

HEALING DAMAGED EMOTIONS INTRODUCTION #1

In one of his sermons Jesus said, "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly (John 10:10). In Matthew 11:28-30 Jesus said, "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."

It is clear that Jesus is saying he can offer us a more abundant way of living than what we have been experiencing. Unfortunately many Christians fail to experience these attributes in their daily lives. People suffer daily and are overcome by such negative emotions as rejection, guilt, anger, grief, low self esteem and depression.

Due to the nature of our society it is very difficult for anyone to grow to adulthood without suffering some damage to their emotions. Many get stuck emotionally at some childhood level and never get beyond that stage. This results in emotional problems later on in mid-life.

Most because of their raising have a stable emotional state of mind. I often hear Christians say "I just can't understand depression. I have never had anything like that!" Well meaning people can't understand why a person in depression can't "just snap out of it."

They imply that their faith must be weak. Unless one has struggled with depression they can never possibly understand it. If you have never had depression just be thankful you have not had to struggle through it. It is a fact that emotional pain can be far worse than physical pain.

By nature and temperament, some Christians are nervous, apprehensive, and easily frightened. Some seem to be born with an oversensitive conscience and their feelings are easily touched and changed. Paul may have been one of these.

We tend to think of Paul as a very strong person emotionally. Yet he says that he went to Corinth in "weakness and fear, with much trembling" (1 Corinthians 2:3). He seems to have been a high-strung man, for he says, "without were fightings, within were fears" (2 Corinthians 7:5).

In growing up we have all experienced different kinds of hurts. Some have reached out for love, approval and affection as children but instead they got rejection, shame, and guilt.

It is also an established medical fact that there can be a chemical imbalance in the brain which produces depression. People who are extremely introspective and sensitive with a chemical imbalance can have the worst problems with depression.

If you visit the far west you will see those beautiful giant sequoia and redwood trees. A cross section reveals the history of each tree year by year. Drought, too much rain, lightning, forest fire that almost destroyed the tree. A savage blight and disease.

Just beneath the protective layer of our outer human bark, are the recorded rings of our lives. In the rings of our emotions there is recorded the memories of many painful past experiences. These affect our concepts, our feelings, our relationships.

They affect the way we look at ourselves, at life and even God. Hurts, scars and wrong programming can interfere with our present behavior.

By Jimmy Eaton

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With many Christians there are certain areas of our lives that need special healing. [Is there any hope for folks who are in need of having their emotions healed?](#)

To begin with it is a great source of comfort to know that the Lord is aware of those who suffer emotionally. In [Hebrews 4:15](#) we read, ["For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin."](#) There is a rugged honesty about the life of Jesus—every kind of emotion was so clearly recorded and freely expressed, without any sense of shame or guilt or imperfection.

You cannot name one single emotion but what Jesus experienced the same identical emotion. Thus we have a great High Priest who understands the feeling of our infirmities. He does not just understand the fact of our infirmities, He understands the feeling of our infirmities.

He understands the pain that comes from them – the frustrations, anxieties, hurts, feelings of abandonment, loneliness, isolation, rejection, even the depression. He can do this because he has experienced all of these emotions.

Also, it is our position that the Bible can empower you to recognize and change your negative thoughts and behaviors. Paul tells us that ["God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind"](#) (2 Timothy 1:7). God is able to empower us with the strength to overcome any negative emotions we may have.

In 2 Timothy 3:16, 17 Paul says, ["All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."](#)

God's word can correct the deficiencies in your emotional makeup if you will Him to do so. His work can make up complete persons. If you have fears, worries, insecurities or depression these can be replaced with love, joy, peace and security. This is how powerful God's word is. Listen to the following assurances given us in God's word. There are many scriptures which offer us hope in healing our damaged emotions.

["And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus"](#) (Philippians 4:19).

["I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me"](#) (Philippians 4:13).

["Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen"](#) (Ephesians 4:20, 21).

["Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort we ourselves are comforted by God"](#) (2 Corinthians 1:33, 24).

["God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble"](#) (Psalm 46:1).

["I will love you, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, and my fortress and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold"](#) (Psalm 18:1, 2).

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"Cast all your care upon Him, for He cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7).

God wants you to tell him about your problems. He wants to know how you feel. Prayer may be difficult for you at this point but even if you can only say a few words then say what you can. Just remember, "He cares for you." The Lord wants you to tell him about your emotional pain.

Philippians 4:6, 7 "Let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Here is assurance that you can have peace of mind, a peace that is completely beyond human understanding.

