

**Series: Peace of Mind
3 Ways to Seek Healing From Trauma
2 Corinthians 12:8 - 10**

Big Idea – God wants to heal your hurts and use you for His glory.

Many listening have endured severe abuse/trials/pain/heartbreak.

What is trauma? Many think Painful event but not so.

“Trauma is a response to deeply disturbing or distressing event.”

Some think trauma as physical—Physical injury—Physical abuse.
While trauma can be physical—Also is Emotional/Spiritual/Mental.

The wounds you can't see can hurt as much as the ones you can see.
(Often takes Longer to heal.)

Some of you are hurt—Deeply wounded—Suffered horrible experience
Well-meaning Christian—Quotes Romans 8:28

True—Not always helpful—Not yet
Shock. Denial. Moody. Anxious. Numb. Guilty.

Sadly, some folks have the idea and attitude that you just have to “get over it”, or suck it up and forget about it, get past it. But I've come to learn to learn is that you don't just get over trauma, you don't just move past it, you actually have to heal from it

today I want to try to build a foundational understanding of what trauma is and then I want to show you in Scripture how we pursue healing and seek God for what only He can do.

Three Types of Trauma

Acute: a response from a one-time traumatic event

Maybe you were in a horrible car accident or you survived a natural disaster or a tornado, or a hurricane, whatever it was, but it was dangerous and you survived, and it was very traumatic, your response was.

Chronic: a long-term response from prolonged or repeated events.

Perhaps you were bullied all the way through junior high, or others of you experienced racism for most of your life. It might have been that you were very, very young, five, six years old, you came across pornography for the very first time and you looked at porn six years old, seven year olds, eight year old, nine year old, and you've been looking at it for years and it's a very traumatic experience for you. Some of you, you were raised in a home where there was alcohol or there was drug abuse and you lived in an environment that never ever felt safe to you. Others of you, you were sexually abused, not one time, but multiple times and often by somebody that should have been protecting you instead of harming you. There's chronic abuse.

Complex: a response to multiple and ongoing events.

This is when you're raised in a home or you're married to someone and you see some combination of all the things that we talked about. There's chemical abuse, there's emotional abuse, there's physical abuse, there might be sexual abuse and the list could go on and on. And no matter what you've been through or at what level, trauma changes you and it changes your perspective, it can change how you see people, it can change how you see God, it can change your outlook on life.

For you, it might be that someone hurts you and you don't know how to trust people, it might be that you find it difficult to trust God, it might be that you grew up with no money, and so you got these really dysfunctional views and fear of not having enough no matter what, it might be that someone did something to you and so you are traumatized worrying that one day they'll do the same thing to one of your children.

How do We Heal?

So we probably never thought of Paul the apostle as a textbook trauma victim!

Paul—Wrote 2/3 of NT. He suffered all 3 types trauma: Acute—Chronic—Complex

Conversion to Christianity—Traumatic!

My conversion was like a Christian Hallmark commercial. 5 years old in preacher father's study in Perdix...

The story of Paul's conversion is in Acts 9—Paul—Murdering Christians—Light from heaven knocks him down (what kind of light knocks you down? – possibly lightning. He hears an audible voice—Saul why are you persecuting me? He's lead into the city and is Blind—3 days. Then a scared Christian believer God called went to tell Saul God was transforming him from a Christian Killer—killer Christian Preacher. So he's healed and what happens next?

God rewarded him with a 6-figure salary with great salary and benefits?

No, no, no. For the rest of his life he endured prolific abuse, running for his life. In fact, I want to show you just on the screen a map of just according to the Bible, just the verses that we have, in every city we see, he had to run out of town trying to escape to save his life.

Paul exited city after city, after city, after city, after city because people were trying to kill him and take his life. He endured ongoing severe trauma and with God's help he healed from it.

A Few Places Paul Faced Traumatic Events

Damascus (Acts 9:23-25)

Antioch in Pisidia (Acts 13:50-51)

Iconium (Acts 14:2, 5-6)

Lystra (Acts 14:19)

Thessalonica (Acts 17:5-9)

Berea (Acts 17:13-14)

Corinth (Acts 18:12-17)

Jerusalem (Acts 21:27-36)

1. We process the pain of our trauma (with trusted safe people)

You don't heal when you ignore the wound-- You don't heal when you suppress the wound, you don't heal when you try to forget the wound, you start to heal when you take it to God and start to process it.

so some of you, what you have to say, you have to acknowledge it, "I was abused."

Now, there's some people today that think everything's abuse. Just because someone disagrees with you doesn't mean you're abused, just because someone corrects you, just because someone believes something different than you, that's not the same thing but some of you need to just acknowledge, "I was abused" or "I was raped," you need to say it. "I was abandoned, I was mistreated."

reason that we don't want to say this, one, is we just like to shut it out because we feel vulnerable, we feel helpless, we feel like it's better to ignore it than to process it. And what happens is, according to the experts instead of seeking connection, we prioritize protection.

Instead of seeking connection, we prioritize protection.

