**BREAKING PERSONAL STRONGHOLDS**

Prayers for healing are often only one part of a person's restoration. Root causes of physi­cal infirmities, mental illnesses, and emotional problems must be addressed as well. Many diseases can be traced to an event of severe trauma or high stress. For that reason, ministering healing often begins by dealing with *trauma.*

Trauma and stress can affect all areas of your body and mind. Your body's cells have cel­lular memory' that recalls and absorbs traumas until God sovereignly intervenes. In response to prayer, the trauma is cursed and its power broken.

Jesus also heals traumatic emotional memories and responses. Emotional issues, such as recurrent or irrational fear, is often traced to a situation from birth or childhood that is pro­voking the abnormal response.

**PHYSICAL TRAUMA: Stress-Related Disease**

There are two approaches to praying for trauma or stress-induced sickness. I can pray for necks, backs, and other illnesses brought on by stress such as irritable bowel syndrome, acid reflux, ulcers, Crohn's disease, heart attacks, strokes, high blood pressure, diabetes, ulcers, and sleep apnea, just to name a few. Or I can tell you how to get rid of stress, and you won't have to pray over those illnesses again.

Stress is part of life. The source can come from family, finances, job, church, accidents, inju­ries, hospitalization, friends, strangers...and more. Research shows that 75 percent of visits to doctors' offices are stress-related.2 Getting rid of stress often becomes more important than praying for somebody's neck or back, even though you need to minister to both problems. To be healed and stay healed, identifying the root cause of a disease is essential.

\_ - -

A man had been seriously injured in a traumatic car accident several years before. He needed a new knee. Many people, including the man himself, had prayed for his knee to be healed. When he came to me for ministry, I chose not to pray for his knee. Hearing his story, I identified trauma as the root and knew that had to be taken care of before his knee could be restored. When I prayed, "In the name of Jesus, I curse that trauma and I command it to be gone," his knee was totally and instantly healed. Trauma is like a magnet to sickness—elimi­nate the trauma and the sickness will go away.

**EMOTIONAL TRAUMA: Rejection, Betrayal, Unforgiveness, and Fear**

Some people want to die because they can no longer endure the pain in their heart. They believe a serious illness is God's way of taking them off this earth so they don't have to live with that crippling pain anymore. When a person cleanses him or herself of worry, unforgiveness, bitterness, anger, and the trauma that brought on stress, that person’s heart becomes clean and whole. With nothing to feed on, disease will leave. It is starved to death. Now, you are going-to learn how to starve some diseases to death.

**Reject Rejection**

During a meeting in Oklahoma, two women were comparing their mid-sections to see whose was bigger. One was about eight months pregnant, the other was not pregnant. Their abdomens were nearly the same size. Through a word of knowledge about an abdominal problem, I called the woman who was not pregnant to the podium. She had 40 tumors in her stomach.

I prayed, "Father, I curse those tumors and command them to be gone, in Jesus' name." Immediately, she went from a size 18 down to a size 12. The Holy Spirit also revealed to me that she was dying on the inside.

Place your hand over the heart when praying for emotional or physical healing.

When I place my hand near someone's heart, I can sense what is going on in his or her life. I put my hand over the woman's heart and prayed against spirits of trauma, rejection, abandonment, and abuse. She started crying. Her pastor was also crying as he repeated, "I love you, Suzie," and she was saying, "I love you, Pastor," back and forth. I asked her to repeat what her pastor said to her, and she answered, "I love you, Pastor."

"That's not what he said." She started to say, "I love you..." but she couldn't speak. I encouraged her, "Come on, you can say it." She choked and almost gagged. Finally she repeated, "I love you, Suzie." "Say it again," I said. I had her repeat those words 15 to 20 times. I wanted to make sure she believed it. Why? She had a terrible self-image because all she saw was the abuse and shame of her past. In an instant, God changed her self-image. He not only set her free from her past, but He was also preparing her for His call on her life. She could not love others if she could not love herself. If you are ashamed of what you look like and don't want to talk to anybody else, the last thing you want to do is minister to others. She used to wake up every morning, look at herself in the mirror, and say, "You are so ugly." Now she wakes up, looks in the mirror, and says, "I love you, Suzie. You are beautiful!" A few days later, she joined us in Arkansas. Glowing and looking 20 years younger, she told us she would be back for service that night after getting something to eat. At the restaurant, she saw a man who was having great difficulty getting to his chair. Talking to the man, she learned he had a back problem that had caused excruciating pain for over ten years. He and his family came to the meeting that night, and the entire family was healed. Her response is an example of what happens after you go through a healing school and receive your healing. When you see somebody in need, you will want to reach out to minister to that person. Some people's hands automatically extend toward the person in need, and others raise their hands in the Spirit. You will know when you walk in His anointing and direction. If this lady had not received healing of her wounded self-image, she wouldn't have had the boldness to speak to the sick man. She had been too ashamed of herself to get out of her shell and pray for someone else. Her healing and restoration made her feel like a new creation. Her testimony gave many others the faith to believe for and receive their healing as well as the self-confidence to minister to others.

