

Chapter 5

TRAUMA

(A) *“You don’t look so good, Lynne, what’s going on?” someone asked. The setting was our weekly prayer meeting which had been going on for several years. “I’m not getting much sleep,” Lynne said. “I keep having nightmares of that dog attacking me, and I wake up shaking and lie awake for hours.” A few months before, Lynne had gone through a terrifying experience. She lived on a small ranch in the mountains of western Colorado. One morning as she left her house to get in her pickup she noticed that the neighbor’s big dog had gotten out again. She hollered, “Go home!” but instead it ran toward her. She attempted to get into her pickup, but the dog grabbed her foot, dragged her out onto the ground and tore into her left lower leg. Then it lunged for her throat. She turned her body and the dog bit into her shoulder. Only the intervention of neighbors, who dragged the dog away, prevented a continuation of the mauling and possibly her death. A trip to the emergency room followed and then much reconstructive surgery on her leg and shoulder. Her body was healed except for the scars, but her emotions were playing havoc.*

(B) *“I don’t know why I go into these deep depressions,” the woman said to her counselor. “I just spent 3 days in bed so depressed that I wanted to die.” “What precipitated the depression?” asked the counselor. “Nothing,” she responded. “I was just in the kitchen preparing dinner; in fact, I was at the sink peeling some potatoes, and suddenly this awful sinking feeling came over me, and I went to bed.” “Let’s ask the Lord to show us the root of this depression. Just close your eyes and remember how you were feeling when you were in your kitchen. Lord, please give us wisdom.”*

In a few minutes the woman started weeping. “Oh! I remember. It was horrible! I was a little girl and my mother had given me a bowl of potatoes to peel. I was terrified of my mother. She was a perfectionist, and was very angry and irrational. I peeled the potatoes as carefully as I could and then took them to her to be inspected. My mother was lying on the couch with a wet towel over her eyes. When she looked at the potatoes she knocked the bowl out of my hands and started screaming that I couldn’t do anything right.”

Sometimes bad roots can be caused by traumas that leave people with spiritual, emotional, and physical problems. These traumas can be the result of long term rejection and abuse. Following are some examples of things that can happen to a child:

- (1) Emotional abuse – curses, insults, criticism, sarcasm, blaming, control and manipulation, neglect (possibly because of drug or alcohol use by the parents, or because the parents are physically or emotionally sick), abandonment, divorce of the parents, death of a parent
- (2) Physical abuse – beating, slapping, burning, depriving of food, locking child up in a room, etc.
- (3) Sexual abuse
 - (a) incest – sexual abuse of any kind by a member of the family
 - (b) molestation – sexual abuse by others (80% of molestations are done by close personal friends of the family)

While it is easy to understand that a child that has suffered long term rejection and abuse would be profoundly effected, experience shows that a single traumatic experience can likewise wound and shatter a

human heart. Examples are traumatic experiences such as: the sudden, unexpected death of a loved one; physical or sexual abuse; a natural disaster such as an earthquake, fire, flood, or hurricane; an automobile accident; a divorce; being involved in a war; and the list could go on. God's Word tells us again and again that the natural world we see and experience is encompassed by the unseen spiritual dimension, and that we need to be alert in every situation to the possible spiritual component. For instance, Psalm 18:17-18 says that, "...my strong enemy....those who hated me....were too strong for me. They confronted me in the day of my calamity, But the Lord was my support....and He delivered me." This passage suggests that in a time of calamity it is not uncommon for our enemy to confront and attack us. This seems to be exactly what happens during and after a traumatic experience when our hearts have been wounded and are especially vulnerable.

The good news is that our Lord addressed the needs of those whose hearts have been wounded and broken. As Jesus started his ministry in Nazareth He read from the prophet Isaiah: *"The spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to heal the broken hearted."*¹ The word *heart* in Hebrew (*lehv*) means far more than our physical heart. Strongs defines *lehv* as "the intellect, the awareness, the mind, the inner person, our deepest thoughts, our deepest feelings, ourself." In other words, it is our very soul, our personality. For the Jews the (spiritual) heart was located not in the chest but in the belly, where they perceived the center of the personality to be located. The word *broken* in Greek (*suntribo*) means "to trample upon, to break in pieces, to shatter, bruise, grind down, smash and crush." So for the Jews to be brokenhearted had profound implications, far beyond our country-western songs, "My sweetheart done left me and broke my heart." It meant to be broken, bruised, and smashed inside. When we are wounded, when we are afflicted, physically or emotionally injured in some terrible way, it is more than an external physical injury. It is as if a big fist smashes into our belly, the center of our being. We are wounded inside; we are shattered inside. We can be healed externally so that no visible scars are left and yet still be terribly bruised and wounded inside. Jesus said that He came to heal that inner brokenness.

