



Topic: Overcoming A Wounded Spirit

*The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but
a wounded spirit who can bear?*

~ Proverbs 18:14 (KJV) ~

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INTRODUCTION

Every one of us sooner or later has some kind of infirmity to bear. It may be that our infirmity is to suffer certain disease and pains, or possibly in passing through life, we may suffer from accident or decline of health. It may be that we do not suffer from any infirmity of the body but instead may enjoy the great blessing of health; but we may have what is even worse, an infirmity of mind. Each of us is born with a cross of some kind to carry. It could be within our family, business, or it could be in certain of our circumstances. Our world is not the Garden of Eden, and we cannot make it to be so. The only resemblance we share with the Garden of Eden is that we too are in the midst of the serpent who attempts to convert our way of thinking away from the things of God and on his exploitation of our vulnerabilities with the intent to draw our minds away from God. Bear in mind that all of us at one time or another will suffer from a wounded spirit or an infirmity of some type. The apostle Paul recognized his infirmity and concluded that in the presence of his infirmity the power of Christ rested upon him. Thus the apostle speaks that "most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities" (*cf. 2 Corinthians 12:9*).

OUR STUDY

Our scripture comes from the book of Proverbs, chapter 18, verse 14. In this passage, Solomon begins to share the distinction between the spirit of a man and a wounded spirit. The spirit of a man, according to our scripture, will sustain his infirmity. The scriptures indicate that man is tripartite meaning three parts: body, soul, and spirit (*cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:23*). The body is that part of man that relates to the physical world...world consciousness. The soul is that part of man that relates the man to himself...(emotions; self-consciousness; etc.). The spirit is that part of man that relates to God...his God-consciousness. The spirit of man or human spirit as some refer, is that part of man that is alive unto God. The Holy Spirit works through our human spirit that we might have fellowship with God. It is through this fellowship that the spirit of a man is able to sustain his infirmity. When we lean, trust, and depend on the God of our salvation to see us through, we are well able to sustain any infirmity that comes in our life. Even though our body may be weakened or diseased, if our emotional attitude (through our relationship with God) is strong and healthy, that attitude will sustain us through our physical sickness.

Either the flesh is in control (and uses our body (physical) or our soul (emotions) for its own ends) OR the Holy Spirit is in control, and our human spirit has a relationship to Christ. It is easy to see how our bodies and emotions could be wounded if we are relying on our physical or emotional state to guide us.

Maintaining a strong and healthy spiritual relationship with God.

- Learn to glorify God for all He will do and has done in your life.
- Avoid sabotaging your relationship with people and God by using faith in all areas of your life.
- Embrace a good relationship with yourself (good actions: keeping a journal of your feelings; speaking to yourself in positive ways).
- Develop a prayer life with the Lord (communicate regularly with the God of your salvation)
- Be actively engaged in the Word of God (regularly attend church and Bible Study)

The “b” portion of our study text asks a question concerning a wounded spirit “but a wounded spirit who can bear it?” As the scripture says a wounded spirit is worse than physical sickness. Physical sickness can be sustained by a healthy spirit but a wounded (sick) spirit cannot be sustained by anything. A wounded spirit is injury to any area of our soul or spirit faculties – mind, emotions and will. It is injury to the unseen area of our being. The only way others can see the injury is in how we openly behave and conduct ourselves. The spirit part of us is the engine to our lives. Life is broken when the spirit’s health is considerably compromised no matter how attractive, healthy and expensive the body may look. The breakdown of the spirit also eventually brings sickness to the body. Proverbs 17:22 lets us know that a broken or wounded spirit drieth the bones. When the spirit part of us is not God-conscious or God-connected, it is easily succumb to being wounded. Maintaining a strong and healthy spiritual relationship with God is paramount to avoid becoming wounded.

There are many ways that we can receive a wounded spirit.

We can endure all kinds of physical affliction, but when our spirit is wounded; when we have been hurt and bruised and/or damaged in our spirit, it can be very painful.

A wounded spirits comes as a result of a re-action to negative words, events, actions, or a violation of our person or rights. It is a re-action that crushes us, knocks us down and from which we cannot seem to rise. The action against us was so devastating that it crushed an area of our life and our spirit. It seems we cannot heal ourselves of its wound.