Notice also that it will guard your heart and mind. **Guard you from what?** It guards you from such things as fear, anxiety, rejection, loneliness and depression.

Fortified with these truths one realizes that he or she does not have to fight this battle on their own.

Low Self-Esteem # 2

It seems that countless men and women today live in an environment which screams to them daily, "you are not worth much." **Have you ever known of a Christian who refused to partake of the Lord's Supper with the justification that, "I'm not worthy to partake"?**

Have you ever known of someone who rejected becoming a Christian with the remark, "I could never live up to what is required in the Christian life, it is too hard!" **Have you ever known of a Christian who has said, "If I should die just don't know if the Lord would save me or not"?**

Paul seems to have experienced some of these feelings of failure. To the Romans he wrote. "We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good, as it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. Now I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?"

The Bible speaks of Satan's subtlety, trickery, and deceptiveness. He uses all kinds of devices to exploit our weaknesses in the direction of discouragement, disappointment, failure and even to giving up the faith. There is nothing more that Satan wants than to render us as ineffective Christians.

He wants to make us think we are not worth anything thus he can prevent us from being of value to the kingdom. Some of the most powerful weapons in Satan's arsenal are psychological. Fear, doubt, anger, hostility, worry and guilt are some of his weapons.

Paul said, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:10-12).

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Low self-esteem is a feeling of inferiority. It is an inner nagging that says, "I'm no good." "I'll never amount to anything." "No one could ever love me." "Everything I do is wrong." Low-self-esteem can begin in the crib and follow us to adulthood.

Jesus related the parable of the talents which demonstrates how disabling low self-esteem can be. The man with the one talent was immobilized by fear and feelings of inadequacy; so much so that he didn't invest his talent, but buried it to play it safe.

He was frozen by fear of rejection by the master, fear of failure, fear of comparison to the other two who were making their investments, fear of taking a risk. He did what a lot of people with low self-esteem do—nothing. With a low self-esteem you will self-destruct.

Look what happened to Israel when the spies returned from spying out the land of Canaan. **Numbers 13, 14** relate the story. You can't have a lower self-concept than to see yourself as a grasshopper. The promise land was ready but the people were not ready. They forgot they were the children of God. They forgot all the good things God had done for them.

What is self-image or self-concept? Your self-image is based on a whole system of pictures and feelings you have put together about yourself. They become the core of your personality. **Proverbs 23:7** says as a man "thinks in his heart, so is he."

The way you look and feel about yourself, way down deep in the heart of your personality, is the way you will become. What you see and feel will determine your relationship with others and with God.

Here are some pictures children have been given to them by adults of what they were.

"You're nothing but a big cry baby."
 "Shame on you!"
 "Any dummy can do that?"
 "Dad says I can't do anything right."
 "I wish you had never been born."
 "You embarrassed me to death."
 "My mother says I'm hopeless."
 "Your sister always brings home ??????"
 "God doesn't like you when you do that."
 "I can't stand you. Go away, leave me alone."
 "If you do that one more time I'll scream."
 "I wish you had never been born."
 "We really wanted a boy but we got her."
 "You are always causing us trouble."
 "You're just one more mouth to feed."
 "You'll never amount to anything."

What you are told as a child you believe. Children do not have the ability to separate what they have been told from the truth. Children believe and trust what they are told.

What they are told is internalized into their very being, and this is what they become. These messages basically tell them that they are somehow defective and are not worth very much.

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Often the home situation is unpredictable. In the world of little children, the greatest hurt of all is injustice. Unpredictable home situations produce injustice. Some never knew if they were going to get hugged or slugged and could never figure out the reason for either one.

This often happens where there is an alcoholic parent. This leaves a child with the thought that God is as unpredictable and unreliable as our parents. This leads to a life-time of inner penance, guilt and anger

Often guilt is placed on a child. "You are driving me crazy." "It's all your fault. What's wrong with you?" "See what you caused." "You are the cause of your mother's sickness." If you had not done so and so this would never have happened."

A friend once told me that his mother wanted him to become preacher. He did not want to become one. When he left to go to college she told him that if he did not become a preacher it would mean the death of her. He said several months later she actually died. He said that he carried that guilt with him as a young man for many years.

Some parents give only conditional love which demands certain standards which a child must live up to. "I will love you if...." If not, then you will not get my love. There is very little or no affirmation and plenty of criticism.

