

L.I.F.E. Groups
March 2010 Lesson
Healing from the Past

We have ALL been hurt by people or circumstances at some point of our lives. Although time has passed, the question remains: have we been healed from our past? This month's LIFE Group lesson will empower you to not just "move on" but to be healed and be made whole!

Before we begin today's lesson, I would like you to enjoy this worship video clip and experience His presence.

[Worship Video Clip]

We have all heard of the very familiar statement "Time heals". But this statement is not accurate. Our source of healing doesn't come by time, retribution, or avoidance. Instead, healing from our past can only come through our Lord.

The Bible reveals God's name as Jehovah Rapha: The God who heals!¹ This is not a characteristic of our Lord in the past. He is still in the work of healing today. It is not just for the physical body but it is available for the soul, which consists of our mind, will and emotions.

Now, the question is how can I be healed?

The first step is acknowledging the fact that you were hurt! This emotion can be displaced by anger, bitterness, or even depression. But these emotions are the effects of the root of the problem. Deep inside these defensive emotions lie *hurt* waiting to be tended to. This is an important step! If we live in denial, we are hurting ourselves, those around us, and most of all it is not the life that God intended for us to live.

Now, acknowledging the fact that we were hurt is just the first step.

Now, we need to make an adamant decision which is the next step. We need to decide "I want to be healed from my past. I don't want to live another day wallowing in my hurt and pain that continues to follow me." Sometimes we feel comfortable with not dealing with the matter. At times, rather than being whole we choose to re-live our past as if we are resurrecting it all over again. We hold on to it so close as if it was a precious gem. We may feel that it's the only thing we know how to do – but today I want you to know, that there is a way out!

¹ Exodus 15:26

On a side note: I don't want you to think that I am devaluing your past hurts. I agree that they are very well legitimate. But see God wants you to be healed and completely whole.

In order for us to experience healing the wounds of our past need to be cleansed. Our wounds have been contaminated with elements that are self-inflicted and it must be removed!

One of these contaminants is un-forgiveness. If you don't forgive you will continue to relive your past. Forgiveness is vital to your healing. Forgiveness should not be based on receiving an apology. It is not even based on the person feeling remorseful for the pain they may have put you through. As a matter of fact, it may not even be based on the other person changing their ways! Forgiveness should be unconditional with no expectations.

Let's look at the life of Jesus... while the soldiers were crucifying Him who had no sin. He prays to the Father and says, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they are doing."² Even as Jesus suffered pain and agony, He was moved with compassion.

Having the ability to forgive is important to the Lord. When the disciples asked Jesus how to pray ... Jesus prayed and He said something interesting during the prayer: "...forgive our sins as we forgive those who sin against us."³ Wow – Jesus prayed that the proportion of us experiencing forgiveness to be the same measure as we forgive others.

Another element of contamination is anger, hatred and the need for revenge! "How can he/she do this to me?"

Before the death of Jesus, His own disciple Judas betrayed him for 30 pieces of silver to locate and identify Jesus. As Judas approached to kiss Jesus as a means of identifying Him to the soldiers, Jesus calls Judas "friend". He could have called him Judas, traitor, or anything else. But Jesus calls Judas: FRIEND!

You might be bitter, sad, or depressed. You might walk around with a "victim" mindset and find it even difficult just to smile.

As much as all these contaminants are true feelings that have its grounds, God desires you to live a better life. If we allow feelings of un-forgiveness, anger, bitterness, sadness, and depression to linger in our minds, we are giving the power to our past to control our emotions. Imagine that ... you have allowed your past to control your emotions for today & tomorrow. Today, that needs to STOP!

² Luke 23:34

³ Matthew 6:12

We would need to purposely forgive. It may be difficult, but your healing is waiting for you! Here is something practical for you to do: Remember those that hurt you in the past. Now, I want you to speak to yourself and say: I forgive them! I forgive _____.

Replace the contaminating element of anger and hatred with LOVE. You might ask how this can even be! Love is unconditional. It has no strings attached. Jesus said to love thy neighbor as thyself. True love is amazing!

“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.” – 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

You shouldn't be bitter, sad, or depressed another day in your life. You loose everyday that was spent being sad about yesterday. This is the day that the Lord has made for you to rejoice and be glad in it! Don't allow the past to have a grip of your emotions today.

An important step to your healing is: *knowing* that God wants you to be healed!

It is God's perfect will that you be in good health and that your soul prospers!⁴

Jesus came to give us life and life more abundantly.⁵

He is the source of our healing. Jesus took upon Himself our grief and our sorrows and they were nailed to the cross. He became the burden-bearer that we may be free! The Bible says, by His stripes we are healed.

Jesus is not only *able* to heal you but He is *willing* to heal you!

He encourages us to come to Him: Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.⁶

God is good and He desires the very best for His children. He doesn't want to see His children hurting. As a father has compassion on his children, our Heavenly Father has compassion toward us!

Jesus Christ came to heal the brokenhearted!