As I shared this teaching about trauma in a home meeting, a lady named Karen asked if she could tell her story. She said that on a certain evening, 5 years before, she had received a call from a policeman who was at a hospital. He asked if she had an 18 year old son named Kevin. With a sinking heart she said that she did. He told her that her son had been in a terrible automobile accident and that a doctor had just pronounced him deceased. Karen said that the moment those words were spoken she felt as if she had been struck or stabbed in the stomach and that she fell to the floor in a fetal position. This is an example, a terrible example, of the power of a trauma.

Of course, we are unique individuals. Two people might suffer the same accident, injury, or loss, and one might be severely traumatized while the other might hardly be affected. Many times people will say to those who have suffered a trauma, and are really in bad shape emotionally and physically, "Just pull yourself together, snap out of it!" But they can't, there is something broken inside. They cannot do for themselves what their friends and relatives many times expect them to do. Jesus is the one who came to heal our broken hearts.

Traumas - such as an accident, physical or sexual abuse, injury, car wreck, earthquake, explosion, terrible fear, fire, flood, death of a loved one, being involved in a war - cause people to be broken inside. Think

about the thousands of men who were afflicted with what we call "Vietnam War Syndrome." Following every war some people are tied up in knots inside and can't function.

The way I picture the effects of trauma is as if we are standing on level ground, and suddenly a terrible earthquake splits the ground beneath us and opens a pit into hell so that a demonic spirit comes up into our life to torment us with emotional or physical torment. Jesus referred to the "gates of hell" in another context. I picture a gate of hell as a doorway or a pit into hell. When people's lives are shaken so they are traumatized inside, it is as if hell has come up into their life and is afflicting them in some way.

My perspective is that God is good all the time. 1 John 1:5 says that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all! He sends blessings: salvation, good health, peace, and abundance, which are His desire for all of us. The devil is evil all the time. He sends sickness, temptation, turmoil, broken relationships, poverty, and death, which are his desire for all of us. The Bible again and again expresses these basic truths. Jesus treated sickness like an enemy and as being from the enemy. He said in the case of the woman who had been bent over for 18 years that Satan had bound her.² With Simon's mother-in-law who was sick with a fever, Jesus "*rebuked the fever; and it left her.*"³ He healed all who came to Him, and in many situations casting out demons was part of the healing process.⁴

A trauma is one of the primary doors or gates by which the enemy gains entrance to people in order to afflict and torment them. Again, Psalm 18:17 ff declares that the enemy who hates us attacks us in a time of calamity when we are most vulnerable. A trauma is in some instances connected to the sin and rebellion of others, as in physical or sexual abuse, rioting or war, a drunk or careless driver. In some instances, it is an act of nature such as an earthquake or flood, and who can understand the spiritual components in such events except God? No matter how traumas occur, they open a gate for the enemy to attack and afflict the victim.

A newspaper article demonstrates what a trauma can do to people. The article reported on the people who were terribly injured in the bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City. "A Denver psychologist who trained trauma counselors in Oklahoma said that the people who suffered this explosion felt helpless. The floors and walls collapsed around them. They saw people being blown up. The experience of being rendered helpless can interfere with the immune system, and because of that situation many people developed gastro-intestinal disturbances. They developed depression, anxiety, and chronic emotional arousal that they can not turn off." Of course, we know that many thousands of people were traumatized by the terrible terrorist attacks of 9\11.

Dr. Francisco Contreras oversees Oasis of Hope Hospital, a cancer-care facility in Mexico, is the author of several books on health, and has a weekly program on Christian TV. He says, "More than 80 percent of my patients experienced a traumatic event within 3 years of their cancer being diagnosed. A job layoff, a divorce, and the death of a child top the list."⁵ He says that it is a proven scientific fact that stress precipitates chemical/glandular reactions in the body and that stress can provoke pathologies, including heart disease and cancer. Life in modern society is tremendously stressful, and when a traumatic event occurs, an already overloaded system can break down in many different ways.

Let me share a few examples drawn from our ministry:

- A lady 45 years old in Mexico came for prayer for healing for severe, painful arthritis in her legs. I always ask these questions to people who are sick: "When did this problem begin?" and "What happened about that time?" in order to get to the root. She said that it began 15 years before when she was 30 years old. What happened? With much shame and embarrassment she said that she had been raped by her cousin, and right after that experience the arthritis started in her legs. Please note that there was no guilt on her part, she was the innocent victim, but Satan comes to afflict innocent victims. That severe trauma opened the gate to hell and a demonic enemy came into her life and put arthritis upon her.

So how did we minister to her? First of all, of course, we had her forgive her cousin, which is very difficult for people who have been physically or sexually abused and traumatized. Then we had her repent of judging and hating and condemning him. Then we broke the soul ties between her and her cousin, spiritually, emotionally, and physically... (see the chapter titled UNGODLY SOUL TIES). Then we prayed for healing of all the effects of the trauma. (Sometimes traumatized persons describe themselves as feeling all broken inside, like a jigsaw puzzle with all the pieces scattered. They feel they no longer have an inner unity. We pray that Christ will come and put the pieces back together. We have had people say as we have prayed for them, "I felt something come back together as you prayed." Obviously I am trying to describe a spiritual reality which is indescribable.) We cast out the spirits of bitterness, fear, and arthritis. Then we anointed her with oil and prayed for healing for the arthritis in her legs. Instantly the Lord took all pain away and she was healed.

After a service in Mexico, a middle aged man and wife came for prayer because of the husband's diabetes. I asked him, "When did you get this disease and what happened?" He said that he and his wife ran a little store, a *tienda*, and four years prior, upon closing one night, a gang of men broke into the store and robbed them. They tied them up, and threatened to torture and kill them with knives unless they told them where their money was hidden. Of course, they didn't have much money but they told them. The gang stole their money and left. Shortly after that the man came down with diabetes. When people have some dread disease, that is a bad fruit, and you will find time after time there is a bad root. Something opened a door for Satan to put that disease upon the person. We had the man forgive those men who broke in and robbed him and his wife, to repent of judging and hating them. We prayed for the Lord to come in and heal his broken heart, to heal the trauma, the brokenness inside. Then we cast out spirits of fear, bitterness, and diabetes. Finally, we prayed for healing for the diabetes.

- He said he felt the Lord touch him, but whether he was healed or not I do not know. I didn't see him after that. My purpose is to never assume that God has done something unless I have actual proof. I believe the Lord healed him. Several people that we have prayed for regarding diabetes have told me in subsequent years that the Lord did heal them. Praise the Lord!

- In Anecdote A that started this chapter, I told about Lynne, the lady who was suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome, fear, nervousness, and bad dreams because of the trauma of the terrible dog attack. This was a classic situation of trauma. We had her forgive the people who owned the dog, who had been very uncooperative and actually blamed her for the whole situation. Then we prayed for God to come and heal her wounded heart. She said she felt as if something inside was coming back together. Then we prayed for the physical and emotional aftereffects of that attack. She was completely set free. She never suffered another anxiety attack or any more sleeplessness after our prayer for her that night.

In Anecdote B, regarding the woman who went into a deep depression as she was peeling potatoes, the wounding by her abusive mother had been severe and of long duration, and her healing required prayer and ministry over an extended period of time. The steps, however, were the basic ones already described: forgiveness; repentance for judgment and condemnation; honoring her mother; casting out spirits of rejection, depression, and abuse; and much prayer for her wounded heart.

- I have prayed for people who have become homosexuals, in part, because of homosexual rape when they were children, which is a very common root. This is a trauma that opens the door for spirits of homosexuality to come in. They are filled with hatred, fear, and shame because of the terrible thing that has happened. It is "a gate of hell" that has been opened into their life. Demons can come in and afflict them. An example was Julio, a 25-year old man who had been actively involved in homosexuality for many years, who hated and despised his behavior, and with all his heart wanted to be free. He told us that his father was a man who was constantly, and that he always ignored Julio and would never even speak to him! When Julio was 10 years old he was violated by an uncle, and 2 years later by another man. Julio was filled with shame and felt that what had happened had been his own fault (a lie of the devil who loves to accuse innocent victims). Julio was gradually drawn into the very conduct he despised. We had him forgive his father, his uncle, and the other man and repent of his judgments against them. We prayed for healing of the trauma and of his heart. We broke the ungodly soul ties that were connected to all of his illicit sexual relationships. Then we cast out spirits of self-hatred and perversion. With strong manifestations, Julio was set completely free! He came to see me the following year to thank me and to tell me that he was a different man. He was engaged to a Christian lady!
- I prayed for a young man named Edward in a prison in Colorado. He came for prayer because of inner torment in his life. As we prayed about the root, he said when he was 7 years old he was hit by an automobile and that "he saw the scene from up above as if he were on a tall ladder," and he had never understood that. What happened, I believe, was that his spirit split off from his body and was up above viewing the scene. This may sound strange, but it is an experience shared by many people who have been traumatized or have had near death experiences. He said during that experience "something came inside" and had tormented him ever since then. We prayed about the trauma of the accident, prayed the Holy Spirit would heal the brokenness inside, and that his spirit

would return to inner wholeness. He said "something" that had tormented him had left as we prayed. He started laughing and said he knew he was healed.

- A few other ministry examples that I will not take the space to develop:
 1. A woman who had suffered pain for 11 years since she almost drowned.
 2. A man and his 12 year old son who had suffered anxiety, insomnia, and other symptoms for a year, since their neighbors were shot and killed by a gang. They had heard the shots and found the bodies. They were both apparently healed and set free.
 3. Richard, who had suffered knee pain for 7 years since "Desert Storm." He had much resentment against many people. After forgiving and receiving prayer for the trauma, most of the pain was immediately alleviated, and later he told me was healed.

A woman who had suffered from a fear of cars since since she had been kidnapped at age 6.

A few additional insights about trauma that I got from an English pastor, Peter Horrobin,⁶ from whom I originally learned about trauma (and I don't understand all of this):

- Sleepwalking might indicate a deep trauma in the past. Sometimes the root is terrible abuse and/or Satanic ritual abuse. Ask the Lord to reveal the root. The person is severely broken inside. Speak to each part and ask the Lord to bring peace to each part.
- Someone who has been resuscitated from drowning, shock, etc. Many times the family says they are a different person afterward. They are not living a full life. Probably there was a breaking inside. Pray for healing of the trauma and for the Holy Spirit to bring all the parts together.
- A severe drug addict whose mind has been blown. This is comparable to a mobile-coma. Pray spirit to spirit, that God will heal, break curses, and bring the soul and body back into alignment.
- A person in a coma:
 - (1) Sometimes the broken part is in control of the body. Pray for the broken part.
 - (2) Sometimes the person is literally "paralyzed with fear," and this is usually a demonic control. Pray against the spirit of fear and paralysis.
 - (3) Sometimes caused by curses placed through witchcraft. Break those curses!
 - (4) Sometimes caused by a blood or sexual soul tie. (The Lord will reveal it.) When the soul tie is cut,, the person is set free and healed.
- When ministering to trauma victims they are many times negative and defeated. Remind them of the rest of the story: "But God brought you through!" "But you were rescued!" "And He has come to heal you."

Missionary Harold Dewberry observes that all five of the physical senses are affected and frequently connected to past traumas. A startling noise, such as firecrackers, an automobile backfiring, or tires screeching on pavement, can precipitate panic and anxiety. A physical touch can cause adverse emotional reactions for a person who has been molested or abused in the past. Similarly, a smell, a taste, or a picture or scene of something that is connected to a past trauma can trigger adverse reactions.

A time of reflection

Wait quietly before the Lord and think about recurring patterns in your life that you have never understood: onslaughts of fear, anxiety, anger, depression, sickness, hopelessness, grief, or panic. Have some of these patterns been precipitated by one of the five senses? Give me revelation, Lord, of any bad fruit in my life that is connected to a trauma. Do you need to forgive someone? Do you need to ask God to forgive you? Do you need to repent for blaming God? Pray: Lord, come inside and heal any brokenness, restore my spirit, soul, and body to the proper relationship You created them to have. Thank You, Lord, that You are the one who came to heal the broken hearted and set the prisoners free. In Jesus' name, amen.

Endnotes

- (1) Luke 4:18
- (2) Luke 13:16
- (3) Luke 4:39
- (4) Luke 4:4, Matthew 4:24
- (5) P. 72, Charisma, July 2002
- (6) See Bibliography for books by Peter Horrobin