Read an interesting story about a guard on a basketball team. She told of the expectations of her father. He was never pleased with how she played even though she was an outstanding player. He could always find fault. He was never satisfied with her performance.

Most of us developed our concepts and feelings about our heavenly Father from our earthly mothers and fathers. With negative approval from our parents it is easy to transfer these feelings to God, our heavenly Father. We feel inadequate and a failure before Him.

Adults too are subjected to verbal abuse. "My husband says I embarrass him all the time." Often an employer will put a guilt trip on an employee. Such low esteem often keeps people out of the church. Some end up saying, "I'm so awful, I could never be a Christian." "I could never live up to what God expects"

When low self-esteem has been programmed into a person it is difficult, and in some cases almost impossible, for that person to feel loved by God, accepted by Him, and of worth to Him and His kingdom. Christ commanded us to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. This implies that it is basic to Christians to have a healthy self image.

When you devalue yourself you become overly absorbed in and with yourself and you don't have anything left over to give to others. The hardest people to get along with are those who don't like themselves. Because they don't like themselves they don't like others thus they are hard to get along with.

Low self-esteem people find it hard to get involved with the church. When you ask them to do something they always have a low self-esteem answer. Moses started out like this.

Have you noticed that in the Bible it seems that God took people with shortcomings and infirmities and gave them work to do and then supplied them with sufficient grace to do what he asked them to do?

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Low self-esteem robs God of marvelous opportunities to show off His power and ability through your weaknesses. Paul said, "Therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities." Why? Because they gave God such a wonderful chance to show off His perfection (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).

Nothing sabotages Christian service more than thinking so little of yourself that you never give God a chance.

The solution to low self esteem begins by recognizing the source for your feelings. Parents who send negative messages probably also received negative messages from their parents. They merely passed them down to you.

Thus you have to recognize you were led to believe a lot of false things about yourself. You have to start disbelieving a lot of falsehoods you have about yourself. They are just not true no matter how strongly you feel about them.

Second, you need to recognize God created you in His own image. This means you are a person of great value.

Third, you are so important that God allowed His Son to die on the cross for you. If you had been the only person on this planet Christ still would have died for you.

Fourth you must recognize that God's love is perfect. He has never ceased loving you. John wrote, "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God" (1 Jno. 3:1, 2).

Fifth, you must accept and believe with all your heart what the Hebrews write said, "For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Heb. 13:5, 6).

THE PERFECTIONIST #3

There are many different kinds of depression. In this lesson we want to focus on a kind we call perfectionism. John Wesley wrote of this type of person. "Sometimes this excellent quality of tenderness of conscience is carried to an extreme.

We find some who fear where no fear is, who are continually condemning themselves without cause, imagining something to be sinful where Scripture nowhere condemns it, supposing other things to be their duty where Scripture nowhere enjoins it.

Growing up in my home congregation I can remember vividly some of the things that were said from the pulpit by the preacher. I remember him saying once that he never took an aspirin for fear he might become addicted. He once said he asked God to forgive him of dreams that he had. He once spoke about tattoos saying it was sinful. He always referred to liquor as the "devil's slop."

I remember a preacher in a gospel meeting who preached against playing horse shoes on a Sunday afternoon of playing tennis in shorts. The interesting thing is that if his grandmother could have seen how short the dresses were of women of his time, as the expression goes, "she would have turned over in her graves."

In Colonial days they had separate steps to the front entrance. One was for the women and the other for men so that men would not see the women's ankles.

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I have heard many sermons based on **Hebrews 1:3** "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation." The implication was that we will only get to heaven by the skin of our teeth. Then the sermons on **Philippians 2:12** "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

Also, did not Jesus say, "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect." There were sermons which told people they were going to hell if they believed or practiced certain things.

As a boy much of the preaching I heard was rather severe and harsh. To me it made Christian living difficult. I remember after being baptized the next day I went to the Post Office and a member who worked at one of the windows told me that he was glad to know I had been baptized and hoped I would be a good boy. At the time I thought I was a good boy. The message was you need to be better.

A fellow preacher once told me that someone came to him where he preached and said, "David please let us go to heaven one Sunday a month." He started reevaluating his sermons.

Perfectionism is the one of the most disturbing emotional problem among Christians. Its chief characteristic is a constant overall feeling of never doing well enough or being good enough. The perfectionist is very complex person. He can never be good enough. He can't please himself, others or especially God. He is always striving, usually feeling guilty, driven by inner shoulds.

