Needed for the heart wounds of life, not just the exterior wounds.*

People that stay happily married or enjoy their ministry calling have figured out something. They know how to use the first aid kit when, not if, they get wounded. They can tell stories and not grimace in pain as they relive the wound or remember the pain.

This project is designed to enable you to gain health for yourself and then give it away to those in your world of influence. On an airplane you put on your oxygen mask first before you help others. You will have the information and some key questions to help facilitate progress for people and their wounds.

If you are working with a group on this subject the *"biggest scar contest"* can be a good way to introduce the subject. You will be rewarding someone for dealing with an issue even though it was not easy to do. That is a good model to follow when we are dealing with the internal wounds we will all receive in life.

Wounds left unattended will, in time, infect all areas of life and leave no part untouched. Often our current actions or reactions can be tied to a wound from the past.

# “IF” We Don’t Deal With the Wounds

Healed wounds tell great stories. Everything from clumsy self-inflicted cuts and bumps to surgeries and car accidents can be seen in scars. They can be the talk of a party, day at the beach, or family gathering. But they are often finished stories without any new chapters.

In contrast, neglected wounds are stories still being written. There may only be a few chapters or volumes of the path that a life has taken because there was no treatment. Without the proper treatment the wound(s) can completely derail the good works in Christ and the abundant life that Jesus has for all who follow Him and He desires all to follow.

There are many ways people self-medicate or allow unqualified people to help them with their wounds. These “treatments” often end in other wounds to the people involved or those around them. If the improper treatment continues there can be generations that are impacted by a wound left alone or improperly treated.

Here are some examples of the results of wounds and the ensuing lifelong actions that follow. Please take the time to read through this list of possibilities.

- ❖ Revenge
- ❖ Alternative Sexual Lifestyles
- ❖ Suicide
- ❖ Depression
- ❖ Physical Health Issues
- ❖ Addictions
- ❖ Insecurity
- ❖ Cruelty
- ❖ Wars
- ❖ Overeating
- ❖ Divorce
- ❖ Child Abuse
- ❖ Sleep Disorders
- ❖ Paranoia
- ❖ Rebellion
- ❖ Anger
- ❖ Rape

I remember as a kid reading about “man-eating tigers.” The thought that they could jump over a ten foot fence with a human in their mouth both terrified and fascinated me. But the cause was even more chilling. They hunted down those tigers and when they were killed, they skinned them and found that all of them had received a head wound prior to their killing rampage. Their untended wounds initiated their abnormal behavior.

When you look at the infamous profiles of serial killers, there is always an untended wound somewhere in their past as well. Robert Ressler and Tom Shachtman describe a study conducted by the FBI, which included interviews with dozens of murderers (mostly serial killers). In each case, they found “similar patterns of severe childhood neglect” [source: [Ressler & Shachtman](http://people.howstuffworks.com/serial-killer3.htm) <http://people.howstuffworks.com/serial-killer3.htm>]. During a child's development, there are important periods in which he learns about love, trust, empathy and basic rules about how to interact with other human beings. If these traits aren't imprinted upon the child during that period, it may not be possible for him to learn them later in life.

Ted Bundy began his murderous path after he was dropped by a girlfriend. Each murder victim that would follow resembled her. That unhealed wound resulted in the death of dozens of similar looking young women.

Most murder suicides follow an event that was painful to the killer. Even if the event was justified and necessary the killers response to the wound results in a tragic end of life

With this as a background, it can help us to understand why people do what they do and are the way they are. Thus as we work with people who have these issues, at some point, we will have to help them address the wounds that have resulted in their current lifestyles.

It may be something they didn't know how to deal with or something they didn't want to deal with. Thus their response to attempts at help will vary from thankfulness to active resistance.

## **Application**

1. Have you tried to deal with the wound(s) and ended up in one of the areas listed above or another self-medication method?