We don't heal in isolation. We heal best in community.

Ignore pain—Wound still—Something else cope—Drug. Alcohol. Sex.

- We heal together with the people of God. And that's one of the benefits of Small group Bible studies. It's not because we want you to do something else in your already busy life, it's because we're better together, because iron sharpens iron, because we confess our faults to one another and we pray for each other Scripture says that we may be healed.

- Community matters so much. And the challenge is, if you ignore the pain, the wound is still there. What happens is you go somewhere else to cope. You go to drugs or you go to alcohol or you go to sex or you use food as a coping mechanism, or you just work, you just work, work, work. Paul actually processed his trauma.

In the Scripture Paul's writing about this, and yes, he's telling them what he's been through, but the reality of what he is doing is, he is processing his pain.

Look at how he Processes it in 2 Corinthians 11:23-28

2 Corinthians 11:23 Are they servants of Christ? I know I sound like a madman, but I have served him far more! I have worked harder, been put in prison more often, been whipped times without number, and faced death again and again.

24 Five different times the Jewish leaders gave me thirty-nine lashes.

25 Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. Once I spent a whole night and a day adrift at sea.

26 I have traveled on many long journeys. I have faced danger from rivers and from robbers. I have faced danger from my own people, the Jews, as well as from the Gentiles. I have faced danger in the cities, in the deserts, and on the

seas. And I have faced danger from men who claim to be believers but are not.
27 I have worked hard and long, enduring many sleepless nights. I have been hungry and thirsty and have often gone without food. I have shivered in the cold, without enough clothing to keep me warm.

28 Then, besides all this, I have the daily burden of my concern for all the churches.

Prison too many times to count

5X—Received 39 lashes—3X—Beaten rods

Stoned—Shipwrecked—Almost starved—Froze—Danger

“... We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself.” 2 Cor 1:8

Paul processing his trauma—Talks about it.

Encourage you—Process the pain of your trauma.

Trusted friends—Pastor—Christian counselor trained help

We process the pain of our trauma with trusted people.

2. We prayerfully press in to God with our trauma.

Learn to “lean on the Lord” - What Paul did 2 Cor 12

Paul had what he called a thorn in the flesh – doesn’t say what it was, but it seems like everybody has one

2 Corinthians 12:8 “I begged the Lord three times to take this problem away from me.

9 But he said to me, “My grace is enough for you. When you are weak, my power is made perfect in you.” So I am very happy to brag about my weaknesses. Then Christ’s power can live in me.

10 For this reason I am happy when I have weaknesses, insults, hard times, sufferings, and all kinds of troubles for Christ. Because when I am weak, then I am truly strong.”

Notice what he said:

“Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me.” 2 Cor 12:8

Most scholars would say this wasn't like just three little prayers, it was very likely three seasons of ongoing prayer. But notice that he didn't blame God for the thorn, but he took his thorn to God and he prayed and he pleaded and he begged - in the very same way you can take your hurt to God, and you can take it to Him again, and you can take it to Him a third time, and you can unload on Him and say, "God, I don't understand, why did this happen? Why did you let this happen when you could have perhaps stopped it?" You can tell Him, "It's not my fault. I don't know what to do, God, I don't even know how to heal." You can totally and completely be honest with Him, don't hold back, He can handle it. Scripture says, "Cast your cares upon Him because He cares for you."

You take your burdens, you give all your hurt from your heart. God, please take it away. Three times he pleaded with the Lord and God responded to him. "And God said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you. For my power,'" God says, "'Is perfect in your weakness.'" "In the thing that you hate the most, you'll best discover my power and presence." And Paul says something that would be just almost weird in any other circumstance, he says, "That's why for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses and insults and hardships and persecutions and difficulties. For when I am weak," he says, "Then I'm strong."

- That only comes from the presence of God. You take it to God, you take it to God, you take it to God, you take it to God. And even if God doesn't take it away, he says, "My grace is what you need, this is what you need." And I hope that you'll understand, and this is for somebody here, let it sink in your soul, nothing can change your past, but God can heal your broken heart.

Nothing can change your past.

But God can heal your broken heart. If this is you, here's a good scripture:

"The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." Psalm 34:18

1. We process the pain of our trauma with trusted people.
2. We prayerfully press into God with our trauma.

3. We pursue purpose in our trauma.

Hesitant talk about this—Know if you're hurting—Not ready to hear this
It's too soon. Not for you yet.

Praise be to ... the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, ⁴ who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

“And we know that in all things God is working for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” Romans 8:28

Your trauma may not have been not your fault.
But pursuing God for healing is your responsibility.

Don't get over it—Heal from it!

After reading 2 Corinthians 12:9-10. How can God's grace change the way you view your situation?

“Getting over” a hurt is different than truly healing. Think about a time when you experienced healing. How did you lean into God during that healing?

Is there a trauma or hurt that you need to process with trusted people? Consider sharing that hurt with your trusted safe friends or Christian counselor so you can pray for healing together.

James 5:16 “Confess your faults (your hurts, your brokenness) to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.”