"If I would just read my Bible more." "If I would just pray more" "If I only had more faith." "If I could be more spiritual." He is ever climbing but never reaching. God is looked upon as one who can never be pleased because he can quite measure up.

Unfortunately most perfection end up having a great deal of anger that is buried underneath layers of timidity, meekness and spiritual piety without knowing it. It is anger because they cannot achieve what they think God expects them to do. If you were to ask a person like this "Are you angry at God?" They would strongly deny it but nevertheless they are.

A perfectionist growing up wants to please his parents. He tried to win his mother's approval but it seems he can never please her. She seems to always find fault. He just never is quite good enough. The perfectionist complex makes the Christian life for some a miserable life. It is as if God is saying, "Come now, you can do better than that!" And your reply is, "Of course is can."

But with increased efforts to please yourself and an increasingly demanding God who is never quite satisfied, you always fall short and feel inadequate, you never you have arrived. But you it's as if God in effect is saying you must never stop trying to be perfect. After all did not Jesus say, "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48).

The perfectionist becomes a perfect candidate for legalism. This oversensitive conscience is accompanied by a rigid overemphasis on external do's and don'ts rules and regulations. He inspects every sermon. He is looking for ways to improve on what he is doing. He ends up trying to carry out the rules and regulations of men which God has never made in the first place.

He turns into what Paul called "the yoke of bondage" (Galatians 5:1). The Galatians got caught up in trying to keep some of the old law which had already been abolished. They were observing special days, new moons, and Sabbaths. Paul referred to their regulations as things you "do not handle, do not taste, do not touch."

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Under the stress and strain of trying to live with a self we do not like, others we can't get along with, a God we can't fully love, he often breaks away from the church or he ends up feeling miserable and may even have a nervous breakdown. He believes with his head he is saved but he can't believe with his heart. The load is too heavy to bear, and he just breaks under the weight.

Have you ever experienced such frustrations in living the Christian life? The good news is that the way to heaven is not the path of perfect performance. No matter how much you try, you can never be perfect. Only Jesus was perfect. God knew that we would be imperfect. Therefore he remedied the situation by giving us His Son to die in our place on the cross.

However, to some Christians grace seems too good to be true. So the perfectionist may sing with head **Amazing Grace** but with his emotions he feels he must do more and more until he reaches a high level that God will be pleased with.

But he never reaches that high level because of his imperfections. The result is that sensitive believers can become neurotic perfectionists who are unhappy and uncomfortable with their Christian life.

One does not get to be a perfectionist overnight, and he will not be healed overnight. It involves the reprogramming of your mind of distorted concepts, healing your inner feelings of all the damaged emotions. There is only one ultimate cure of perfectionism. It is profound, but as simple as the word **grace**.

This word is from the Greek word **charis** which means "Gracefulness, graciousness, kindness, a favor". In the New Testament it has a special meaning: "freely given, undeserved, unmerited, unearnable, and unrepayable favor".

God's acceptance of us has nothing to do with our worthiness because we can never do enough to be worthy. The healing process for the perfectionist is day-by-day believing, living, and realizing this grace relationship with a loving, caring heavenly Father. The perfectionist has been programmed seek unrealistic expectations, impossible performance, conditional love, and a subtle theology of works.

Jesus said, "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Isn't that good news? He says there is a better way to live, "Take My yoke upon you....for My yoke is easy, and My burden is light" (11:28-30). His yoke is not a burden. It gives you the assurance that the Lord will never leave you alone, but will always be yoked with you steadily, always by your side, always even unto the end.

Learn to accept yourself as you are. Then remember to give thanks to God for who you are---His child. This does not mean as Paul says you "continue in sin that grace may abound." The Christian life is a continuous growth process but you will never be perfect. So, like God you have to accept your imperfection.

GRACE IGNORED #4

Some years ago I was in a gospel meeting with a congregation I had previously served as the preacher. They asked to speak to the ladies class which met on a mid-week morning. I took **1 John 1:7-10** as a text and spoke on the fact that if we walk in the light as He is in the light we have fellowship with the Lord, and the blood of God's Son keep on cleansing us from all of our sins.

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I pointed out that no one ever walks perfectly in the light but the fact that we struggle to do this, then God keeps us under the cleansing blood of Jesus.

By the time I had ended the class I could tell from the expressions on the faces of many there was doubt and disbelief. One came by to say she did not believe you could ever be sure for certain that you are saved until death. One said she would have to think about this, meaning was sure she could believe it.

Many times I have had faithful Christians tell me that they are afraid to die. They say that if they should die they are not certain God would save them. It is common for Christians to express many different fears about their spiritual condition.

