

Lesson 8

Clearing the Promised Land

Joshua 15-20

Through the battles in the book of Joshua, the Israelites gained the upper hand over the enemy. Joshua showed no mercy; he didn't compromise or settle. God called for complete victory. We see that even once the land was claimed and apportioned to the tribes, the Israelites had to continue to fight to keep the ground they had conquered.

God knows that the mindset of our enemy has not changed in all these years. The enemy does not give up easily. We cannot settle or compromise with him. Satan is not going to relent and let us live the abundant life without a fight. We must determine to press through for complete victory with complete reliance upon the Lord. One of the major ways we can do this is by receiving inner healing of past hurts and disappointments.

Inner Healing

Read Joshua 15-17 for the context of this week's lesson.

By Joshua 17, the twelve tribes of Israel have finally received their portions of the Promised Land, but there is still work to do. Clearing dense forests and driving out stubborn, strong enemies is tough work! Yet God promised His faithfulness and their victory if they would refuse to settle: "to its farthest borders [the Promised Land] shall be yours" (Joshua 17:18).

The same is true in our lives. As believers, we can compromise with the adversary and settle outside of the Land of Milk and Honey, or we can drive out those strong enemies and establish complete victory. For years I have known about three verses in 2 Corinthians that are important for our spiritual well-being, but I wasn't sure how to interpret them. I had read countless commentators' opinions of what the verses meant, and I had searched them out for myself, but I could never quite get to the bottom of them. Then Anne and I started on our journey of praying with people, and I began to understand these verses in a whole new way. I think they relate to living in the Land of Milk and Honey.

"But the hill country shall be yours. For though it is a forest, you shall clear it, and to its farthest borders it shall be yours; for you shall drive out the Canaanites, even though they have chariots of iron and though they are strong."

Joshua 17:18



“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.”

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

1. In the key verse in the margin circle these words: **fortresses, speculations and lofty thing.**

Fortresses is translated from the Greek word *ochyroma*. It can also be translated as castle or stronghold, suggesting an impregnable place.^x

Speculations is the Greek word *logismos* from which we obviously get the English word logic. It can also be translated reckoning, judgments, imaginations or arguments.^{xi}

Lofty thing is translated from *hypsoma* in Greek. It can also be translated high thing, elevated thing, barrier, rampart or bulwark.^{xii}

We all have places in our spirits that have been hurt. Often these hurts happen when we are young children and most vulnerable. It is easy to see how this can occur in a tumultuous childhood, but even people who have had loving parents and storybook childhoods are hurt by life in this world. Things are done to us that wound our spirits – that place deep inside of us that is called in Scripture, “our innermost being” (Psalm 51:6). Our spirits silently observe and process these events, whether they are deeply traumatic or seemingly insignificant, and our spirits get wounded.

Because of these wounds, we begin to think certain ways about life. We make assumptions. These assumptions become so intertwined with our thoughts, that we believe they are true for everyone. These are the “strongholds” referred to in 2 Corinthians 10:4. We view all of life from the vantage point of these strongholds. From them, we come up with strategies for living. In the words of 2 Corinthians 10:5, we *logismos* – we reason and decide how to live so that we can avoid these hurts in the future. If we are rejected by our father as a young child, we may think, *I never want to be rejected again; it hurts too much.* This is our stronghold. From there we come up with the strategy: *I will never let anyone get close to me so that I will never get hurt again.* And then we live out of that decision. We may become a loner and never let anyone get close to us. Do you see the progression? A wound in our spirit leads to judgment in our hearts about life, and this leads to a strategy for living. The problem is that our strategies only work for a while. We will get rejected again, and we will get hurt. When we rely on our own strategies, we are not relying on the Lord or receiving His peace and His provision.

2. What does the Lord desire in our “innermost beings” – in our spirits according to Psalm 51:6?

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 tells us that we need to destroy these strongholds because they are opposed to knowing the Lord. We need to capture these ways of thinking and let the Lord bring us His truth and light. But that is easier said than done – especially since we are usually not even aware of our strongholds.

One of the main ways we have discovered strongholds is when a person comes to us for prayer about a current matter. She* is “stirred up” about it, and she knows her reaction is way out of proportion to what is appropriate. We take her through a prayer exercise. First we ask her to think about the current situation and to feel the emotion that this elicits.

