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# Invisible Barriers 5

## Emotional Wounds

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# How Wounds Affect Us

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## Woundedness

We live in a broken world deeply impacted by the power of sin. Man's rebellion against God has brought chaos and destruction into the world that has touched the lives of every person on the planet.



Talk to anyone around you and if you talk long enough you will hear a story that caused that person pain. Each of us carry wounds deep in our souls that affect the way we view the world around us.

The wounds that we carry are invisible barriers to spiritual growth. These wounds hinder us from being everything God created us to be. Many go about life not realizing the impact wounds from the past have in their lives.

## How Wounds Affect Us

I am sure that I don't need to tell you the various ways pain can enter your life. I'm sure, if you wanted to, you could give me a long list of the wounds you have received over the years. The exact details of how we were wounded may vary, but the pain that impacts us is similar.

I want to list some of the various types of events that can cause brokenness in our lives and then talk about how these wounds can affect us. For example:

- You are five years old, your mom and dad argue, he walks out the door never to return.
- Your best friend betrays you and tells your deepest, darkest secret to all who will listen.
- You grow up in a home with an abusive alcoholic parent.



- You are sexually abused or raped.
- You are constantly made fun of by those around you. You are the focal point for every joke.
- You put everything you had into a business adventure and it failed.
- Your mom said, “I wish you were never born.”
- Your husband leaves you for another woman. Your wife leaves you for another man.
- Someone is spreading vicious, ugly rumors about you that others believe to be true.
- A drunk driver causes an accident that kills one or more family members.

The list could go on and on, but you get the point. There are so many events in our lives that can cause us pain and heartache. Let’s look at an example of how these tragic events cause pain and influence our lives.

## Laura’s Story

[This story is told through the eyes of an adult looking back on an event in the past. It represents many of the stories I have heard over years of ministry]



Hi, I'm Laura, I am five years old. I love playing in my room with my dolls. I love to mother them and care for their every need. We were having a tea party. As I start pouring tea for my guests, I hear my father start screaming in the other room.

Immediately fear grips my heart and mind. My stomach tightens up. I begin to shake. I want everything to go well between mom and dad. Tears start flowing down my cheeks.

I want the arguing to stop, but it doesn't. Their voices just keep getting louder and louder.

I cover my ears with my hands to block out the arguing. "Please stop. Please stop," I say over and over.

Even though I know what is coming, my body jerks when I hear the sharp crack of my father slapping my mother and the dull thud of her body hitting the floor.

I run into the living room and see my mother lying on the floor weeping. My father is standing over her shaking with rage. I see a suitcase by the door.

I say, "Don't hit mommy any more daddy. I'll be good,"

He turns to me in rage. He is so angry that I almost pass out. He screams at me, "Get back in your room now,"

I know that look, so filled with hatred and disgust. As I turn to leave the room he turns, grabs his suitcase, and storms out the door.

I never see him again, but he still haunts me. I will never forget the look in his eyes the day he left.

## Laura's Pain

Some form of Laura's story is experienced every day. The events may change, but the results are the same. A little girl filled with pain because of the choice someone else makes.



So many of the things that affect our lives are caused by the people we love. Laura's dad should have loved her and protected her. Instead he was abusive and walked out of her life. These kind of actions cause a lot of heartache in a little girl's life.

Heartache is a good word to describe the way we are feeling. These events cause pain that we carry around with us. Some have described this pain with words like, "It felt like he stabbed me in the heart."

Emotional pain is every bit as real as physical pain. It hurts. It hurts bad.

So let's look at some of ways pain entered Laura's heart.

## Through Abandonment

God's plan for the family is to be a place of safety and nurture. Her father was to be her protector and provider. His love was to provide a sense of worth, security, and confidence in Laura. But that all changed the day he walked out the door.

Laura's first feelings were fear. "Where is he going?" When will he come back?" Then her mom told her he would not be coming back. Pain entered her heart as she thought, "If my dad loved me he would never have left."