In Luke 10 we read about a certain man who was traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho. On his way he fell among thieves who robbed him, stripped him from his clothes, wounded him, and left him half dead. A priest came by and did nothing. A Levite came

⁴ 3 John 1:2

⁵ John 10:10

⁶ Matthew 11:28

by and also looked on and passed by. But a Samaritan who is not so highly esteemed by society came by and had *compassion*. This Samaritan bandaged his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them. He then put him on his animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day the Samaritan paid the inn keeper and then told the inn keeper to take care of the man and whatever would be spent he would repay the inn.

This man was hurting on the road and needed help! The people who might have been expected to help walked by. Sometimes we expect others to help us or at least join us in our pity. But they may not be found when we needed them the most. We don't need to wait for a Good Samaritan to come by. Jesus is the Good Samaritan who desires to help us. More than anyone else, God desires that you are well. He doesn't want to *just* hear about our pains and alleviate them. He wants to eliminate the sting of the past from our lives!

The Good Samaritan bandaged his wounds pouring oil and wine on them. The oil was used as an element for his healing because of its soothing and relaxing properties. The wine was used as an antiseptic – a cleansing agent. In like manner, the Holy Spirit desires to comfort you which is symbolic to the oil. The wine is symbolic to the work Jesus has done on the cross so that the pain of our past may be eliminated.

Just like the Good Samaritan, Jesus paid the price in full. There is nothing that we have to add to the work on the cross to be a recipient of His healing!

Now, are you convinced that the Lord desires you to be healed?

If you are convinced, you are ready to go the next step and that is allowing God to heal you!

Are you ready to give your hurt over to the Lord? Let's not hold onto it anymore as if it was a prized possession. 1 Peter 5:7 says: Casting all your cares upon Him for He cares for you. You are in safe hands. God is not the source of your hurt. He is the source of your healing.

So when does it begin?

I've got good news for you! Jesus took the pains of our past and bore it on the cross knowing what we would have to go through. Today, we can experience what He has done for us by FAITH.

The bible says when we confess with our mouth and believe with our heart that Jesus died for you and that He rose again, we are saved! This qualifies us to be HIS child! He is our Lord and Savior. From that moment on, we experience the greatest gift called: SALVATION!

Soteria is the Greek word for Salvation which includes deliverance, restoration, pardon, healing, wholeness, soundness for body soul and spirit.

You receive this entire package once you have become His child!

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”⁷

God has graciously provided all of these benefits for us. But in order for them to be reality it needs our faith.

In just a little while, for those of you who never prayed the prayer of salvation we are going to do that together! We are going to make sure that you are able to experience all of what God has in store for you and that you become His child. Then, I’m going to believe with you for your healing!

So how do I know that my healing has happened? We have all heard the line: forgive and forget. It is definitely a catchy phrase but not true. You can’t just wash out the memory of the past. But what will happen is the sting of the past will be removed.

The bible speaks about a man named Joseph. As a young man, he was favored by his father and he was known to be a dreamer. He was despised by his brothers because of his dreams; revealed how one day they will all bow before him. An opportune time came about and his brothers threw him in a pit and stripped from his clothes. He was sold by his brothers and his coat was stained with the blood of an animal as a deterrent to the father that his son was brutally attacked and killed in the fields. But see Joseph’s emotional turmoil doesn’t stop with his own family. He is slandered by his new employer’s wife. He is put in prison and forgotten by those he helped in prison. But throughout all the hurt and pain - God was with him and prepared the way for him to be the prince of Egypt. God was not the source of Joseph’s pain! But God did turn the situation around. Joseph could have been contaminated with the feelings of unforgiveness, anger, bitterness, sadness, or depression. But Joseph decided to forgive and love his brothers as one day the dreams of his childhood came true!

Watch how Joseph was healed! In Genesis 41, Joseph has a child and he names his son: Manasseh, which means God, has made me forget all my trouble and all about my father’s household.

The next time you share your past with someone, it won't be about having a pity party and trying to obtain empathy from someone. But it would be about telling others how GOD brought you through!

⁷ Ephesians 2:8

Here is my final point: you need to strengthen and renew your mind daily by the word of God. His word has been given to us to establish us in our walk with Him. It's not only important that you are healed from your past but that you are emotionally healthy every day of your life. This is accomplished by studying and meditating on the word of God.

Thy word have I hid in my heart that I may not sin against thee. - Psalm 119:11

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. – Psalm 119:105

For, "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever." ... – 1 Peter 1:24-25

Jesus wants to give you a new start. He wants to change the condition of your heart so that you would no longer live another day with the pain, guilt or shame of your past. He wants you to step into a new season starting now!

You can't do this on your own!

Prayer of Salvation!

Heavenly Father, We come to you in Jesus name. And Lord we thank you that you died on the cross for our sins and you rose from the dead. And this day I confess with my mouth and I believe with my heart, that Jesus you died and rose again. From today on you are mine; I am yours. I am your child forever in Jesus name.

Prayer of faith for their healing!

Father, I pray for those who are wounded from the past. Dear Lord we pray this day that you would heal them. Heal them and eliminate the sting of the past. From this day on, in Jesus name and by faith, we receive it.

Discussion Questions:

1. Share a personal experience on how you were healed from the past.
2. How does forgiveness play a vital role in healing?
3. Discuss practical ways on how the Word of God can be used to have *healthy* emotions.