

When You Hurt



David Wilkerson December 1, 1978

In one way or another, we are all hurting. Everybody is in the same boat. Even the laughing, happy-go-lucky crowd is hurting. They try to hide their hurt by drinking and joking — but it won't go away.

Who hurts? The parents of a prodigal son or daughter. Millions of parents have been deeply wounded by a child who has rejected their counsel. Those loving parents grieve over the deception and delinquency of a child who was once tender and good.

The victims of broken homes are hurting. The abandoned wife who was rejected by her husband for another woman. The husband who lost the love of a wife. The children who lost their security.

Others suffer illness. Cancer, heart problems and a myriad of other human diseases. To be told by a doctor, "You have cancer — you may die!" has to be terrifying. Yet many reading this message have experienced such pain and agony.

Lovers break up. A boyfriend or girlfriend walks away, trampling on what was once a beautiful relationship. All that is left is a broken, wounded heart.

And what about the unemployed? The despondent ones whose dreams have collapsed? The shut-ins? The prisoner? The homosexual? The alcoholic?

It's true! In one way or another — we are all hurting. Every person on earth carries his own burden of pain and hurt. There Is No Physical Cure

When you are deeply hurt — no person on this earth can shut down the inner fears and deepest agonies. Not the best of friends can really understand the battle you are going through or the wounds inflicted on you.

Only God can shut down the waves of depression and feelings of loneliness and failure that come over you. Faith in God's love alone can salvage the hurt mind. The bruised and broken heart that suffers in silence can be healed only by a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit — and nothing short of divine intervention really works.

God has to step in and take over. He has to intercept our lives at the breaking point and stretch forth His loving arms and bring that hurting body and mind under His protection and care. God must come forth as a caring Father and demonstrate that He is there, making things turn out for the good. He must, by His own power, dispel the storm clouds — chase away the despair and gloom — wipe away the tears — and replace the sorrow with peace of mind. Why Me — Lord?

What hurts most is that you know your love for God is strong — yet, you can't seem to understand what He is trying to work out in your life. You could understand why prayers go unanswered, if you were cold toward His love. If you were running from God, you could probably understand why the testings and severe trials keep coming on. If you were a down-and-out sinner who despised the things of God, you could bring yourself to believe you deserved to be hurt badly. But you are not running — you are not rejecting Him in any way. You long to do His perfect will. You

yearn to serve Him with all that is in you. And that is why your hurting is so debilitating. It makes you feel there is something terribly wrong with yourself. You question your spiritual depth; and at times, you even question your sanity. From somewhere deep inside you, a voice whispers, "Maybe I'm defective somehow! Maybe I'm being hurt so deeply because God can't see much good in me! I must be so out of His will, He has to discipline me to make me obedient."

Friends Try So Hard to Help

A bruised or broken heart causes the most excruciating pain known to mankind. Most other human hurts are only physical. But a heart that is wounded must carry a pain that is both physical and spiritual. Friends and loved ones can help soothe the physical pain of a broken heart. When they are there, laughing, loving and caring, the physical pain eases and there is temporary relief. But night falls, and with it comes the terror of spiritual agony. Pain is always worse in the night. Loneliness falls like a cloud when the sun disappears. The hurting explodes when you are all alone, trying to understand how to cope with the inner voices and fears that keep surfacing.

Your friends who really don't understand what you are going through offer all kinds of easy solutions. They get impatient with you. They are mostly happy and carefree at the time, and they can't understand why you won't simply "snap out of it." They suspicion that you are indulging in self-pity. They remind you that the world is filled with heartbroken, hurting people who have survived. More often, they want to pray that "one-time, cure-all, solve-everything" prayer. You are told to "release your faith, claim a promise, confess a cure, and walk away from your despair."

That's all well and good, but it's preaching that usually comes from Christians who have never known much suffering in their own lives. They are like Job's "baby sitters," who knew all the answers — but who could not relieve his pain. Job said of them, "Ye are all physicians of no value." Thank God for well-meaning friends, but if they could experience your agony for even one hour, they would be changing their tunes. Put them in your place just once, feeling what you feel, experiencing the inner pain you carry, and they would be saying to you, "How in the world can you take it? I couldn't handle what your are going through."

Time Heals Nothing!