She felt the insecurity of being abandoned. She felt unloved and uncared for. She cried a lot and started clinging to her mother like glue. She wondered if she was going to leave her too.

## Through Guilt and Self-Condernation

Laura thought through the days before her father left. She remember that he had yelled at her quite a bit during that time. He would say things like, "You're such a brat. You'll never learn to listen." "I don't know why we ever decided to have kids. Life would be so much easier without you."

It was then that Laura understood (incorrectly) that it was her fault that her dad left. If only she would have been better and listened and been obedient, her dad would not have left. She took all the responsibility for her father's actions and another level of pain entered her heart.

Not only did she have to deal with her father being gone, but it was all her fault that he left.

## Through Rejection

It did not take her long to come to the conclusion that the reason her father could not love her was because she was unlovable. No matter how hard she had tried, her father left.

Then she started thinking about some of the fights she had with her friend. She remember the words she said, "You're not my friend any more. I don't like you any more. Suzie, is my friend now."

The more she thought about it the more she knew that she was unlovable. No one could ever love her and her pain deepened.

## Through Self-Hatred

Knowing she was unlovable, Laura turned more and more inward. She started looking at every part of her life trying to determine why she was so unlovely.

She remembered the words her father had said, "You're such a brat. You'll never learn to listen." I can never do anything right, she thought. What's wrong with me? What can't I do things the right way?

In addition, she had thought, If I was only as beautiful as Suzie or smart like Jonie, then I would be lovable. The more she looked at herself the less she liked herself. It was all her fault nobody loved her. She was defective.

She began to loathe who she was. The pain deepened further still.

As you can see one act can impact a lot of wrong thinking. Next time we will look at the problem with pain.

# The Problem with Pain

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## The Problem with Pain

The main problem with pain is that it hurts. We don't like the pain and the negative feelings that are associated with pain. So we try to get rid of pain as quickly as we can.



Part of the pain we experience when bad things happen to us include a variety of emotional responses. These include anger, sorrow, grief, depression, bitterness, and hatred.

People deal with pain in a variety of ways, which we will look at shortly, but before we do we should look at some reasons why God would want us to experience pain and negative emotions.



## Many Think Negative Emotions are Bad or Evil

Many believers are out of touch with their feelings. They actually believe that the emotions they are experiencing are bad and evil. If they were a “good” Christian they would not have to deal with depression, anger, sadness, hatred, or grief.

Any time they experience a strong emotion they immediately turn away from it, thinking that it is evil or of the flesh. If it feels bad it must be bad. This thinking is incorrect and gets in the way of a person’s emotional health.

The reason I say that strong emotions in themselves are not evil is because God Himself experiences strong emotions and He is holy and emotionally whole. If these emotions are evil, then God would have nothing to do with them. God experiencing them shows us the validity of the emotion.

The Bible shows us that God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit all experience what we consider to be negative emotions. Let’s look at how each or the members of the Trinity experienced strong emotions.

### God experiences anger

“Now again the anger of the LORD burned against Israel . . .” (2 Samuel 24:1).



The phrase “anger of the Lord” is used 35 times in the Bible to describe God’s response to the sinfulness of man. God experiences anger. God’s anger burns against injustice, idolatry, the shedding of innocent blood, taking advantage of the poor, the weak, children, and widows.

Anger is a strong emotion. So much so that many people want to get rid of it as something evil. God’s anger burned. It was strong and it was pointed at unrighteousness.

Some things should make us angry. When a grown man beats a little baby because it does not stop crying. When a mother drowns her children because she no longer wants to care for them. Or when someone scams an eighty-year-old woman out her life savings. We should be angry.

The Bible does deal with the idea of anger and what we should do with it. “BE ANGRY, AND yet DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity” (Eph. 4:26-27).

Anger is not the problem. What we do with anger is. The Bible tells us to deal with our anger quickly and not allow it to fester. When anger festers it builds into unforgiveness, rage, bitterness, craving for revenge, and other undesirable feelings and emotions that give place to the devil.