I have heard preachers speaking at the funeral of a faithful Christian say something like, "We cannot say nor do anything that will change the conditions of this departed one so we will direct our thought to the living." Surely he could have said some comforting things to the family about a faithful Christian that would help the family in their time of grief.

There is has always been that feeling with some that you can never be certain about the departure of a brother or sister in Christ. I have heard members say at a funeral of a Christian, "Did you hear him, he preached that man right into heaven." If he was preaching the funeral of a faithful Christ why couldn't he preach him into heaven?

It seems to me that most members of the church have heard very little about the doctrine of grace as set forth in the New Testament. In past years if a preacher preached on grace it had to do with the false teaching that one cannot fall from grace. Some years ago a well known preacher by the name of Hodge wrote a book on grace in which he set forth the truth that we are saved by grace.

Immediately brethren from different part of the country began to attack the book and deride him as a false teacher. They implied he was teaching a dangerous doctrine that we are saved by grace alone, which he did not set forth in his book.

I had a friend who used that book in a Bible class and many became so upset they demanded that he stop teaching on the subject. The New Testament doctrine of grace has been so novel to us that we cast suspicion on anyone who spoke on the subject.

Certainly we are not saved by grace alone but neither are we saved by works alone. It takes the grace of God for us to be saved. There is no way we would ever make it without God's amazing grace.

Jesus gives us a parable that can be very helpful to us in understanding God's grace. "Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants...one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold...he fell down, and worshiped him saying, "Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all." Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow servants, which owed him an hundred pence; and he....took him by the throat, saying, "Pay me that thou owest"...and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debit. And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto. So likewise shall My heavenly Father do also unto you, if you from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses. (Matthew 18:23-35)

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This parable is filled with profound insights into our guilt and the grace of God. Like the man in the parable, a person's debt to God and to others is so great that it can never be paid back, any more than a servant working for a few dollars a day could ever save up enough money to repay a debt of ten million dollars. He fell on his knees and begged for mercy.

However, he asked for a special kind of mercy. Jesus used the Greek word, **makrothumason**. Every time this word is used in the New Testament it means "an extension of time, a delay." "Lord, have patience with me. Please delay and I'll repay everything. Just give me more time and I will eventually pay everything back".

The Lord in his mercy forgave him all his debt and released him. But the same servant went to a servant who owed him a measly twenty dollars. He seized him by the throat and demanded "Pay me what you owe me." When he couldn't do it, he showed no mercy but put him into the debtor's prison until he paid in full.

The Lord summoned the servant and said, I forgave you now you and now you treat your fellow servant this way. So in anger he delivered him to prison until he should pay all. Then Jesus said, "So also My heavenly Father will do to every one of you if you do not forgive your brother from your heart." It is clear that to the unforgiving, God will be like a harsh and stern debt-collector.

The whole debt system has been built into the human personality in a most incredible way. The servant, not realizing he was completely forgiven, thought he still had to go around collecting money from the servants who owed him, so that he could repay the debt he owed the lord. So often the unaccepted are the unaccepting. The unforgiven are the unforgiving. The un-graced are the ungracious.

The parents who hurt you when you were growing up, brothers and sisters who failed you, who teased you, put you down, a friend who betrayed you, a sweetheart who rejected you – they all owe you a debt, **don't they?** They owe you affection, love, security and affirmation, but since you feel indebted and guilty, resentful, insecure and anxious, since you see yourself as unforgiven and unacceptable, you in turn become unforgiving and unaccepting.

You have not received grace, so how can you give. Two major causes of most emotion problems among Christians are these: the failure to understand, receive and live out God's unconditional grace and forgiveness; and a failure to give out that unconditional love, forgiveness, and grace to others.

We believe in grace but that is not the way we live. We believe grace in our heads but not in on a feeling level. We sing about grace but it's all on a head level. Grace has not penetrated the level of our emotions. We say "Grace is God's undeserved favor" but it's not in our feelings. It's not in our living.

In fact we are afraid to believe this for two reasons. **First**, fear someone will say we believe in "Once in grace always in grace." **Second**, we are afraid it is too good to be true.

Grace is not only God's undeserved mercy and favor it is also unearned and can never be repaid. The failure to see and know and feel grace drives many Christians to a tragic treadmill of performing, achieving, and striving. They try to atone and pay the debt. They read an extra chapter, pray more and longer, do some good work. What they are actually practicing is the false doctrine of penance, trying to pay something back for their failure.