Then, there is that age old cliché, "Time heals everything." You are told to hang in there, put on a smile, and wait for time to anesthetize your pain. But I suspect that all the rules and clichés about loneliness are coined by happy, unhurt people. It sounds good — but it is not true. Time heals nothing — only God does.

When you are hurting, time only magnifies the pain. Days and weeks go by and the agony hangs on. The hurting won't go away, no matter what the calendar says. Time may push the pain deeper into the mind, but one tiny memory can bring it to the surface.

Truthfully, it doesn't help much either to know that Christians have suffered before you — down through the ages. You can identify with the suffering of Bible characters who survived tremendous ordeals of pain. But knowing that others have gone through great battles doesn't calm the hurt in your own bosom. When you read how they came out of their battles victorious — and you still haven't — it only adds to your hurt. It makes you feel as though they were very close to God to receive such answers to their prayers. But it makes you feel unworthy of the Lord, because your problem lingers on — in spite of all your spiritual efforts.

Double Trouble

People seldom get hurt just once. Most who hurt can show you other wounds also. Pain is layered over pain. A broken heart is usually a tender, fragile one. It is easily broken because it is not protected by a hard shell. Tenderness is mistaken for vulnerability by the hard-shell heart. Quietness is misjudged as a weakness. A total giving of oneself to another is mistaken as "coming on too strong." The heart that is not afraid to admit its need of love is misjudged as "too sexually oriented."

It follows then that a tender heart that reaches for love and understanding is often the easiest to break. Hearts that are open and trusting are usually the ones that are wounded the most. This world is filled with men and women who have rejected the love offered to them from a heart that is gentle and tender. Those strong, hard-shelled hearts that trust no one — hearts that give so little — hearts that demand love be constantly proved — hearts that are always calculating — hearts that are always manipulating and self-serving — hearts that are afraid to risk — those hearts seldom get broken. They don't get wounded because there is nothing to wound. They are too proud and self-centered to allow anyone else to make them suffer in any way. They go about breaking other hearts and trampling on the fragile souls who touch their lives — simply because they are so thick and dull at heart themselves,

they think everybody should be just like them. The hard hearts don't like tears. They hate commitment. They feel smothered when asked to share from their own hearts.

Heartbreakers Do Not Get Off Easy!

Part of the pain a broken heart must suffer is the thought that the offender, the heartbreaker, is going to get away with it all. The heart says, "I am the one hurt and wounded — yet I'm the one who pays the price. The offender gets off scot-free — when he should pay for what he did." That's the problem with crosses — the wrong one usually gets crucified. But God keeps the books, and on the Judgment Day, the books will be balanced. But even in this life, heartbreakers and people-wounders pay a high price. No matter how they try to justify their hurtful actions, they cannot drown out the cry of the one they wounded. Like the blood of Abel that cried out from the ground — the cries of a broken heart can pierce the barrier of time and space and terrorize the hardest of hearts. Hurts are usually caused by outright lies. And every liar must eventually be brought to justice.

Is there a balm for a broken heart? Is there healing for those deep, inner hurts? Can the pieces be put back together and the heart be made even stronger? Can the person who has known such horrible pain and suffering rise out of the ashes of depression and find a new and more powerful way of life? Yes! Absolutely yes! And if not, then God's Word would be a hoax and God Himself would be a liar. That cannot be!

Let me share with you a few simple thoughts about how to cope with your hurt.

1. Stop Trying to Figure Out How and Why You Got Hurt!

What has happened to you is a very common ailment among mankind. Your situation is not unique at all. It is the way of human nature. Whether you were right or wrong means absolutely nothing at this point. All that matters now is your willingness to move on in God and trust His mysterious workings in your life.

The Bible says,

"Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" (1 Peter 4:12–13).

God didn't promise to give you a painless way of life. He promised you "a way of escape." He promised you help to bear your pain. Strength to put you back on your feet, when weakness makes you stagger.

Most likely, you did what you had to do. You moved in the will of God — honestly following your heart. You went into it with an open heart, willing to give of yourself. Love was your motivation. You did not abort the will of God — someone else did. If that were not true, you would not be the one who is hurting so. You are hurt because you tried to be honest.

You can't understand why things blew up in your face, when God seemed to be leading all along. Your hearts asks, "Why did God allow me to get into this in the first place, if He knew it would never work out right?" But the answer is clear. Judas was called by The Lord. He was destined to be a man of God. He was hand picked by the Savior. He could have been mightily used by God. But Judas aborted God's plan. He broke the heart of Jesus. What started out as a beautiful, perfect plan of God ended in disaster, because Judas chose to go his own way. Pride and stubbornness wrecked the plan of God that was in operation.