We can see what takes place when anger is given an opportunity to simmer. There are times when the anger erupts and brings its destructive effects with it. Racial unrest erupts into riots that cause millions of dollars damage and further anger.

One group holds anger and hatred toward the other. They seek some way of revenge and cause great harm. The group that was hurt is stirred to more anger and hatred and seeks revenge. The cycle continues endlessly every day across our world.

The devil will take every opportunity to stir up anger, division, and strife. He loves it when you hold anger in your heart. It gives him an opportunity to bring his destruction into your life.

Learn to use anger the right way. Anger is a signal that something is wrong. When you are angry take a moment to stop and find out why. It is there for a reason and many times not the reason we give.

We say, “You made me so angry.” Many times it is not the person that made you angry. You were responding to something else. That is where investigating why the anger is there and dealing with the real issue is so important.

When you take time to ask God why you are angry, He will show you. When He does, you will be able to start dealing with the real source of your anger.

Some of the causes of anger are past hurts, guilt over something we have done or not done, feelings of injustice, or feeling overwhelmed. Once you determine why you are angry you can bring the issue to the Lord and walk through the process of healing.

## The Holy Spirit Experiences Grief

“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.” (Ephesians 4:30)



There are many verses in the Bible about the Holy Spirit. As far as I know there is only one strong negative emotion attributed to the Holy Spirit: grief. I am sure that there are many things that cause the Spirit to be grieved.

The Spirit can be blasphemed (Matthew 12:31). No, blasphemy is not swearing or cursing. It means to slander or to speak lightly of sacred things. The Jewish leaders were convinced that Jesus cast out demons by the power of the devil. It was the Holy Spirit's power doing this. They slandered the work of the Holy Spirit by saying the source was demonic.

The Spirit can also be insulted (Hebrews 10:29). The idea is of a person considering oneself to be superior and insults through their disdain for a person or thing.

The Spirit experiences grief when the church lives in disarray. In Ephesians chapter four Paul's encouragement of not grieving the Spirit is surrounded by words like stealing, unwholesome words, bitterness, wrath, clamor, slander, and malice.

When the church acts this way the Holy Spirit experiences emotional pain. The idea of grief is a sadness caused by the pain one experiences in their soul. This pain resulted from the ungodly actions of members of the church in Ephesus. The Spirit saw what they were doing and was grieved.

## Jesus Experienced Deep Emotional Pain

“And He took with Him Peter, and James, and John, and began to be very distressed and troubled. And He said to them, ‘My soul is deeply grieved to the point of death: remain here and keep watch.’ (Mark 14:32-33)

“And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground.” (Luke 22:44)



It is in the Garden of Gethsemane that we see the humanness of Jesus most clearly. For months He was telling His disciples that He was going to go to Jerusalem, be rejected by the leaders there, and beaten, crucified, and be resurrected after three days.

Jesus knew the time of His betrayal and His death on the cross had come. He knew He was going to face rejection, beatings, scourging, and the painful death of crucifixion. The weight of what was coming came crashing down on Him as He entered the garden.



The Gospels use some powerful words to describe the emotions that Jesus felt. There is no way for me to adequately describe what took place in the heart and mind Jesus. There is no way for you understand the struggle and depth of emotion that Jesus went through that night.

Let's look at the meanings of some of the words used to describe the almost overwhelming emotions Jesus dealt with His final night before the crucifixion. Jesus became "very distressed." The idea behind this word is that Jesus was greatly amazed, astonished, alarmed. The full emotional impact of what He was facing hit Him all of the sudden.

Powerful emotions rose up in Him. He was "grieved" (sorrowful and distressed) and "distressed" (be full of heaviness, be very heavy.) He wasn't just grieved, he was "deeply grieved" (exceedingly sorrowful, extremely afflicted, profoundly sorrowful).

The emotions Jesus was feeling were so strong and impacting that Jesus told Peter, James, and John that His soul was "deeply grieved to the point of death." Jesus was feeling the full weight of what was coming. He had a choice to make and so He prayed to the Father.