2. What have been the consequences of those other methods?

**3. With the healing in the area of the wounds you will also find a need to renew the mind in the areas affected. Long term change will mean a new way of thinking. Putting Christ's teachings into practice will be the foundation that your new life will be built on.**

**4. Read Matthew 7:24-28 and then the Gospels, paying close attention to Jesus' interaction with Peter. Peter made many mistakes but Jesus worked with him and prepared him for the new life he would live. Are you ready to embark on this journey out of the life you know into the life He has planned for you, the abundant life (John 10)?**

# Basic First-Aid Principles

**Clean it out! Keep it clean! If it is bigger than what you can do by yourself, get some help! These principles apply to a sliver, scrape, cut, or wound of any kind. You know what happens if we ignore it. It gets infected and then it can go from a simple wound to something very dangerous and potentially life threatening.**

**I remember talking to a man after church one night who was visiting for the first time. As I shook his hand I couldn't help but notice that he was missing three fingers. I asked how that had happened and he told a story he regretted a lot.**

**He liked working with wood and he had gotten a small sliver but didn't want to deal with it; he figured he would take care of it later. Unfortunately for him, "later," turned into blood poisoning, gangrene, and the loss of three fingers.**

**Clean it Out!  
Keep it Clean!**

*If it's bigger  
than what you  
can do by  
yourself:*

**Get some Help!**

**Wounds don't get better by themselves. Someone has to take action. When we are young, it can be a parent, eventually we take care of it ourselves. Sometimes we head to the doctor because of the severity of the wound.**

**Each of the three stages has its own challenges. Clean it out! Just acknowledging the severity of the wound is often the first mistake we make. Often our first response is to say "I'm ok," or "it's not that bad," only to faint with the next breath or see some blood and start to go into shock.**

**Cleaning it out can be even more difficult if the wound is deep, or it's a sliver that doesn't want to come out. There is sometimes more pain in the cleaning than there was in getting the wound. Many a child grimaces at the prospect of a brush and soap to clean out a wound followed by hydrogen peroxide or iodine. Too often we respond the same way to our wounds and the pain of cleaning it out by revisiting the wound again. We must be encouraged to know that the ultimate healing exceeds the pain we have learned to live with.**

**Keeping it clean has its unique characteristics too. Often we don't want to or can't stop our activity to let something heal. It isn't that serious of a wound at first but if we don't keep it clean we will have to re-clean it and start the healing process all over again. Neglected, it can become serious.**

**Getting help can be a difficult road to follow as well. Sometimes we underestimate the wound; we think we will be okay without any further help. We may worry about the expense of a doctor or how much time it will take to get help. More than one person has gone days with a broken bone only to finally go in for help and end up with a complicated healing process because they waited.**

**All of these principles also apply to our internal wounds. We aren't any better about dealing with these kinds of wounds than we are the ones we can see.**

## **Application**

- 1. How many of us have ignored a wound and then paid a price for avoiding the issue?**
  
- 2. What were the long term results of that lack of action?**
  
- 3. Why did we avoid getting help?**
  
- 4. What do you learn from those mistakes?**
  
- 5. How can you see it applying to your internal wounds, wounds to the heart and spirit that we all experience?**
  
- 6. Do you still have episodes from your past that are open wounds?**
  
- 7. Are there people you avoid because of their actions to you?**
  
- 8. Would you like to see these wounds healed?**
  
- 9. Let's start with making a list and then see how many of these you can do by yourself.**

**10. For wounds that need additional help from the outside, do you have people you can go to for that kind of help? These will be people that can help you clean it out, keep it clean, and help you scripturally to see real healing take place?**

**Wounds left unattended will, in time, infect all areas of life and leave no part untouched. Often our current actions or reactions can be tied to a wound from the past.**

# Applying it to our Internal Wounds

**1. Clean it out!** *1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."*

One of the realities of our wounds is that we can have a part in receiving them. Maybe we hurt someone else first. Perhaps we were careless and were wounded because of that. We may have needed the words but we didn't want to hear. Confessing our sin is a necessary part of the healing process.