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It is claimed by some physicians that up to seventy five percent of people in hospitals today with physical illnesses have sicknesses rooted in emotional causes. The patients are punishing themselves with their illnesses.

Their physical symptoms and breakdowns are their involuntary confessions of guilt. The solution to this insecurity is believing 100% in the doctrine of grace as set forth in God's word. If we can ever bring ourselves to believe in it then fears can be relieved.

Some say, Yes, I know that God has forgiven me, but I can never forgive myself. This is a contradiction in terms. [How can you really believe that God has forgiven you, and then not forgive yourself?](#) When God forgives, He buries your sins in the sea of His forgetfulness. You have no right to dredge up anything that God has forgiven and forgotten. Accept your responsibility in the matter.

One of Paul's favorite phrases was ["the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,"](#) which means that Grace is not some commodity that is poured out on us but it is the Lord coming to us, accepting us as we are

UNRESOLVED ANGER #5

A few years ago I attended the 50th reunion of my college class. A former student that I had known fairly well my senior year came to me and told me a story about the year he was on the basket ball team. I had been manager of the team my senior year and maybe that is the reason he told me this story.

He said that the entire year he sat on the bench and the coach did not send him in to play. All that time he kept building up resentment and by the end of the season he made up his mind he would not return to the school. He transferred to another school.

All through the years since he had maintained deep resentment against the coach because he did not let him play. A few weeks before he related this to me he heard that his former coach had terminal cancer and was bedridden. He called his wife and asked if he could come for a visit.

As it turned out he went to the house and there told his former coach about the anger and resentment he had build up against in when he was a student and had maintained for many years after that.

He said the coach's eyes welled up with tears and he told him he had no idea that he had caused us anger to occur. They both cried and forgave one another. He then told me that it was like a great weight had suddenly been lifted off his shoulders. He no longer carried around that anger and bitterness but was totally free from it for evermore.

Anger is a natural emotion. We were born with it and began to express it as early as infancy. Anything that frustrates or irritates us will usually provoke the emotion of anger. Generally speaking anger has been considered as something bad and should not be expressed. Children are often rebuked for showing any anger.

Anger is a divinely implanted emotion, part of God's image in the human personality, and is to be used for constructive purposes. The truth is anger is a natural emotion and it is right to express it provided we express in the proper way and keep it under control. In [Ephsians 4:26](#) Paul commands, ["Be angry, and do not sin; do not let the sun go down upon your wrath."](#)

HEALING DAMAGED EMOTIONS

Paul is saying it is alright to get angry but just be sure you don't let it get out of control. You can keep it momentarily but not past bedtime. Paul is saying express your anger, but be sure that it doesn't lead you into any form of bitterness, resentment or hatred. Be angry, but be careful. Anger becomes resentful and bitter when you don't know proper ways to express it.

Even Jesus expressed anger. Seeing the animals and money changers in the Temple area which was a sacred area, he became angry that they were using it to trade and make money. In his anger he drove them out, turned over the tables that had the money stacked up on them.

The important thing about anger is we express it in such a way that we "do not sin." You can verbalize your anger without losing control, saying or doing something inappropriate.

If your family rules said it was wrong to express anger, that you would be punished if you did, then you may have learned faulty ways of handling anger. You probably ended up doing one of two things. Either you repressed or you suppressed your anger.

If you repress anger you stuff it and refuse to feel it. If you suppress anger you feel it but never express it. Either of these can produce problems in later years. While it may be temporarily blocked out of the memory it remains very active within the subconscious causing pain, especially in adult years.

Many studies have been made of the ill effects of anger and hate upon the human body. It has been found to be very destructive to the body. Blood pressure may rise to a dangerous point. The heart is affected which in turn affects various physiological functions.

The nervous system is also affected. One psychologist has gone so far as to say that pent up anger causes more deaths than any other cause. This is because of the harmful effects anger and hate have on the vital organs of the body.

Anger which is improperly handled often leads to depression. It is now a recognized fact that anger can be at the bottom of depression. Anger most of the time is internalized and it is either directed toward ourselves, toward other or even toward God. Sometimes it may be a combination of two or even all three of them. Until one can verbalize their anger, analyze and resolve it, they will continue to be depressed.

When one is filled with repressed anger he is not physically or mentally capable of fully worshiping and serving God. Thus it is important that look deep within ourselves and discover any anger that has been pent up for years.

It may sound like an over simplification of what causes depression, however, if you will discover your anger, who it is directed toward then forgive, then you will be surprised how depression will subside.