Jesus was in agony. This word describes a struggle taking place in Jesus for victory. An inner battle raged as Jesus fervently prayed for what was about to happen not to happen. The internal battle was so strong that Jesus sweat drops like blood.

He asked God three times if there was any other way. Three times He knew there was not. Three times He told God that His will be done, not His own. He won the battle over His emotions and willingly went to the cross.

You are an emotional being, but you don't have to be driven or overcome by emotions. There is no need to run from your emotions or try not to experience them. God created you in His image. Emotions are part of the package.

Jesus is an example that no matter how strong the emotions, they can be dealt with if you bring them to the Lord in prayer. When Jesus was faced with His agonizing decision, He took it to the Father. It was in prayer that He won the victory.

Next Week

How we deal with pain determines the results we experience. Let's look at some of the ways people try to deal with pain and strong emotions.

# How We Deal With Pain

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## How We Deal with Pain

As you can see, much of the pain that we experience comes through the events that take place in our lives and the thoughts that we have surrounding the event (we will deal with ungodly beliefs in the next section).

Every person deals with pain in different ways. That is why two people living in the same house can experience similar events and respond differently.

Let's take a moment to look at some of the major ways in which people attempt to deal with pain and the resulting negative emotions.



## Ignore It

Some seek to deal with pain by ignoring it. The thought is that if the negative feelings are ignored they will go away. If only you think good thoughts you won't experience the bad thoughts.

Lana and her five-year-old daughter, Nancy, are sitting in the living room playing with dolls. Harold, Lana's husband, walks in the room and trips on one of dolls.

"What are you trying to do, kill me? Harold shouts as he picks up the doll and slams it against the wall. He walks over to Nancy and slaps her face. Nancy's head whips back and she starts to cry.

Harold turns. As he walks through the door, he shouts, "Don't let it happen again or you'll get worse."

Lana grabs Nancy and holds her close. She whispers softly into her ear, "Let's think good thoughts. Why don't we think about going to the beach and building a sand castle. Wouldn't that be fun?"

Lana seeks to distract her daughter with good thoughts. If we think good thoughts everything will go away. If we think about the beach, then the pain of the moment will leave. Ignoring pain will not make it go away.

## Stuff It

Another classic way to deal with pain is to stuff it. This is similar to ignoring pain it but is more aggressive. It is not a tactic to deny pain, but a willful attempt to force the pain away though will power.

You know there is an issue that needs to be dealt with in your life. It is affecting you negatively and causing you grief. It is too painful to think about. Every time you allow the pain to surface nothing happens except you feel more miserable and more hopeless that things will never change.

Every time something brings the situation to the forefront, it is like a scab being ripped off a wound. The pain comes rushing in. You make the herculean effort to stuff it down. You are not ignoring it, you are willfully pushing it away into the depth of your soul so you don't have to feel the pain.

This takes an incredible amount of effort on your part. It consumes a lot of energy and can begin to affect you not only emotionally but physically. The more things you stuff, the bigger the time bomb waiting to explode. Stuffing pain will never make it go away.

## Accept It

Some people accept pain as a way of life. You grow up with a string of bad events where people have hurt you over and over again. You begin to think that this is your lot in life. If anything bad is going to happen it is going to happen to you.

You feel like you are walking around with a huge bullseye over your heart and everyone is taking a shot at hitting it. There must be an unseen sign on your back saying “Kick Me”, because everyone does. This must just be your lot in life.

You start looking at yourself and figure there must be some reason that all these bad things are happening to you. Something must be wrong with you. You must be a bad person. You must deserve what you get.

Once you start thinking this way you stop trying to change your situation. You don't even try to do things or expect things to be different. You just shake your head and accept whatever comes your way. Accepting pain will not make it go away.





## Rehearse It

Some people rehearse their pain. You are consumed by one or more situations from the past. The situation is never far from you. It is almost like a video in your head that is set to replay over and over again.

You sit around and go over the event and how it has hurt you. You dwell on event and think of things that you should have said and should have done. You nurse your anger and pain because of what they did to you.

Whenever you come to a person, even a complete stranger, you tell them the story of how you were wronged and hurt. Your whole life centers around an event that happened to you sometime in the past.

I remember talking with one person. She was weeping and telling me about an event that took place in her life. After hearing the story and seeing the pain she was experiencing, I asked when the event took place. I was expecting sometime in the last few months. She told me it happened over thirty years ago.

She was reliving an event that had happened over thirty years ago and experiencing pain as if it was recent. Rehearsing pain will never make it go away

## Medicate It

This is a common way people choose to deal with pain. You seek to medicate it so you don't feel it. You try to cover up the pain, not by willfully putting it down by stuffing it, but by seeking comfort in other places.

There are so many ways you can medicate your pain. Here are some of the more popular:

- Alcohol and drugs - if you are bombed out of your mind the pain goes away for a while.
- Food - you eat for comfort
- Sex - you seek to fill the void and pain with pornography or one sexual relationship after another.
- Gambling - the adrenaline of the game
- Shopping - the pleasure of something new
- Work - keeping busy
- Fantasy - living in another life
- Entertainment - sports, video games, movies, etc.

There are a couple of problems with trying to medicate your pain. First, the relief is only temporary. It only helps for a few short minutes or hours.

Second. It causes more problems than it solves. Many of the things listed above are addictive and can lead you into bondage. Now you have the added weight and guilt associated with addition and a whole new set of pain to deal with. Medicating pain will not get rid of it.

## Emulate it

Instead of dealing with the pain, you emulate it. You choose to walk in the same way as the person who caused you pain. You become the person who hurt you.

Not that you are the person who hurt you, you become just like them. You act the same way they acted. You hurt others the same way they hurt you. You choose, maybe not consciously, to be just like them. I know, because that is what I did.

I grew up in the home of a violent alcoholic. My dad was abusive verbally and physically. He was the nicest guy when sober, but scary when he drank.

I grew up filled with anger. I started to sniff paint, do drugs, and drink alcohol. I would get drunk and pick fights with people I did not even know. They didn't do anything to me. I was just angry.

I always blamed my dad for my anger. I was angry because he was angry. I was convinced beyond a shadow of a doubt that he caused me to be the way I was.

Imagine my surprise. One day after an outburst of anger I started blaming my dad for my anger. I heard the Lord say to me, "You chose to emulate him." I was absolutely shocked. Those words hit me hard and they were the beginning point of my deliverance from anger.

I knew that I could no longer blame my dad for who I was. I chose to be the way I was. Emulating the cause of pain will never get rid of it.



## Bring It to Jesus

Do you use one of these six ways to try and deal with the pain you experience in life?

- Are you ignoring it and hoping everything will be alright?
- Are you stuffing it deep inside so you don't have to feel it or deal with it?
- Are you accepting it and just believing that life always has to be this way for you?
- Are you constantly rehearsing it and experiencing the pain over and over and over again?
- Are you trying to medicate it and making your life more painful in the process?
- Are you emulating the person who hurt you and hurting others in the same way?

If so, it is time to acknowledge how you handle your pain, repent and turn from it, and turn to Jesus who heals the brokenhearted.

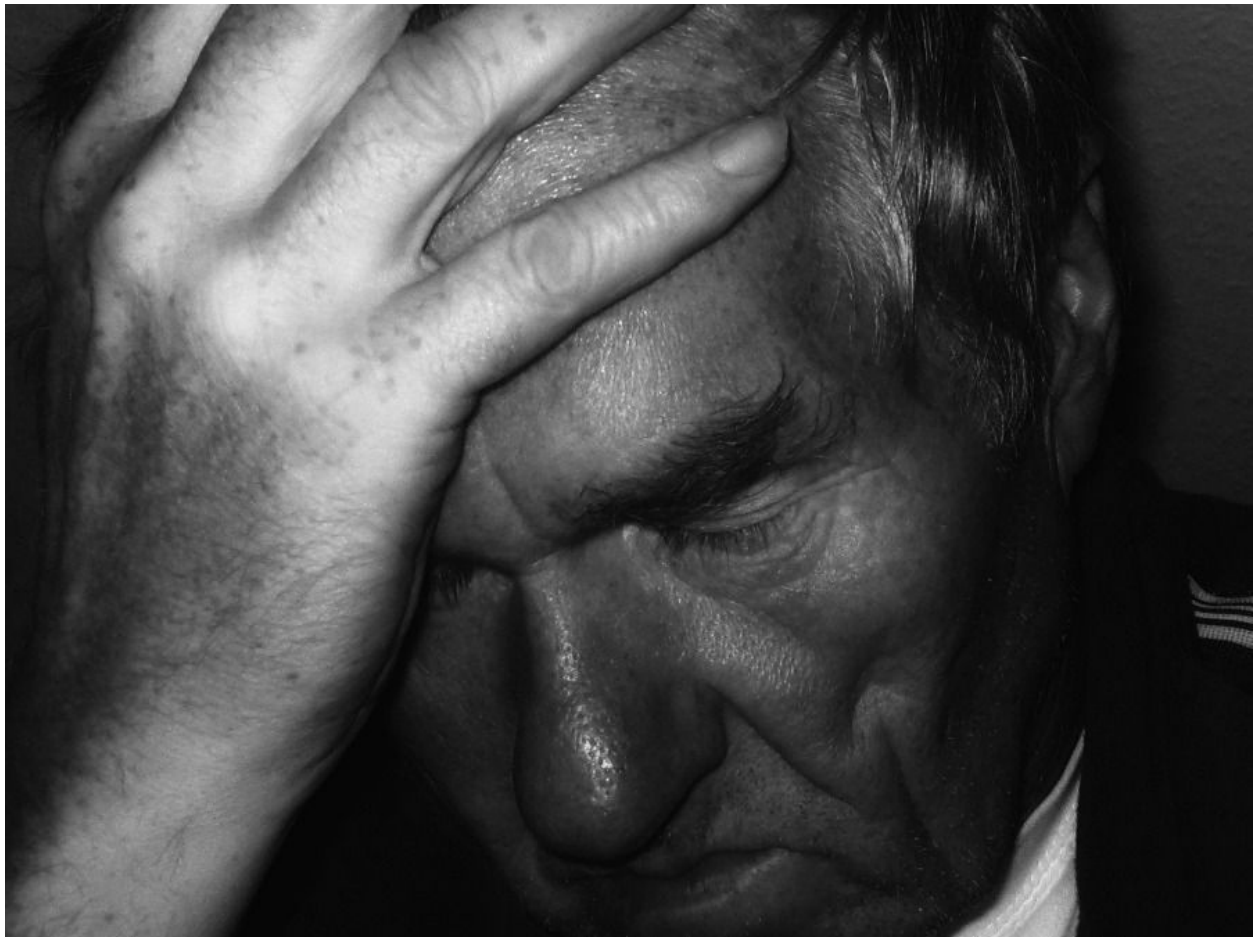
There is only one effective way for a believer to deal with pain and that is to bring it to Jesus. Jesus has a plan and the power to remove the pain and heal your broken heart. Next week we will learn how to bring our pain to Jesus and get rid of it.

# Jesus Knows Your Pain

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## Jesus is Your Healer

Jesus knows your pain. Jesus bore your pain on the cross. But even better than that, Jesus can heal your pain.



## Jesus Knows Your Pain

So often you may feel that no one understands your pain. You tell your story and people glibly say, "Just get over it," or "You need to forgive and forget." But the pain is real and as we have already learned ignoring it doesn't make it go away.



But there is one who does know your pain. Jesus knows your pain. He knows exactly what you are going through. He knows you at a level that no one else in the world can know or understand.

