

# WASP: Inner Healing

## Prayer

*Jesus, we thank you that you have loved us into existence and continue to love us into wholeness. Without you nothing lasting can come to be. We need you to move through the story of our lives and free us of all the areas in our mind and heart that have gotten wounded by our experiences. We need you to re-create us as once you formed us in your image. Pour your abundant love throughout our life story and cleanse it of all darkness that we might live totally in your light. Amen.<sup>1</sup>*

Previously, we discussed how Jesus cured people of physical diseases and cast out demons. Now we will examine how Jesus' intense love for people healed them on the inside. The **essence of healing is God's unconditional love (agape) for each person**. This love that Jesus radiated to cure people also set them free on the inside, free from sins and the wounds of sins done to them.

Inner healing is defined in several ways. It can refer to **healing the inner person**, or it can mean the **healing of the memories which cause a person dis-ease**. Inner healing can mean setting the inner person free of what is keeping them from wholeness. It is the restoration of God's vision for their life.

## Inner Healing in the Bible

In Isaiah 53:3-4 we read, "[Jesus] has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." Jesus died for our sins, the sins done to us, as well as the effects of sins done to us. The power flowing from the cross can set us free of all these things. Jesus brought physical healing and inner healing to the people He met. A good example of inner healing is what Jesus did for the disciples. Walking with them, accepting them, affirming them, encouraging them and forgiving them was part of their inner healing.

The Gospel of Luke describes Jesus bringing inner healing to the tax collector Zaccheaus<sup>2</sup>. When Jesus found him, Zaccheaus was up a tree in the pain of alienation from his community and God. We can only imagine what inner wounds drove Zaccheaus to become a tax collector. Maybe it was his way of retaliating for childhood hurts. But Jesus stopped and loved him where he was. Jesus accepted and affirmed him. This love gave Zaccheaus the space to repent and begin to heal. Jesus created an environment in which Zaccheaus could repent and experience inner healing.

In John, Jesus affirmed the man born blind. Jesus' actions were unlike anything the man had received in the past from his community<sup>3</sup>. This man had been told he was "completely born in sins" and probably had a misguided picture of God<sup>4</sup>. But Jesus' love and acceptance healed his picture of God and his understanding of the origin of his suffering, which had kept him from wholeness his entire life. No one

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<sup>1</sup> John 1:1-5

<sup>2</sup> Luke 19:1-10

<sup>3</sup> John 9:1-38

<sup>4</sup> John 9:34

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had told him he was lovable, worthy, and loved by God until Jesus came along. Once he knew the truth about himself, no one could ever separate him from Jesus and that understanding. This is inner healing.

Jesus' ministry to the Woman at the well is another powerful example of inner healing<sup>5</sup>. The woman is found at the well "about the sixth hour" or around noon.<sup>6</sup> By including this information, John wanted readers to know the woman did not come with the other women. Reading further in the story we discover a possible reason why. Jesus reveals her inner pain; she could not stay in a marriage relationship<sup>7</sup>. As a result, she carried inner pain and developed well-polished defenses.

Jesus loved her and offered her a gift of life-giving water, unconditional love (agape) which led her to inner healing<sup>8</sup>. She accepts the gift, "Sir, give me this water..." and this begins her inner healing<sup>9</sup>. Though she must deal with areas of pain and sin, the text provides evidence that her encounter with Jesus led her to new life. She became the first recorded missionary, as she returned to the people she feared, inviting them to "Come, see a man who told me all the things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" By encountering Jesus and receiving healing, she was set free to be who God created her to be.

## True Identity: The Image of God

Healing of our inner-being or our inner-soul can also be described as a deep feeling of God's love for us before we did anything, or anything was done to us to cause inner wounds. We can experience this by imagining the smile on God's face the day He thought us into being. A healing picture is to imagine ourselves being conceived in the center of the Trinity with the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit on every side of us, loving us into existence. We were conceived with Perfect Love swirling all around us. We were expected, and we were planned by God.

In Genesis 1:27, we read that we are each created in God's image. And from 1 John 4:8 tells us, "...God is love." We were created in an environment of complete love, with the love between the Father, Son, and Spirit all around us. We were expected and desired. Experiencing God's deep love gives us power to heal through anything that happened to us.

God says to Jeremiah, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you..."<sup>10</sup>. We were each known and cherished by God as we were formed. The Psalmist wrote, "...You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made..."<sup>11</sup>. And John asks,

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<sup>5</sup> John 4:4-42

<sup>6</sup> John 4:6

<sup>7</sup> John 4:18

<sup>8</sup> John 4:13-14

<sup>9</sup> John 4:15

<sup>10</sup> Jeremiah 1:5

<sup>11</sup> Psalm 139: 13

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"Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God"<sup>12</sup>. We each have an inner awareness of belonging despite what been done to us.

God knows our true identity. By His power we can heal from childhood wounds and discover this true self. Only in relationship with God our creator can we develop our authentic self. But lack of love, affirmation, and meaningful relationships impacts the development of our identity. In the absence of trustworthy love, children develop negative feelings about themselves, God, and others. This distorts their identity, view of God, and the ability to recognize those who could help them rediscover who they really are.