The perfectionist can become overwhelmed with anger toward himself for not being perfect. He needs to recognize it and forgive himself for not being perfect – for not reaching the demands and expectations of parents when growing up. And then quit holding grudges against self. No one has a right to condemn himself. Only God has that right.

There are times when we are wronged by others. Feelings of inferiority often cause us to resent others. The result is that we often have pent up anger toward others. Sometimes we only imagine we have been wronged.

HEALING DAMAGED EMOTIONS

A study of **Matthew 5:23-24** tells us what to do with anger against others. **"Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift"**.

It may seem strange that anyone would ever be angry toward God but it often happens. You may or may not even be aware of it. When there is been a tragedy, sickness or death we often blame God. **"After all He is God, and He could have prevented or corrected the situation if he had wanted to."** Anger toward God happens frequently to the legalist who feels God requires too much of him.

We need to confess our anger to God and ask him to forgive us and help us to resolve it. We do not forgive God for anything For God has done nothing wrong. Instead we are thankful to God for understanding our feelings and teaching us to love and forgive.

In **1 John 4:20, 21** we have some very strong language about this whole matter of forgiveness. It may jar you a little but listen to what is said. **"If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar, for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?"**

This is what the Greeks called **"agape"** love. It is unconditional love. It is giving love without any strings attached. The verse does not imply we suddenly become affectionate toward someone but it means we would do what is best for that person and one of the best things you can do is forgive.

At this point it is very important for you to see the importance of forgiving the ones who have caused your pain. Forgiving is a choice. It may take some time to work through the emotions that are involved. To forgive is not to charge the offense to someone's account. You can forgive even if someone does not deserve to be forgiven.

Paul and Barnabas could not work together. Very wisely they parted company, and very wisely the early church laid hands on them both, blessed them both, and sent them in opposite directions. While you cannot work with everybody, that doesn't mean you have the right to resent anyone. It does not mean you have the right to hate or to be bitter.

Paul said, **"If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men"** (Romans 12:18). There are always those who will not make it possible to live with them in peace.

You need to forgive for your own personal well being if for no other reason. This may seem difficult or even impossible but it is better than suffering the agony of deep emotional pain such as depression. The pain will not go away until you are willing to forgive.

Some will argue that you cannot forgive until that person repents and asks for forgiveness. This just will not hold up. Jesus clearly taught us to pray, **"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.....For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses"** (Matthew 6:12, 14, 15).

There is a scriptural way to deal with all these hurts from our past. The greatest illustration is the Cross. There God took what, from a human standpoint, was the worst injustice and deepest tragedy that ever happened and turned it into the sublime gift man has ever known, the gift of salvation. We also see this in Joseph.

By Jimmy Eaton

HEALING DAMAGED EMOTIONS

Never was there more injustice than in the Cross. No one ever received more rejection than our Lord. His accusations, His trial, His crucifixion were all vastly unjust. Never say, "God doesn't know what it is like to suffer."

We know that God understands what it is like to live in this kind of a world. He has become our Wounded Healer. In fact "God was in Christ, reconciling us to Himself, not counting our trespasses against us" (2 Corinthians 5:19).

Forgive everyone who is involved in your problem. This relieves you of what is often hidden anger. Often we will not face up to our anger because anger is considered a terrible sin; it is then pushed down even deeper.

Are you a part of a debt-free community. The church should be a debt-free society, where we love each other because we are loved. Where we accept because we are accepted. The Lord does not say "Well, I'll give you a little more time to repay." Paul said, "Owe no man anything, but to love one another" (Romans 13:8). Jesus said, "Freely you have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:8).

DEALING WITH OUR INFIRMITIES #6

"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us.....according to the will of God. (Romans 8:26-27)

Somewhere in our makeup as human's lies an area the Scripture calls "infirmities." In the Old Testament the word infirmity is connected with the sacrifices offered by the priests. An infirmity was primarily a physical spot, a blemish in the sacrifice.

If a man had an infirmity, even though he was a member of the priestly family of Aaron, he could not function as a priest. His infirmity disqualified him. The offering of sacrifices had to be "without spot or blemish."

In the New Testament we begin to see a figurative use of the word infirmity. It is a metaphor, a figure of speech. The Greek word *astheneia* means "a need of strength, a lack of strength, a weakness, an infirmity, a crippling". The word is hardly ever used in a purely physical sense. Rather it refers to mental, moral and emotional weaknesses.