3. *I encourage you to walk through these steps with me. (If this is your first exposure to this kind of inner healing, you may want to read through this chapter first and then return to this exercise.) Think of a recent incident in which you know you were “stirred up” and that your reaction was out of proportion to the event. Allow yourself to feel the emotion that it elicits.*
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When she is “there” we ask the Lord Jesus to drift her back to the first time she felt this very same way. She does not have to think this up; the Lord will just drift her back to the memory. The memory is usually from very early in her life. Often the memory is of the experience that caused her to set up the stronghold.

4. *If you are willing, ask the Lord to bring up the memory when you first felt this way. Then, wait on the Lord.*
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When she is back in the memory, we ask the Lord to bring her His truth about that event. And then we wait to see what the Lord does. Sometimes she will see the Lord in the scene, and she will realize He was there all along. He had not rejected her. Sometimes she will hear the Lord speak to her spirit and transform her understanding of the memory. Sometimes she will sense a deep feeling of peace that defies her circumstances. She no longer has the need for the life-long strategy. Her reaction to the present situation then comes into balance, and she is filled with “a peace that passes understanding” (Philippians 4:7). Her stronghold has been captured for Christ!

5. *As the Lord brings the memory to mind, ask the Lord to bring His truth about the event.*
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I have allowed the Lord to minister this way to me many times. One of the early times was when I realized that I had a hard time dealing with any kind of sorrow. Ever since I could remember, my MO had always been to push through any

*We are using the feminine pronoun to simplify, but please know this type of prayer is effective for men as well.



“Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life.”

Proverbs 4:23

sadness to get to the sunny side of things. A part of me just shut down when things became sad. I assumed everyone felt this same way. It was especially hard for me to go through the last few years of each of my parents’ lives, watching their health deteriorate with each visit. It was clear they were not going to get better. There were no happy endings to look forward to in this life. I wanted to take all the sorrow and darkness of life, cram it into a small container and push it aside so that I could stay in the light. I couldn’t do it anymore. It was only getting worse. I called Anne for prayer.

When we went before the Lord in prayer, Anne asked the Lord to remind me of the first time I’d felt this way. In my mind’s eye, I could clearly see a year-old baby girl and a woman in a living room that was bright and sunny and happy on one side. However, near the front door the room was very empty, dark and uninviting. I knew that I was that baby and that I was determined to stay in the light. The dark side of the room seemed like a void and made me feel very sad.

This picture that came to my mind actually had meaning to me. This was not anything I had dwelt on, nor that I consciously remembered, but I knew that when I was nine months old, my grandmother was dying of cancer in Washington State, thousands of miles from our home. My mother left me with a kind, grandmotherly woman for three months while she took my older sister and went to care for her mother. My father came to visit me every afternoon after work.

Anne prayed for the Lord to reveal His truth to me about that memory. As I kept watching, the scene changed to a room with a baby in a baby bed. It was very dark, and the same sense of void and sadness were there. Again, I knew that I was that baby. As I kept watching, I noticed a small cross on the wall above the crib. It began to grow, and I could see that it was a crucifix with the Lord on the cross, the crown of thorns smashed into his head. He was suffering massively. The whole cross came just over the bed and stayed by the baby’s side. It was as if the One on the cross was saying, “I know what it is like in the dark, sad places of life. I know what it is like to suffer deeply. I am with you even there.” A verse that I had never “claimed” (or even especially liked) came into my mind: “that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings” (Philippians 3:10). This verse became so dear to me. The Lord doesn’t force us to suffer so that we can see what it feels like, but when suffering comes our way, we have a God who understands the depths of our pain. I stayed with that image for a while, later I even sketched it because it meant so much to me.

Something profound happened in my spirit as I watched the picture of the baby and the cross. The Lord brought me His truth about suffering. It is a truth that I had known in my head, but somehow, through those pictures, I really “got it” in my spirit. Since then, I don’t have to press through to get to the sunny side of things; sometimes there is no sunny side. I don’t need to try to contain all the sadness and push it aside. The void place is no longer void, the Lord has come into it. In fact, during the prayer as I looked around the room, it was still dark, but it was not a foreboding darkness. Instead it was a quiet, resting, take-a-nap kind of darkness. It was full of peace. I know that I am not alone, left by myself to try to

manage sad times. He is right by my side; His understanding presence brings comfort through suffering.