**Overcoming Betrayal**

If you have ever been betrayed, you are in good company. Jesus was betrayed. Paul was betrayed. Betrayal by a friend, spouse, or a member of your church is very painful. It is not the betrayal but how you react to it that counts, however. Your response to betrayal can affect your health because anger, bitterness, depression, and unforgiveness can eat away at your body and emotions, releasing stress hormones and weakening your immune system. What should you do if you have been betrayed? Notice Paul's response to betrayal in Second Timothy 4:16-18: At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them. But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen! Paul is a model of how to respond to betrayal. He did not let the effects of betrayal cling to him. What did he do? First, he prayed for those who had betrayed him (verse 16). This implies that he forgave them. Second, he relied on God instead of man and declared his faith in Him to deliver him 'from every evil work" (verse 18). In effect, he put the negative situation behind him.

Jesus tells us, "And whenever y011 stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses" (Mark 11:25). Unforgiveness keeps both you and the person who betrayed you in bondage. Forgiveness looses both of you. "...Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. 16:19).

**Prayer for Betrayal**

**Father, I forgive for betraying me and I ask You to separate that sin from and put it on the cross of Jesus, never to be held against again, in Jesus' name. And Father, please forgive me of anger, bitterness, and unforgiveness toward. Put my sin on the cross, never to be held against me again. In the name of Jesus, I command the spirits of anger, bitterness, and rejection to leave me and I break their power over me. Thank You, Jesus, for Your promise, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' So al may boldly say: 'The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" (Heb. 13:5-6).**

**Unforgiveness**

Have you ever heard a child say, "I am sorry," without truly meaning what he or she said? Adults do the same thing when they go through the motions of forgiveness but don't forgive from the heart. Hurts and disappointments come from all directions. People can often hurt, reject by word or deed, criticize, or disappoint you. Unless you learn how to properly deal with your reactions, unforgiveness can grip your heart and become a stronghold.

Learning how to deal with unforgiveness often begins with your relationship with your parents. While some people grow up in dysfunctional families, even loving and well-meaning parents make mistakes in childrearing or fall short of their children's expectations. Some parents don't teach their children the value of forgiveness because they never learned or practiced it themselves.

Check your heart for bitterness. Is there anything you are still holding against your parents? Are you remembering something about your spouse, brothers, sisters, or other relatives: Perhaps friends, teachers, colleagues, bosses, or members of your church hurt you. Is then anyone you have not forgiven? As you think about each person, do you feel resentful, troubled, or peaceful? Offenses are part of life. The question is, how do you deal with that offense' You can choose to not take offense at the situation, but to instantly forgive and forget.

Jesus is our example. As He was crucified, He prayed*, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do"* (Luke 23:34). Even as He endured suffering, Jesus interceded with the Father, mercifully pointing out the weakness of His tormentors. He also taught His disciples the importance of unequivocal and perfect forgiveness:

*Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, 'Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt" (Matthew 18:21-27).*

Jesus, "moved with compassion," forgave all your sins. Who are you to refuse to forgive others? Forgiving those who have sinned against you releases God's love and compassion to flow through you. The effect of this decision is peace in your heart and health in your body If you choose not to forgive, the destructive effects of Unforgiveness will boomerang on you. Unforgiveness is a poison that you drink, hoping that the other person is going to get sick. If you refuse to forgive, you are the one who will get sick. Unforgiveness leads to resentment, fear, and stress, which lowers the immune system and opens the door to arthritis and other diseases. Unforgiveness also keeps you in spiritual bondage. It clogs the conduit from you to God. You have to choose to end this never-ending cycle and clean this garbage out of your life. Jesus said:

*...If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses (Matthew 6:1445).*

Go through your checklist and pray. Does the thought of any person on your list cause feelings of anger, bitterness, resentment, or discomfort? That could be a sign that you need to forgive him or her. Jesus told Peter to forgive people "not...seven times, but up to seventy times seven" (Matt. 18:22). Just as Jesus forgave those who killed Him, the Son of God, you are not to forgive based on who was right or wrong, but in obedience to God.

**Prayer for Forgiveness**

**Father, I forgive for hurting me. Separate this sin from and put it on the cross, never to he held against again. Father, bless \_\_\_\_\_. (Repeat this prayer for anyone else you need to forgive.) I ask Your forgiveness for the anger, bitterness, and Unforgiveness in my heart against \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. I receive Your forgiveness. Thank You, Father, in Jesus' name.**