So, lay off all your guilt trips. Stop condemning yourself. Stop trying to figure out what you did wrong. It's what you are thinking right now that really counts with God. You did not make a mistake — more likely you simply gave too much. Like Paul, you have to say, "...The more I loved...the less I was loved..." (2 Corinthians 12:15 KJV).

2. Remind Yourself God Knows Exactly How Much You Can Take — and He Will Not Permit You to Reach a Breaking Point!

Our loving Father said, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." (1 Corinthians 10:13).

The worst kind of blasphemy is to think that God is behind all your hurt and pain. That it is the Heavenly Father disciplining you. That God thinks you need one or two more heartbreaks before you are ready to receive His blessings. Not so!

It is true that the Lord chastens those He loves. But that chastening is only for a season and is not meant to hurt us. God is not the author of the confusion in your life. Neither are you. It is human failure. It is the enemy sowing tares in your field of endeavor. It is the deception in someone else near you who lost faith in God. The enemy tries to hurt us through other humans, just like he tried to hurt Job through an unbelieving wife.

Your heavenly Father watches over you with an unwavering eye. Every move is monitored. Every tear is bottled. He identifies with your every pain. He feels every hurt. And He knows when you have been exposed to enough harassment from the enemy. He steps in and says, "Enough!" when the hurt and pain no longer draws you closer to the Lord — when, instead, it begins to downgrade your spiritual life — God moves in. He will not permit a trusting child of His to go under because of too much pain and agony of soul. When the hurting begins to work to your disadvantage — when it begins to hinder your growth — God must act and lift you out of the battle for awhile. He will never allow you to drown in your tears. He will not permit your hurt to deteriorate your mind. He promises to come, right on time, to wipe away your tears and give you joy for mourning. God's Word says, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Psalm 30:5).

3. When You Hurt the Worst, Go to Your Secret Closet and Weep Out All Your Bitterness

Jesus wept. Peter wept — bitterly! Peter carried with him the hurt of denying the very Son of God. He walked alone on the mountains — weeping in sorrow. Those bitter tears worked in him a sweet miracle. He came back to shake the kingdom of Satan.

A woman who had endured a mastectomy wrote a book entitled, "First You Cry." Recently I talked with a friend who was just informed he had terminal cancer. "The first thing you do," he said, "is cry until there are no more tears left. Then you begin to move closer to Jesus, until you know His arms are holding you tight."

Jesus never looks away from a crying heart. He said, "A broken heart...I will not despise" (Psalm 51:17). Not once will the Lord say, "Get hold of yourself! Stand up and take your medicine! Grit your teeth and dry your tears." No! Jesus bottles every tear in His eternal container.

Do you hurt? Badly? Then go ahead and cry! And keep on crying, until the tears stop flowing. But let those tears originate only from hurt — and not from unbelief or self-pity.

4. Convince Yourself That You Will Survive — You Will Come Out of it — That, Live or Die, You Belong to the Lord!

Life does go on. You would be surprised how much you can bear with God helping you. Happiness is not living without pain or hurt. Not at all. True happiness is learning how to live one day at a time, in spite of all the sorrow and pain. It is learning how to rejoice in the Lord, no matter what has happened in the past.

You may feel rejected. You may feel abandoned. Your faith may be weak. You may think you are down for the count. Sorrow, tears, pain and emptiness may swallow you up at times — but God is still on His throne. He is still God!

You can't help yourself! You can't stop the pain and hurt. But our blessed Lord will come to you — and He will place His loving hand under you and lift you up to sit again in heavenly places. He will deliver you from the fear of dying. He will reveal His endless love for you.

Look up! Encourage yourself in the Lord. When the fog surrounds you and you can't see any way out of your dilemma — lay back in the arms of Jesus and simply trust Him. He has to do it all! He wants your faith — your confidence. He wants you to cry aloud — "Jesus loves me! He is with me! He will not fail me! He is working it all out right now! I will not be cast down! I will not be defeated! I will not be a victim of Satan! I will not lose my mind or my direction! God is on my side! I love Him — and He loves me!"

The bottom line is faith. And faith rests on the one absolute — "No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper" (Isaiah 54:17).

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