This may sound hokey to you. But I want to tell you that I am different way down deep in my spirit, in my innermost being, because of the truth that the Lord brought me that day. As my life unfolds, I continue to see how different I am because the Lord has captured that stronghold.

The Lord brings His truth to us when we turn to Him in this way. His truth is what sets us free from the pain of the event, and I am convinced that His truth is “the weapon of our warfare” that is mentioned in 2 Corinthians 10:5 that destroys our strongholds.

6. *Sometimes this kind of prayer is easier done with another person. Ask a friend to do this prayer exercise with you the next time you are stirred up about a situation in your life. Here is a summary of the steps for inner healing prayer:*

- 1) *Consider the current situation that has you stirred up. Let yourself feel the emotion that this elicits.*
- 2) *Ask the Lord to drift you back to the first time you ever felt this way. Then just wait; He will bring up a memory.*
- 3) *Again, let yourself feel the emotion that you felt in the memory. When you can feel it, ask the Lord to bring His truth about that day. Wait. Keep yourself in the memory and see what the Lord shows you. There just may be more going on than meets the eye, and the Lord may have something wonderful for you!*

Inner Healing
Exercise

Anne and I notice in our own prayer lives that God seems to heal us emotionally by clearing up the past in the ways described above. Therefore, we have read and studied many teachers on this type of prayer. Each one seems to have some variation and calls it something different. Agnes Sanford called it “healing of memories;” Francis and Judith MacNutt, Mark Virkler, and Mike Flynn all call it “inner healing;” Ed Smith calls it “mind renewal” and teaches a very specific course called *Theophostic Prayer*. We have great respect for each of these teachings and have learned from all of them. (They are listed as recommended reading in Appendix II.) Basically all agree that when praying for another person, it is extremely important to follow the Lord and what He is doing.

Over the years, Anne and I have prayed for one another in this way many times. Looking back, we can see how the Lord knew just what He was doing – bringing up each memory in His divine order so that we would be healed in one area, before He took us to the next. The journey never ends; it seems that we never run out of things that stir us up! The Lord is always ready to bring His truth and peace; we just have to turn to Him in prayer.

Sometimes He will go back to a memory where we have already received healing. When this first happened, we wondered if the earlier prayer time had not been

complete. We have learned that it is not that the healing was incomplete but that there is a second or even third stronghold that we constructed back then, and He is now ready to deal with it.

God knows what each person needs better than anyone else. He desires our emotional freedom and the redemption of our past. Praying for inner healing is a lifetime journey of which the Lord is the leader. The key is to let the Lord do the leading and to see what He wants to do. It is always good.

Inner Healing for Kids

We can pray for one another's past hurts, but we can also pray with our children right when their little spirits are hurt so that these wounds do not take root in their hearts. One day, I went to pick up two of our granddaughters from their pre-school. There was some confusion in the carpool line, and one of them was nowhere to be found. Turns out, when the substitute teacher called the children in from the playground, my granddaughter had not heard and was left outside. She was safe, but all alone for some time. Even after we were home, safe and sound, she was still very upset.

As her mother and I talked with her, trying to calm her down, she kept touching her heart and saying that she was scared. I asked her if she wanted to talk to the Lord about it. Instead of asking the Lord to take away her fear, I asked my granddaughter if she wanted to give her fear to Jesus. She did, so she said something like, "Jesus, I give you this feeling in my heart." With that she touched her heart and with a look of amazement shouted, "It's gone! Jesus took it away." And she skipped away with delight. She was immediately transformed. This may seem like a tiny point, but the Lord so respects our free wills that He doesn't often *take* a feeling away from us, even if we ask Him to. Instead, He waits until we give it to Him. If I were ever to teach a class on Christ-centered parenting, I would place great emphasis on protecting our children's spirits and teaching them how to release their hurts and disappointments to the Lord before they can become strongholds.

Disappointment

We don't have to be children to give our sorrows and fears to the Lord. There are times in our lives when we are deeply disappointed by loss or by failure or by some other circumstance. We are weighted down as we carry these burdens. We can even become incapable of experiencing the presence of the Lord and the fruits of the Spirit like joy and peace.