- **Negative, critical words:** someone says something that penetrated deeply into our spirit in a hurtful, crushing kind of way.
 - o Proverbs 18:4. The words of a man’s mouth are as deep waters.
 - o Proverbs 18:21. Death and life are in the power of the tongue.Words produce either death or life – in those who speak them, and in those who receive them. Example: Marriages – even Christian marriages – are broken by the critical words spoken between a husband and a wife, and vice versa.
 - o Proverbs 18:6. A fool gets into constant fights. His mouth is his undoing? His words endanger him.
- **Sin:** Sin is the curse of humanity. Sin is whatever comes between us and God. It affects our spirit.
 - o Psalm 38:1-5. We read of David acknowledging a wounding in his life and spirit. David was hurting because of his guilt and consciousness of sin.Sin wounds us. When we put sin out of our life (through genuine repentance), our spirit is released to heal.

- **Satanic attack:** The thief comes to “steal, kill and destroy” (cf. *John 10:10*). Satan loves to wound our spirit. He knows that when we carry a wounded spirit, we are no real threat to him.
 - o Psalm 143:1-4: David is crying to God because “the enemy has persecuted my soul. He has smitten (bruised and wounded) my life down to the ground...therefore my spirit is overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is desolate (laid waste; made numb; stunned; devastated)

A wounded spirit brings down. It never lifts us up. Satan knows this. Thus his attempt is to bring us down.

- **Unforgiveness:** Withholding forgiveness from those who have disappointed and hurt us will “lock our spirit into” its wounding. We cannot heal if we do not release the hurt to God.
 - o 2 Corinthians 2:1-11: Paul teaches us that if we don’t forgive those who have caused us harm, Satan will take advantage of us. Let’s not be ignorant of him wanting to get his “sticky paws” into wrecking our lives and future ministries that will impact the nations. No matter how much someone has wounded us, we do have to come to a place of being able to release forgiveness to that person. If we don’t, we will be the one who pays the highest price. We cannot afford to let anyone destroy us because we can’t or won’t forgive and therefore can’t heal from the original damaged caused.

We have here only scratched the surface in identifying those things we are subject to encounter that can lead to a wounded spirit. The key is to recognize where you are and take the appropriate steps to maintain a healthy spiritual relationship.

Scars showing healed wounds vs. signs showing wounds yet to be healed.

A wounded spirit compromises or harms our spiritual health. It can potentially lead to spiritual illness or inner health problems. Two matters determine whether or not these past unpleasant experiences have any negative effect on our present: (1) our reaction to them, and (2) the severity of the experiences. The degree of their effect varies from person to person. Each of us has some level of scars in our spirit from whatever unpleasant past experiences. Scars imply that the wounds have healed. We can recall the unpleasant experiences and how we had so much inner pain. Occasional recall or remembrance of the experiences only serves as a reminder that we pulled through. God was faithful in enabling us to rise above the experiences instead of leaving us to drown from them.

In the present we’ve moved on, the past inner hurt and pain is gone. There is no preoccupation with the sad past experiences. They have no power over us, or over our present circumstances. Many times we may also see how God still brought good out of the unpleasant experiences. It is when the wounds have not healed that it’s a problem. It’s the opposite of what we’ve just shared. We constantly recall the unpleasant experiences, how unfair they were, and assume we’d be better off today had we not experienced them.

In the present we are still preoccupied with the past, the past inner hurt and pain still surfaces in negative ways. They have power over us and over our present circumstances. Many times we cannot even see how God still brought good out of the unpleasant experiences. The inner wounds are still raw and untreated.

Remember the God we serve is fully able to cure spiritual wounds and heal a sick spirit. He’s our spiritual physician or medical doctor.

CONCLUSION

My prayer is that you will be aware of the areas in your life that keep you down through a wounded spirit. Remember our goal is not to forget the hurtful event or experience, but to receive healing for that event or experience. Our healing will only become effective and lasting as we turn our hurts, pains and wounds over to the Holy Spirit who is able to remove the sting from them. Then when we look back upon a healed wound, we will see it in a different way, because it has been healed and is no longer painful to look back upon. Be encouraged my brother and my sister in knowing that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose (*cf. Romans 8:28*). While you may not see the good as you travel through your healing process, in the end it will speak for itself.

God's peace and blessing be upon you....

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