The sacrifices find their fulfillment in Jesus our High Priest. Because of his infirmities he can understand the infirmities of his people and deal more gently with them. He could be more understanding as a priest. He never had to make a sacrifice on His own behalf. But since He was tempted, since He was tested at every point as we are. [How do we know?](#)

"In the days of flesh," while Jesus was human, He "offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that we able to save Him for death, and was heard in that He feared. Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered" (Hebrews 5:7, 8).

At one point He said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death" (Matthew 26:37, 38). He knows what it is to pray to God with loud sobs. He wrestled with feelings that nearly tore Him to pieces. There is nothing more destructive to a human personality than a slap in the face. It is so humiliating, so demeaning, so deeply dehumanizing. It destroys something very basic to our personhood.

HEALING DAMAGED EMOTIONS

Isaiah 53:2, 3 tells us that "He was despised and rejected of men; a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief and we hid as it were our faces from Him, He was despised, and we esteemed Him not."

The word Emmanuel means "God with us." This is why we can come boldly before God's throne. We can draw near with confidence.

We are coming to a heavenly Father who understands our feelings and invites us to share them with Him. Jesus is our wounded Healer. He knows, He understands. There is not a single feeling that we cannot bring to Him that He has not already felt.

"Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He hath poured out His soul unto death; and He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. (Isaiah 53:4-6, 12).

God does not leave us alone. We are not abandoned to our paltry resources to somehow struggle through all this mess, to live defeated lives. Jesus our High Priest is "touched with the feelings of our infirmities." He identified with us when He became the Son of Man.

Then there is Romans 8:26 "Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered". The idea is that the Holy Spirit becomes our partner and helper, who works along with us in a mutual participation for our healing.

Jesus promised in John 14:16-17 he would send the Comforter or Helper to the disciples. This word in the Greek is Paraclete. Para means "alongside," and kaleo means "to call." "I will send you One whom you can call upon who will come alongside and help you with your infirmities."

The Greek word help is a combination of three words sun—"along with, together"; anti—"on the opposite side"; and lambano—"to take hold of." When you put them together, sunantilambanotai means "to take hold of together with us over on the other side." Have you ever gotten excited over a Greek word? Jesus said, "I will send you a Paraclete who comes alongside when you call, who will take hold of, together with you on the other side."

It helps to get even more technical in our word analysis. This word is in the indicative mood and represents a fact. It is in the middle voice, indicating that the Holy Spirit is doing the action; it is in the present tense, that speaks of habitual, continuous action. He is always there!

We have here the great works of the comforting, counseling the Paraclete—He is always available to take hold on the other side of our crippling infirmity, our damaged emotion, our painful hang-up. He doesn't leave us because we are damaged or imperfect in our performance.

He is exactly the opposite from the misconceived caricature of the God which the perfectionist imagines—the God who is always whispering, come on now! Try a little harder! The Paraclete is the God who understands, who sees we are carrying a burden too heavy for us, who realizes we cannot make it on our own, who comes alongside and takes hold of the heavy burden and its pain and help us to lift it, enabling us to carry our crippling infirmity. What a beautiful picture!

HEALING DAMAGED EMOTIONS

This verb found only one other place in **Luke 10:40** Martha said to Jesus, "Will You please speak to Mary and tell her to come in here and **sunantilambano** me. Tell her to come in here and do her share and get hold of the other side. I can't do it all myself."

That's the picture we get from this word **sunantilambano**, the Holy Spirit helping us, taking hold the other side. God loves us, not because we are good, but because we need His love in order to be good.

The Holy Spirit offers us His continuous enabling presence and power, not because we are good, but because we need Him in order to be good. What good news! And how does the Holy Spirit help us. "For we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us." Only the Holy Spirit truly knows the mind of God.

And only the Holy Spirit truly understands us. Because He understands the inside of us and understands the inside of the heart of God, He knows how to get these two together. And so the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep to be uttered. Emotional healing takes place by the work of the Holy Spirit. The **Paraclete** not only comes alongside, but He also comes inside.

Too often we quote **Romans 8:28** out of context. It is the final step in this whole corrective sequence. "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God." Unfortunately the **all things** do not do us good, they many even work against us. God does not change the actual, factual nature of any evil which occurs, but He works in and through these things, causing circumstances in the end to work out for our good.

Thus God can turn bad things around so as to work together for our good. He can change hurtful things into helpful things. He can recycle our emotional hang-ups into usefulness. God can change the meaning of bad things into meaningful things.