If we are completely innocent it is still a part of the healing process. Often condemnation will come and with it blame and another opportunity for a fresh wound. Many times victims of rape or incest think or are even told they must have done something to provoke the attack. Children whose parents get a divorce often blame themselves. Repentance means we turn from it no matter how we got involved in it.

Asking forgiveness takes care of our part in it (if we had one) but also the condemnation that will almost surely come if we are innocent. Forgiven people don't need to live in shame or condemnation.

Easy? Not always. But the first key step in the healing.

**2. Keep it clean!** *Matthew 5:43-48 "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."*

When someone wounds you they cross a line. Often we call them enemies and Jesus has a special way for us to treat them, "*love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.*" This keeps the wound clean long enough to heal and keeps you from adopting an attitude that will only make the wound worse.

A great reminder for prayer is when you remember the wounding and the person involved. Pray for them, a prayer of blessing, a prayer for the things you would like life to hold for yourself. In time they won't be your enemies anymore, at least

not in your mind. And that is often the place of greatest battle. Too often we pray a “get-em Lord” prayer; at that point the wound is dirty once again and healing is a long way off.

**3. Get some help!** *Galatians 6:2* “Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. ”

The scriptures are very practical. If you can't seem to clean it out or keep it clean by yourself, get some help. Asking for help is not a sign of weakness but of honesty. He expects us to need help from others. He has prepared people to do just that, help in times of need.

## **Human Help**

I have been a part of a ministerial network in my area for more than twenty-five years. We are there to support each other and if needed “carry each other's burdens.” In those twenty-five years none of the people who became a part of the network dropped out of ministry, divorced their spouse, or committed a career-ending mistake.

Those who never became a part of it? I have a list of those who have had everything we have described in their lives, as they tried to live it alone with just Band-Aids and no cures.

Who are some potential helpers?

- Pastors
- Counselors
- Healed Friends
- Etc.

## **His Help**

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

Because of Christ we have access to Father God and He comforts the heart of the wounded. In time that gives us a capacity to comfort others from the abundance we have already received from Him.

Sometimes people think that “God” is too removed from our world so how could He really understand. But we need to remember that Paul wrote that passage and here are a few of the “troubles” he went through.

*2 Corinthians 1:8-9 "We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead."*

*Acts 14:19 "Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead."*

*2 Corinthians 11:24-27 "Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked."*

**4. Don't stop your forward progress.** *Hebrews 12:12-13 "Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. "Make level paths for your feet," so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed."*

In professional sports they can return athletes to their peak performance quickly because they follow this scriptural principle. They deal with the injury and begin a rehabilitation program right away. People don't get better by sitting and waiting for a feeling of health and well-being to overcome them. They need to start moving forward as soon as possible.

I had cancer surgery and they removed part of me, reattached some internal plumbing and they wanted me up and walking the next day. Hospitals and coaches know the need for activity for healing. We need to learn it for ourselves and others for those internal wounds life is full of.

Sure the steps can be little ones, but some kind of action is necessary. Just waiting isn't going to help. Some steps might include getting up and doing a common daily task or returning to work where the wound had occurred or writing a note to someone who was involved.

## **Application**

1. Have we cleaned out the wounds that are still impacting our lives?

- 2. How easy is it to ask forgiveness for our part (or our innocence) in an issue?**
  
- 3. Is it easier to blame others?**
  
- 4. Even if we are 100% innocent have you had condemning thoughts like, "If only ...", or "I must have brought it on myself ..." etc.?**
  
- 5. Praying for those have become our enemies goes against what we think is right. To do good for those who have hurt us is difficult but critical to recovering. Are we ready to deal with this and begin the path of recovery?**
  
- 6. Do we have people who will walk along this path with us?**
  
- 7. Have we learned how to go to the "God of all Comfort?"**
  
- 8. Can we have quiet times with Him that impact us, whether it is driving down the road or reading scripture, or worshipping at church?**

# Complicated

There are so many sources for wounds that sometimes it can get complicated. What complicates it the most is, it doesn't matter what the source is, it all feels the same. The challenge becomes responding properly regardless of the feelings that accompany the experience. In this regard we need to get good at responding to the cause and not the symptom (feeling bad).

For example, you don't put a Band-Aid on arterial bleeding and you don't yell at a doctor for life-saving surgery even though it hurts the next day. Let's look at some of the common causes and how to respond to them.

**1. Nasty** *Proverbs 26:10 "Like an archer who wounds at random is he who hires a fool or any passer-by."*

*Mark 13:7 "When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come."*

There are **Nasty** people out there who just like to hurt others. In the distant past, there might have been archers who liked to shoot at strangers. It isn't anything new but no one enjoys it. Today we have drive-by shootings and people who don't stop the words that come out of their mouths that hurt others. In most cases these people have a past that includes wounds that they have received and never completed the healing process.

Sometimes the wounds are the results of an immoral or forced action. No matter how you knew these people, their act was a nasty one that you suffered for. It can be confusing when they have titles that should be positive ones for us, such as father, teacher, friend, or relative.

Other times there can be a social consequence to the nasty actions of others. The horrific experiences that war produces fall into this category. I have read that at any given time up to two dozen wars are in progress worldwide. They cannot help but produce wounds of every physical and emotional kind.

**2. Negligence** *Psalms 38:5 "My wounds fester and are loathsome because of my sinful folly."*

We do stupid things and don't think about the possible outcome of our actions. That is called **Negligence** and we are all guilty of it at some time or another. We need to accept our responsibility when it is our own "folly" that is involved. I am not a practical joke kind of guy because of the wounds I have seen take place at the hands of someone's "folly."

A car accident caused by someone being on the cell phone, eating lunch, and checking the GPS is pure "folly and negligence", no one else should be blamed but the distracted driver. Yet, too often we want to sue someone because spilling hot coffee on our lap started the chain reaction that ended up in the crash and we don't want to take responsibility for our part in the problem.

We will only repeat these kinds of wounds to ourselves and others if we don't learn from them and accept the real problem; us.

### **3. Normal** *Proverbs 27:17 "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another."*

Just being around people will result in wounds, it is **Normal**. None of us fit perfectly together because none of us are perfect. It doesn't mean what they did to us was premeditated or meant to hurt the way it did. When iron sharpens iron sparks fly.

I have seen daughter and mom combinations fight over insignificant issues because their rough edges were so much alike. Those things happen, but if we don't respond properly to them, we can end up wounded and losing out on some of our best relationships.

Any team is built on the strength of their differences not similarities. But those differences mean that there will be sharpening times where sparks fly and without the first aid kit teams can self-destruct.

### **4. Needed** *Proverbs 27:6 "Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses."*

*John 15:1-4 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me."*

There will be times in our lives when the wound is **needed**. Somebody needs to say something to us and it often ends up being a friend or loved one. Unfortunately that doesn't make it feel any better. People aren't the only ones who will do it either, our Heavenly Father will do what is best for us as well as He works in our lives to bring out the real us and crucify the fallen part of us. There will be times when He wants to eliminate something that used to be a part of our lives, maybe even a part He started and grew. That kind of change is not always easy or enjoyable.

**5. Nurture** *Proverbs 13:12 "Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life."*

*Psalms 27:10 "Though my father and mother forsake me, the LORD will receive me."*

Those closest to us have the capacity to hurt us the most. When people we expect to **Nurture** us don't we get hurt. It can be something said, a promise not kept, or expectations that aren't met, it doesn't matter the source, the wounds can be deep and long lasting if we don't take care of them.

I have talked to youth and heard how horrible their parents were because of a broken promise, neglect, or favoritism.

*Galatians 5:7 "You were running a good race, who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth?"*

Only people on the same track as you can "cut in on you." That means people that are related to you, go to school or work with you, or those that live in your neighborhood are potential problems.

**6. Nature** *Luke 21:11 "There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven."*

There are many tragedies in life that could be avoided or minimized if we paid attention to what is described in the scriptures. If there will be earthquakes, shouldn't we build our buildings like that might happen? If earthquakes cause tsunamis, shouldn't we build homes farther back from sea level? If a river floods periodically, shouldn't we build on higher ground? If there are to be famines, shouldn't we have a supply of food stored up? When we are wounded by **Nature** there may be steps we can take to avoid it again. It seems that it is Mother Nature until it gets ugly then we blame Father God for His creation. It is a creation He warned us about.

**7. Not listed but wounded by it.** There are so many ways to get wounded that I will leave the remaining sources under the number seven. Your specific issue may not be here but you will still find the principles here to help you deal with it.

*Hebrews 12:11 "No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it."*

Healed wounds only make us stronger.
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**It is the feelings that complicate the experience. You feel wounded no matter what the source, and that can be a problem. You need to respond differently though, depending on the source of the wound. This is a key issue.**

## **Application**

**1. List your wounds.**

**2. From your list of wounds take the time to determine the source. Was it needed, nasty, or normal, etc., that will help you to determine what your long term response should be. If we consistently respond incorrectly to our wounds we will limit our growth and the potential of our lives. Scars tell stories. Wounds drain us of energy, vitality, and our future.**

**3. Are there any areas that we consistently respond to in ways that cause more harm than good?**

**Nasty?**

**Negligence?**

**Normal?**

**Needed?**

**Nurture?**

**Nature?**

**Not Listed but wounded by it?**

# Our Resistance and His Grace

*Hebrews 12:11 "No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it."*

Ask yourself when you are wounded:

- ✓ How do we respond?
- ✓ Are we trained by a wound?
- ✓ Do we learn from it?
- ✓ Do we change the way we do things?

If we resist we are often setting ourselves up for more trouble in the future. When our kids were little they had plenty of opportunities to get slivers in our backyard. We had a tree fort, wooden play toy, and trees. Slivers were not uncommon but getting them to let us remove the sliver was always a challenge, until I told them the story about the man who lost his three fingers from a sliver. (pg. 9)

After that they would come running into the house, just moments after the injury and wonder if it was too late. Could we please take the sliver out! I wish it was that easy with people and the internal wounds we receive in life.

Unfortunately we tend to resist first, and then at some point, and of our own free will, finally choose to get some help. After a physical wound, when we ask how they are, how many of us have heard, "oh I'm okay"? That is often spoken even when the injury is obviously very serious. We need to think through the wound and its source. What will be the action/reaction that best fits the source?

The first aid kit action applies to all of the situations and people.

1. They need to forgive.
2. They need to pray for and bless the wound-er.
3. They need to seek help if they can't do it on their own.
4. They need to make level paths and move forward by dealing with the three key parts of the first aid kit.

*Hebrews 12:12-13 "Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. "Make level paths for your feet, ' so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed' "*

## Struggling with #1

If forgiveness is a struggle area sometimes it related to the fact that we don't feel forgiven. We may still be struggling with our own sin's shadow that seems to cover us in darkness.

Receiving the forgiveness that Christ's death on the cross provides for can be a key part of our healing.

*Ephesians 2:14-18 "For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit."*

*Colossians 1:19-20 "For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross."*

*Colossians 2:13-15 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.*

## Struggling with #2

At other times we may not want to give out forgiveness and bless the wound-er, because we don't think it is fair, that someone can do something to another and get away with it. At that point we have forgotten that He has not forgotten and if and when necessary He will take care of the situation. We are to take a different course of action.

*Romans 12:17-21 "Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary:*

*"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;  
if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.*

*In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."*

*Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."*

### Struggling with #3

Asking for help varies in challenge, from person to person. Some have no problem asking for help, while others will exhaust themselves trying before they give up and ask, while others will never ask. Asking is a Christian mandate though it can be a cultural "no, no."

*Matthew 7:7-8 "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened."*

I grew up with the idea that asking for help was a sign of stupidity and failure. Thus when I came to Christ at age twenty-two I had a lot of unlearning to do. It has been gradual but I am a reasonably good asker now. Several decades into my life with Christ, I must ask often and in a wide variety of settings to accomplish what He has set before me. Sometimes it is in different languages and in locations I have never been before. I can't figure it out on my own, I must ask for help.

Guess what? For all of us there will be time when we can't figure it out on our own and we must ask for help, and then probably receive it. Why didn't we do this sooner? That is a great question. Get good at asking for help when you need it.

### Struggling with #4

*Hebrews 12:11 "No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it."*

But, to be "*trained by it*," may mean further action/reaction on our part. We need to do something different to make "level paths for our feet that the lame may be healed rather than disabled."

Can we change something in our routine to avoid the **Nasty** people? We are already praying for them but we don't necessarily have to go find them so they can be nasty to us again. As a kid I had a number of enemies just because I had moved into a very small town (350 people) and wasn't related to anyone there. One particular enemy loved to throw rocks or rotten apples at me. He was a good shot too. I knew where he lived and knew other ways to get places that I could take. That minimized the wounds with a slightly longer path.

Sometimes we can change a situation, sometimes we can't. In those settings where we can't we need to consistently apply the 1-2-3's of the first aid kit. It may change things in time or it may not. The one thing it will do is keep us healthy despite the treatment we receive. Many people have experienced horrific conditions or experiences and still lived the rest of their days with a genuine smile on their face because the wounds became scars and stories not life-ending injuries.

Clean it Out!  
Keep it Clean!  
*If it's bigger  
than what you  
can do by  
yourself:  
Get some Help!*

People have emerged from concentration camps with a smile on their face and love in their hearts for the people who held them captive and treated them horribly. They knew and practice the first aid kit.

When we are **Negligent**, and our own actions lead to wounds, we need to see it as a challenge that leads to change. We need to live life a different way. As a new believer I think my words got me in more trouble than anything else. But reading Proverbs and applying it helped me to change my situation. The correction I received from reading the word wasn't always easy to take, *"no discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful."* But it gave me insight into what I needed to change and why.

*Proverbs 10:8 "The wise in heart accept commands, but a chattering fool comes to ruin."*

*Proverbs 10:14 "Wise men store up knowledge, but the mouth of a fool invites ruin."*

*Proverbs 10:18 "He who conceals his hatred has lying lips, and whoever spreads slander is a fool."*

*Proverbs 12:16 "A fool shows his annoyance at once, but a prudent man overlooks an insult."*

*Proverbs 15:2 "The tongue of the wise commends knowledge, but the mouth of the fool gushes folly."*

*Proverbs 15:10 "Stern discipline awaits him who leaves the path; he who hates correction will die."*

In the **Normal** course of life you will find the same situation. If it is just correction that should be a challenge to change. My wife and I are both firstborns; take charge, get-it-done, people. That is great unless we are both working on the same project. Our iron did sharpen, or at least create sparks on a regular basis in our first few years of marriage until we learned that we just had to decide who had the ultimate lead on the project. The other could be supportive even if their idea

wasn't used if they weren't in charge. Statistically, our pairing in marriage only has a seven percent chance for success. I can see why, if you don't accept the challenge of the correction and come up with a change in the way things are done. But we can get a lot done between the two of us when we work together because we found a way that works, despite the pain of the past.

In the normal course of life and the challenges it brings, sometimes our wounds will be needed. It is just correction but it hurts and feels like rejection. Those are the times when we take the challenge of correction and change and work towards the new you. Then you do things differently, because someone cared enough to bring it to your attention.

"Correction  
feels like  
rejection"

Often those who should **Nurture** us are the ones who deliver the deepest wounds. It may be that they did something awful or that we thought it was awful even if it was needed, normal, or negligence and not premeditated to make life miserable for you.

Cleaning out those wounds can very difficult especially if we felt cheated or singled out for the wounds.

When **Nature** is the wound-er do you want to gamble again? Rebuild in a flood plain? Buy another trailer in tornado alley? Make changes based on the realities of the real world and not the one we would like to live it. He warned us about these things.

At the end of the project you can take the information that you have heard and apply it in some practice scenarios. This will give you the chance to do what should be done and not what is normally done in difficult situations.

Make sure that each situation utilizes the newly learned material and not common clichés.

- ✓ Do we have any areas that are constant sources of new wounds in our lives?
- ✓ How can we deal differently with those issues?

When all this great information still leaves us paralyzed we need to grow in God's Grace.

*2 Corinthians 12:7-10 "To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I*

*delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong."*

*1 Corinthians 15:9-10 "For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me."*

Grace is what comes alongside us when we take whatever steps we can. It takes our feeble effort and makes it into enough to accomplish the task at hand. Too often we only look at our personal resources and never even try. Grace enlarges, enhances, and enables us to do what we can't do by ourselves.

When we understand it as Paul did we will make steady progress in the challenges that life has for us. It will also keep us from becoming proud because we realize it's not just us but Him and His grace working through us.

# Needy

When we don't deal well with our wounding experiences we often become "needy." I will define "needy" as someone who uses the praise of others to be the band aid for the wounds they have previously received. Unfortunately when we adopt this strategy to deal with our wounds we are setting ourselves up to be wounded even more deeply and frequently.

*Proverbs 4:23 "Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life."*

Needy people are like a beggar who has their cup out for handouts; handouts of praise, compliments, attention, recognition, or focus on their heartache and challenges. Sometimes the needy don't always want the compliment, they just need people to see how amazing they are because of what they are dealing with. If they don't get what they need quickly they fish for them with questions that force someone to give them a compliment or ... wound them.

- ✓ Do you ask people for compliments/attention that either build you up or hurt you when you get an answer?
- ✓ If you don't receive praise for an act done do you resent those who could have (in your mind should have) given the praise?
- ✓ Is praise or success your motivation for your actions?

The kind of wounds that leads to the "needy" reaction, are varied. You will have to do a little digging to discover what may be the core issues, but until you do find a source there are some basic issues that can be addressed.

*Romans 8:15-17 "For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his suffering in order that we may also share in his glory."*

Are we still motivated by a fear of some kind?

- ✓ Is it the fear of rejection?
  - Does this scripture make it sound like your relationship with Father God is shaky or secure?
- ✓ Are children bought and returned like defective merchandise?

*2 Corinthians 1:3-4 "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our*

*troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God."*

## **Application**

1. If we let Him comfort us what will we eventually have to give away?
2. What are some ways He can comfort us?
3. How will this makes us generous?
4. How will this make us sensitive to other's needs?
5. How will we be able to show this comfort to others?

**Like all wounds the path for the needy goes through the basic first aid kit mantra, clean it out, keep it clean, and if it is bigger than what you can do by yourself, get some help.**

# Helping Someone Else

*Matthew 7:1-5 "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."*

Remember the resistance that we talked about before? Almost everyone resists help when the wound hurts enough or is embarrassing for the person to talk about. Even though you can clearly see the problem their willingness to allow you to help cannot be taken for granted. Remember the resistance issues that everyone deals with.

There is an acronym for trust that I think is appropriate here.

- T Time, give them the time they need, don't demand they work on your schedule
- R Reliable, just be consistent not perfect, they need to know who they are talking to
- U Understand, means you listen well, not that you have experienced or even say "I understand." Your listening will tell them that, not your story of a similar situation and how you removed the plank from your eye, unless they say you "can't understand." Then your story better be similar or you need to be content saying, you're right but I can listen.
- S Success, they need to experience it in Jesus' way at some point. Praying for them until they find a new peace or comfort is a start. As some point they will need to be able to do this on their own for many of life's issues.
- T Tested, I have had a couple of death threats in my ministry life. They always came from hurting people. Don't be surprised by how you are treated by those you are trying to help. They may frustrate you just as a part of testing your sincerity and motives. How you respond during those times may determine how quickly they trust you enough to open up to you.

This process of trust will be moved along too if you don't assume anything. That is one characteristic of judging; we already think we know what is going on. It continues to amaze me that people can function at all, given some of the horrific experiences they have encountered.

I think it is good to understand too just how broken-hearted Father God is about what goes on down here.

*Genesis 6:5-6 "The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain."*

*Jeremiah 7:30-31 " The people of Judah have done evil in my eyes, declares the LORD. They have set up their detestable idols in the house that bears my Name and have defiled it. They have built the high places of Topheth in the Valley of Ben Hinnom to burn their sons and daughters in the fire—something I did not command, nor did it enter my mind."*

His plans for us are very different than what we experience at the hands of others. Helping the wounded to see that and have hope is a key part trusting His ways for their healing. Exposing them to the truth and giving them opportunities to try are essential. Being there to coach them along is important as well. You know the challenges of forgiving and praying for your enemies. It can seem like the hardest path, which it is. It also works.

There will be times when the people are hurting and they need your help now. In those times you may just need to dive in like Jesus did for the woman at the well (John 4). She had been wounded by broken marriages, bad church information, and her ethnicity. Jesus had little time but dove right in and spoke life into her areas of pain and suffering. Read her experience with Jesus and know that at some time you may help someone else in the same way.

Someone in the church had a friend who had made an attempt on their life and had ended up in a psych ward to recover and I was asked to visit them. They didn't know me and didn't want to talk to me at first but they were working on a puzzle so I sat down to help. After we did the customary task of finding the border pieces we sat back bewildered. It wasn't a square or rectangle or anything. It looked more like the state of New York, and the puzzle looked nothing like the picture on the front of the box.

In laughter we figured it out at the same time. There were two different puzzles in a box that neither of them matched. We were in a psych ward; this was supposed to be therapy but would drive anyone crazy. From that common laughter we ended up talking and she met the "God of comfort." She is now a healthy member of a local church blessing people with that comfort she herself received from God.

My prayer for you is that you let the truth of Christ and His compassion touch your heart so that you can touch others with what you have received.

*2 Corinthians 1:3-7 "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. If we are distressed, it*

*is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort."*

## **Application**

- 1. Do you know people who need help in the area of wounds?**
- 2. Are you now capable of helping them or do you just need to help from a distance for now through prayer?**
- 3. Make a list and then a plan to start building a trust bridge to walk across to help them.**
- 4. Remember: Clean it out, keep it clean, and if it is bigger than you can handle, get some help!**

# Practice Scenarios

Scenarios are a great way to help add clarity, application, and understanding as you work on wounds in your own life or help other people deal with the wounds in their lives. Be honest when you work through these, they are not homework that will be graded; their purpose is to help you. After you have written down your answers look at the material and see if you followed the guidelines that have been laid out for you in the text.

*Write down your steps to dealing with each of these scenarios.*

◆ When there is criticism that is unjustly given how do you deal with it? Walk through the process.

Clean it out

Keep it clean

If it's too big get some help

What challenge and change should follow?

◆ When you are abandoned by those who should love you?

Clean it out

Keep it clean

If it's too big get some help

What challenge and change should follow?

◆ When you are mocked at school/work or from others?

Clean it out

Keep it clean

If it's too big get some help

What challenge and change should follow?

◆ **When you are ignored, and it's like you aren't even there?**

**Clean it out**

**Keep it clean**

**If it's too big get some help**

**What challenge and change should follow?**

◆ **When leadership you work with has gone bad?**

**Clean it out**

**Keep it clean**

**If it's too big get some help**

**What challenge and change should follow?**

◆ **When you are the victim of a crime or personal assault?**

**Clean it out**

**Keep it clean**

**If it's too big get some help**

**What challenge and change should follow?**

◆ **When there is a social injustice that takes place and you are aware of it?**

**Clean it out**

**Keep it clean**

**If it's too big get some help**

**What challenge and change should follow?**