

## EMOTIONAL HEALING

Previously, I have identified eight states to emotional/spiritual healing that are common to all. They are:

1. Pain and suffering, 2. A genuine desire to get well, 3. Hope, 4. Instruction, 5. Motivation, 6. Obedience, 7. Discipline, and 8. Perseverance. I have addressed stages 1 and 2 in my last couple newsletters. This edition focuses on the third issue, Hope.

### What kind of hope do you have?

There are numerous mentions of the need for hope in scripture. Many passages refer to hope as a noun such as in Psalm 39:7: *My hope is in thee*. And hope is also used as an action word: *I hope in the Lord Jesus* (Phil 2:19). I would like to focus on a few passages of scripture which I feel support my belief that hope is essential to one's emotional and spiritual healing.

To paraphrase the apostle Paul, he emphasized that the person with no hope was to be pitied. Simply put, if there is no hope, there is no vision, and if there is no vision, we will perish (Pro 29:18) and continue to live in the center of our fears. Fear is the antagonist of hope and the arch enemy of Love. Love is what casts out fear (1 John 4:18). And in 1 Corinthians chapter 13 we are taught that *love hopes all things*. Wow! That's a lot.

Hope allows us to see beyond our circumstances. If we cannot see past our dilemma, we are doomed to stay in it. There is truth, I have found, to the notion of self-fulfilling prophesies. The mind is a powerful tool and has the ability to set us free or put us in bondage. Freedom results in believing (not just knowing) the Truth and bondage results in believing lies. And Truth is that we serve a powerful healing Almighty God. In this truth we have all hope. There are two different kinds of hope. The first is what I refer to as hope with a "small h" and then there is Hope with a "capital H". The first will always let us down. This kind of hope says "I am strong enough to do this myself." or "The counselor will fix me." or "The medicine will take care of my problems." These are all based on things worldly instead of things heavenly. Healing Hope puts our faith in God's ability and willingness to take care of us and see us through our current state. It is not looking at one's own personal power or the power of other individuals such as Pastors and Counselors. Such individuals are merely guides and vessels unto the

working of Christ. This kind of hope, which is rooted in human effort is misdirected, inadequate and will let us down. Hence the difference between secular and Christian counseling. The secular approach to healing would say that we are in control of our own destiny; things are what we make of them and truth is relative. Chances are that this very worldly thinking has contributed significantly to our current trouble. We are, in reality, not so strong at all. Guilt and shame over our current struggles is almost always a larger problem than the apparent issue itself. God's Truth says that *[His] strength is perfect in our weakness* (2 Cor 12:9). And one of my favorites: *You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart* (Jer 29:13). These are just a couple references that would indicate that our hope is not to be in ourselves or in another. Not that we don't need others to help us find the way to Truth but our search is always for God, not "self-enlightenment". We are not sufficient in and of ourselves to be the "masters of our own destiny". I understand that this is not popular teaching. We'd like to believe we have inside us what it takes to accomplish whatever we set our minds to. My point is that observation shows that this is the "small h" of hope that will let us down.

I also acknowledge that we all struggle here. Sometimes we just cannot muster up the faith and Hope necessary to get us out of ourselves, to see things as God does. In these cases, God is not harsh. He knows our limitations. However, we still must find Hope (Him). We must get our eyes on Him, and off our burden. Here is where a counselor or another can be of great assistance. Since I, as a counselor, am outside of a counselee's pain (where I need to be if I am to be of any assistance whatsoever), I have a greater ability to be objective and see the vision that God has for us. It is perfectly acceptable and reasonable to attach to the Hope of another. I can have Hope for you and if you will see that Hope, you will begin to experience it yourself and be encouraged. We walk alone in our struggles but we can travel together. Counseling is an opportunity to receive some help in seeing God's vision of healing. We must find Hope in the midst of our suffering because this is what pulls us out of it into God and His bigger perspective. And this has nothing whatever to do with *our* understanding of our circumstances. It has everything to do with God's. This is a huge step to healing.