Anne and I have learned that there may be seasons of grief and disappointment in our lives. We aren't to deny these times, but God never intended us to get "stuck" in these seasons.

7. Read Luke 22:31-34 and John 13:36-38. How would you describe the attitude of Peter on the night before the crucifixion of Jesus Christ?

8. Read Luke 22:54-62 and John 18:12-27. How do you think Peter felt after his denials of Christ? How do you think he felt when the Lord was crucified?
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9. Consider the scene at the Sea of Galilee in John 21:1-22. How does the Lord restore Peter?
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The Lord did not leave Peter in his pain and disappointment but went to him and brought healing and restoration to his soul. A mere fifty or so days later, a restored and healed Peter would preach the awesome sermon that sparked the birth of the church (Acts 2).

Isaiah 53:4 says, “Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried.” We have learned that through prayer we can “bundle up” the feeling of grief or disappointment and give it to the Lord. He will exchange it for His peace. This exchange does not negate the real loss that has occurred, but it just takes a simple prayer in faith to release the burden to the Lord. We were not created to be burden-bearing beasts!

Vain Imaginations

The passage in 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 touches on another aspect of our thought life that needs to be addressed if we are going to start living in the Land of Milk and Honey – our imagination.

In the King James Version of the Bible, 2 Corinthians 10:5 says, “casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalted itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.”

This passage is not teaching that it is wrong to have a great imagination, but that *all* of our thoughts, even our imaginations, need to be submitted to the Lord for His approval. No, this is not saying that every single thought we have needs to be *about* the Lord. We can organize our day, plan a business meeting, work on a project or enjoy a visit with a friend. We can be creative and use our imaginations to solve problems, or we can simply relax.

However, sometimes when we have pain in our lives, we unconsciously create a daydream as a way to find comfort and to deal with the pain. Many times this daydream is a “what-if” that we wander back to whenever we are feeling the emotional hurt. I knew a woman who was happily married but occasionally had disagreements with her husband. When her feelings were hurt, she would retreat into her thoughts and wonder, *What if I had married that boy I had a crush on in grade school? I bet my life would be better. He wouldn't hurt me like this. And she would imagine what life might have been like. She barely knew that boy*



“We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.”

2 Corinthians 10:5

when they were children, but still she wondered. She shared with me that one day, after years of nursing this thought, she was in her usual daydream smarting from a recent disagreement with her husband. She heard a word from the Lord who whispered into her mind these words, “He wasn’t all that great.” With that gentle rebuke from her Counselor, she literally laughed out loud as she realized what she had been doing all that time. Her daydream had kept her from taking her hurt to the Lord. The Lord does not want us to escape into a place in our minds to deal with pain; He wants us to bring it to Him, for His comfort and ministry.

10. What about you? Do you have any “what ifs” that your mind goes back to? Do you have a daydream that needs to be brought captive to the Lord? Ask Him to show you.

Philippians 4:8 is a great grid to filter all of our thoughts through:

Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.

You can see that letting your thoughts run wild when your husband’s plane is late and imagining that the plane has crashed, falls outside of these parameters: it is not true. Thinking negative thoughts about someone who has hurt you is out of bounds according to this verse: it is neither lovely nor honorable. You get the idea. Meditate on this verse until it is deep in your spirit so that you can always make sure your thoughts are lining up with God’s best for you. Then let your mind dwell on these things.

Prepare for Life

The Lord created us to live in freedom. “[His] yoke is easy and [His] burden is light” (Matthew 11:30). When we walk with the Lord in the land He has promised, there is no need for us to carry the burdens of wounds, hurts, disappointments, or “what if’s.” Instead, we release our burdens to Him and receive His healing and His truth!

11. Consider the following scripture and meditate on it using the prayer exercise that was detailed on page 13.

❖ Scripture: ***Philippians 4:8***

❖ Word or Phrase:

❖ Insight:

❖ Invitation:

^x Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for ochyrōma (Strong's 3794)". Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2010. 13 Sep 2010. <<http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G3794&t=NASB>>

^{xi} Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for logismos (Strong's 3053)". Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2010. 13 Sep 2010. <<http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G3053&t=NASB>>

^{xii} Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for hypsōma (Strong's 5313)". Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2010. 13 Sep 2010. <<http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G5313&t=NASB>>

Lecture Notes: