

## 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 through 3 in previous letters. If you are new to this newsletter and desire to receive the last three issues, please let me know. I would now like to discuss the fourth state: Instruction.

Okay, so you believe that a) you are experiencing enough discomfort and pain and are ready to move through your fears,

b) you truly want to get well regardless of what God may ask of you in the process and as a result of being well, and c) you have the right kind of Hope- in God's ability to take care of your problems, not a hope in your own strength and resources. So what's next? You now need guidance and instruction on how to get through your particular trial or tribulation.

We first must understand that we do need help. None of us are beyond it. We must find ourselves humble enough to acknowledge this fact. Many struggle with the kind of pride that says "I can deal with it myself." If we are honest, the real voice within this statement is "I don't want anybody to see how weak I really am." Ironically, to expose oneself by reaching a hand out for help often times takes tremendous courage and spiritual strength. In order to proceed with healing we must first acknowledge to ourselves that we need help (i.e. instruction), and that our own efforts have failed us.

One does not have to look far to support the need for instruction. The entire Bible is a book of instruction. Proverbs 8:33 sums it up well, *Heed instruction and be wise*. The matter of gathering instruction is really not so difficult. The difficulties lie in receiving God-inspired Truth and guidance. So let's say you want Biblical guidance regarding depression. You go down to our local Bible Superstore and find three shelves full of hundreds of books on depression. How depressing! And how overwhelming and confusing as well. But it is a start. Lots of sources of help for the Christian can be eliminated right away. Sources such as faddish magazines, much of the "guidance" provided on the internet, TV talk shows, and most likely secular psychology and even scientifically derived solutions to our problems based on empirical research. Those in powerful places in our society are still trying to turn something spiritual and emotional into empirical Science. Yet God says, *Lean not on your own understanding* and *My ways are not your ways*. Truth is

truth. I am not rejecting all but Christian sources, I'm just saying to be cautious. Even in Christian circles, one must be very prudent about the instruction given by books, tapes, pastors, counselors and various teachers.

Regardless, instruction is most definitely the next step to healing. I believe that first we must desperately and diligently seek God on the matter at hand. He can and will use a variety of sources to provide you His instruction. Most of us long for His sweet voice to penetrate our clogged ears. Sometimes He will do this and often times He will not. At times God will have someone cross our paths through whom He can speak. Other times He will impress upon us His guidance through the Bible. Sometimes He will lead us to an inspired book. But almost always, I have come to believe, His instruction involves human interaction and connection. He designed us for this. We need each other. We need to talk. We need for someone outside of our circle of pain to speak and minister God's Truth and instruction and we must be humble enough to receive it. It can be a friend, a pastor, a counselor or a neighbor but it will nearly always involve human connection. This is part of God's healing plan. See how He did it as recorded in the Bible: prophets, teachers, apostles, disciples and, of course, our Lord Jesus Himself.

If you are at this step in your healing, I would again suggest that you first seek God's wisdom on the matter through fervent prayer. In addition, pore through the Scriptures to see what God's written Word has to say about the matter. This of course, should be our daily walk. From there, I believe God will lead you to the next step. Usually it will involve humility by sharing your pain with someone you trust such as a family member, your pastor or a good friend. We are instructed, however, to *...not cast our pearl before swine, lest they trample it in the mud and come back and tear you to pieces*. In other words, don't freely give what is sacred (your heart and your pain) to someone who cannot handle it spiritually and sensitively. It will feel as though you have been ripped to pieces. You must thoroughly trust the individual in whom you are confiding your pain and fear. From there, they will most likely provide you with some valuable instruction as to your next step. It may be a referral to someone else, or a valuable resource, or perhaps they have words of much needed encouragement. Regardless, the next step, that of seeking and receiving instruction, will be yours to take.