## Identifying the Lie

Feelings such as being unloved, not good enough, worthless or sometimes invincibility or superiority are referred to as ***The Lie***. **The Lie is a state of deception in which the fundamental belief the person has about his/her identity and his/her image of God is false.** This false identity can cause the person's inner spirit to be traumatized. This is called a ***Broken Spirit***, that is, **a person's spirit partially separated from the spirit of God.** This often happens when children experience broken trust with a significant adult, such as a parent or spiritual leader. This can happen through a traumatic event or successive harmful events. The Lie creates false needs to prove that a person is lovable, worthwhile, accepted, and meaningful or to be noticed.

***The Secret*** is the measures or means used by a person to try to get affirmation, to gain acceptance, to prove self as worthy. These measures include perfectionism, people pleasing/performance, workaholism, alcoholism, co-dependency, marry for self-benefit, or continually putting people down. The Secret never fills the true needs of a person for connectedness to God and others. Instead, false needs create unrealistic expectations of self, others, and God. Therefore, the person faces constant disappointments resulting in mixed emotions of anger, shame, fear, sadness, and guilt; which lead to codependency, compulsions, depression, and divorce. These reinforce The Lie and perpetuate shame and unworthiness. These conditions create spiritual stress, leading to physical consequences of other stresses.

Prolonged Spiritual stress leads to:

- 1) an inability to shut off the stress response (physical pain, wear on the body organs and joints)
- 2) destruction of the response system, sometimes called chronic fatigue or fibromyalgia
- 3) an inability to cope with reoccurring stress
- 4) a breakdown of one's immune system, heart, or brain

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<sup>12</sup> 1 John 3:1

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People say things like:

- "I work all the time and yet I never feel good about myself."
- "I hear people say I am a good person, but I don't believe it."
- "I go to church, but God never changes my situation."
- "I thought getting married would take away my inner pain, but..."
- "I have so many material things, yet I feel empty."
- "After the things I've done, I'm sure God doesn't want me."
- "It is so hard to keep making believe that I am happy."
- "I don't really trust anyone anymore."

## Inner Healing Ministers & Ministry

The journey of inner healing and discovering our true self, begins when we trust someone.

Zaccheaus, the disciples, and the woman at the well all trusted Jesus. With a trusted person, we can begin walking back to the place where we were loved into being. This can happen in a group or with one person.

The presence of a safe, trustworthy, non-judgmental, and gentle Godly person opens the door to inner healing. They walk with us back to wounded areas in our heart, mind, and soul. Then they pray the love of Jesus into those areas. Once we release the inner pain into the hands of Jesus, we begin to discover our true identity as children of God. Through inner healing prayer ministry, sacraments, scripture, Christian community, and sharing we begin to feel what was blocked by painful memories, the love of God that has always been within. We begin to feel deep within our souls the unconditional love of God.<sup>13</sup>

Taking time to be quiet and listening to God allows us to soak in the power of His love. We discover the truth of *whose* we are. Once the lie is uncovered, we change from living in darkness to living in the light of truth<sup>14</sup>. We hear Jesus saying, "you will know the truth and the truth will set you free."<sup>15</sup> A person must choose to live in the light, the truth. God takes the initiative to heal us and love gives us power to make good choices.

We are empowered by God's love to take the next step. In the midst of this safe environment, we invite Jesus back into our story and feel His love at every point that we did not feel His love before. Taking Him or allowing Him to take us back into memories lets us release the pain of those memories to Him, so we may no longer remember the shame, anger, fear or bitterness, but the peace of Jesus. With time our hearts are set free of the heaviness of memories and our behavior in the present changes. We become whole.

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<sup>13</sup> Isaiah 43:1-4; Jeremiah; 31:3; John 15:9

<sup>14</sup> 2 Corinthians 4:6

<sup>15</sup> John 8:32

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Take some quiet time now to acknowledge any **Lie** you have lived with about yourselves:

## Self:

- "I work all the time and yet I never feel good about myself."
- "I hear people say I am a good person, but I don't believe it."
- "I have so many things, yet I feel empty."
- "It is so hard to keep making believe that I am happy."
- "I am not good enough for anyone to like me."

## God:

- "I go to church, but God never changes my situation."
- "After the things I've done, I'm sure God doesn't want me."
- "Sooner or later God is going to get me for what I've done."

## Others:

- "I thought getting married would take away my inner pain, but..."
- "If I don't let people see how I really feel, they will accept me."
- "I don't really trust anyone anymore."

Take time to acknowledge any means we have used to be affirmed, to prove we are worthy, to cover up our feelings, which we have called **The Secret**.

**Share with another person** your discovery and if possible find a person who can pray with you for inner healing. Invite Jesus back into your story and feel His love freeing you of the feelings that have burdened you. If we continue this process of honest naming of feelings, telling them to someone else, and then receiving the love of Jesus through prayer, we will be set free and discover a deeper sense of our true identity in God. Jesus came into the world to set us free and to live in freedom<sup>16</sup>. Give him permission to move within and set you free.

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<sup>16</sup> Galatians 5:1