Jesus experienced great depths of pain in His life. We already mentioned the intense emotional struggle he went through in the garden. Here are a few of the things He experienced:

- **Betrayal** - Judas betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver
- **Abandonment** - All of His disciples fled when they arrested Him in the garden.
- **Denial** - Jesus warned Peter that he would deny him three times before the rooster crowed, and he did.
- **Injustice** - The trials Jesus went through on the night He was betrayed were illegal according to Jewish law.
- **Slander** - The leaders said that He was possessed by the devil casting out demons by the power of the devil. They brought false witnesses to find some excuse to put Jesus to death,
- **Rejection** - The religious leaders and people rejected Jesus as Messiah and chanted for him to be crucified.
- **Physical Abuse** - The soldiers beat him, plucked out pieces of his beard, placed a crown of thorns on His head and hit it in with a rod, they beat his back with whip thirty-nine times, they drove nails into His hands as they crucified him on the cross.
- **Mockery** - The soldiers, mocked him by placing a robe upon Him and calling Him king. The leaders and people mocked Him as He was hanging on the cross.
- **The Weight of Sin** - When Jesus hung on the cross the sin of the world was placed on Him. The point of the crucifixion was that Jesus would bear the full penalty for our sin. He who knew no sin became sin for us.
- **The Wrath of God** - The full weight of God's wrath was placed upon Jesus on the cross. God's righteous anger and judgment were centered on Jesus as a sacrifice for all.

All of these things show how Jesus can relate to your pain. But there is even a greater way that He understands your pain. He is God and knows all things. He knows you. He knows your thoughts and feelings. He understands exactly what you are going through to the slightest detail.

I am sitting with Dennis and Gayle, a very distraught young couple, who just lost their newborn baby. The father is sobbing and shaking his head back and forth. He could not believe that his baby boy just died. I say gently to the couple, "I can somewhat understand what you are going through."

The words are barely out of my mouth and the father's head snaps up. His eyes glare at me and he vehemently says, "You don't understand how we feel. I am sick and tired of people telling me that they know what I feel. You don't know what I am feeling."

"No, I don't know exactly what you are feeling," I say, "but my wife and I lost our first son." The hardness of his eyes softens and he tilts forward open to receive my story.

"My wife is seven months pregnant and her water breaks. They rush her to the hospital and she gives birth to Zachariah Lee, we call him Zach."

"I couldn't be there for Zach's birth because I was in Basic Training for the Air Force in Texas. At mail call that day my Training Instructor made the announcement that Airman Tuinder is the father of a new baby boy. I was shocked and so happy I could hardly stand it."

"The next day another Instructor called me into the office and told me that my son was dead and that he was there to help go through the paperwork to go home on emergency leave. My heart is broken. My son's dead. My wife is 1,500 miles away."

"After what seems like a million years I arrive home. I walk in the bedroom where my wife is recovering. I run to her, grab her into my arms, and we weep together. She tells me that Zach lived less than twenty-four hours. The doctor did all he could do but his lungs collapsed and he died.

"The first and only time I meet Zach was at his funeral. He is lying in a tiny casket. I walk up and look at him. He is lying there so peacefully. I run my hand over his hair and giggle, because his hair was longer than mine."

"No, I can't understand exactly the pain you are going through, but I do know the pain of losing a baby."

Maybe no one around you understands the pain you are experiencing, but Jesus does. You may think that you have to bear this pain alone, but you don't. You can bring your pain to Jesus. Jesus took your pain upon Himself on the cross so you don't have to bear it.

## Jesus Bore Your Pain

Surely our griefs He Himself bore,  
And our sorrows He carried;  
Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken,  
Smitten of God, and afflicted.  
But He was pierced through for our transgressions,  
He was crushed for our iniquities;  
The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him,  
And by His scourging we are healed. (Isaiah 53:4-5)



The first two lines of verse four tell us that Jesus bore or carried our griefs and sorrows. He took them upon Himself when He went to the cross.

Both the word griefs and sorrows (note they are plural) carry the idea of physical and emotional sickness or anguish. Jesus bore your physical and emotional anguish on the cross.

We already mentioned that emotions are okay and that God gave them to us. When bad things happen to us we should expect to experience pain, but pain is only meant to be temporary. There should be an end to the pain.

It's when pain is allowed to linger that trouble begins. Unresolved emotional pain has been known to cause physical illnesses, relationship problems, and personal inner struggles. You are not created by God to bear long-term emotional pain. Jesus came to bear our emotional pain and distress.

## Jesus Can Heal Your Pain

“ . . . He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted . . . ” (Isaiah 61:1)

“He heals the brokenhearted, and binds up their wounds.” (Psalm 147:3)

“The Lord is near to the brokenhearted, and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”  
(Psalm 34:18)

“He restores my soul . . .” (Psalm 23:3)

This is the great part of the story. You don’t have to remain in pain. God sent Jesus to bind up your broken heart. Are you willing to bring your pain to Jesus? Will you walk through the steps below trusting that Jesus will meet you and heal you?

It really comes down to a decision that only you can make. Do you want to continue to try and deal with your pain in the ways discussed above? Or will you take your pain to Jesus and willingly give Him each feeling and emotion?

Maybe you’ve cried out to Jesus to take your pain away before and nothing happened. I am asking you to do something else. I am asking you to bring your pain to Jesus, give it to Him, and ask Him to heal your wounds.

Set aside some time and go through the following steps with every painful situation that plagues you. Take your time. Be thorough.

### Prepare

Set aside a block of time. Be sure to have a pencil and paper handy. Go somewhere you can have privacy.

### Ask

Ask the Lord which painful memory He wants to heal. It might not be the biggest issue you are dealing with, but trust Him to lead you through the process of healing.

### Remember

Remember the situation. Who is involved? What is taking place? What are you feeling?

Remembering might bring up strong emotions that make you feel uncomfortable. Don’t try to stuff them or ignore them. Examine what you are feeling and write down each feeling on your piece of paper. They might include feelings of fear, anger, shame, helplessness, disgust, regret, etc.

### Forgive

Who in this memory hurt you? Whom do you need to forgive?

You might be struggling with the thought of forgiving the person who hurt you. It somehow feels wrong. They caused so much pain, how can you forgive them?

Forgiveness is not letting someone off the hook, or treating what they did to you lightly. It is not ignoring, forgetting, or excusing what took place. It is not dependent on them feeling sorry or asking for forgiveness.

Forgiveness is releasing a person from all your feelings of anger, hatred, and revenge and trusting God to deal with that person. Forgiveness is a choice you to make release that person and let them go. It is a step of faith and obedience to the Lord recognizing that He will ultimately bring justice.

Be as specific as possible as you forgive each person involved. Don't give out generic forgiveness like, "I forgive my dad."

The person who hurt you did so through specific acts. Forgive them for those acts. Say something like this. "I forgive you mom for calling me a loser in front of my friends. I forgive you for embarrassing me. Or I forgive you for always being so negative and critical of me."

So go ahead, speak out your forgiveness. Don't just think it in your mind, use your voice to proclaim your forgiveness. Then trust the Lord to deal with that person.

## Give

Now give the Lord all the pains that you are carrying. Take the list of emotions and feelings you are experiencing and one by one give them to the Lord. Ask Him to take it and bear it for you. Be specific and press in until you feel it is gone.

Say something like this, "Jesus, I give you my feelings of embarrassment and humiliation when my mom called me a loser in front of my friends. I ask you to take them and bear them for me."

## Heal

Ask the Lord to heal every area of your heart that was affected by this situation. Invite Him to restore your soul. Ask Him to fill you with His life and blessings.

Go through the process until you have given the Lord every feeling involved in the incident and you can look back at it without pain and heartache. If there is still things that rise up, bring it to the Lord until nothing remains but His peace.