

MISMANAGED TRAUMA

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Pain is a guarantee in this life, but how we handle that pain determines whether it becomes a stepping stone or a stumbling block. When we get wounded, we are left with a choice. We can take that hurt to God for healing, or we can mismanage it.

When we mismanage our emotional scars, it creates mental strongholds. It warps the way we view God, the way we view ourselves, and the way we treat the people around us. We stop walking in freedom and start walking in defense mode.

Here are five ways we mismanage our hurt, the psychological toll it takes on our minds, and exactly how it sabotages our daily lives and relationships.

1. BURYING THE PAIN IN THE DIRT OF DENIAL

Scripture

Psalms 32:3 KJV

When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.

The Psychological Effect

Suppression is one of the most common ways we handle trauma. We just act like it never happened. We put on a suit, we put on a smile, we walk into

church and say, "I'm blessed and highly favored," while we are bleeding out on the inside.

Psychologically, when you bury pain alive, it doesn't die. It incubates. The human mind cannot permanently erase trauma just by ignoring it. It turns into unexplainable anxiety, chronic depression, and sudden panic attacks. Your body literally keeps the score. You start walking around with a low-grade exhaustion because it takes a massive amount of mental energy to keep that graveyard dirt packed down.

The Impact on Life and Relationships

When you live in denial, you become emotionally unavailable. You cannot connect deeply with your spouse or your children because deep connection requires vulnerability. If you let someone get too close, they might bump into that hidden bruise. So you keep relationships surface-level. You distance yourself whenever things get too real, convinced you are just being independent, when the truth is you are terrified of being exposed.

2. NURSING THE OFFENSE AND WATERING BITTERNESS

Scripture

Hebrews 12:15 KJV

Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.

The Psychological Effect

Sometimes we don't bury the pain; we put it on a pedestal. We replay the betrayal tape in our heads every single day. We rehearse what they did to us, what we should have said, and how wrong they were. We think holding onto this anger is protecting us from getting hurt again.

Psychologically, this breeds a victim mindset and overwhelming cynicism. You begin to expect betrayal everywhere you look. Your brain actually gets addicted to the righteous indignation. You lose your peace and replace it with suspicion.

The Impact on Life and Relationships

Bitterness is contagious. The scripture says a root of bitterness defiles

many. When you mismanage pain this way, you poison your own well. You start projecting the face of your ex onto your new spouse. You assume your current boss is out to get you because the last one was unfair. You push good people away because your bitter mindset tells you, "Everybody is going to let me down eventually."

3. BLEEDING ON PEOPLE WHO DIDN'T CUT YOU

Scripture

Ephesians 4:31 KJV

Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, and malice, be put away from you.

The Psychological Effect

This is the psychological reality of displaced anger. You cannot safely lash out at the person who originally traumatized you - maybe they are dead, maybe they are in a position of power, or maybe they just walked away. So, that emotional pressure builds up until it finds an easier target.

Your thinking becomes reactive rather than proactive. You live on a hair-trigger. A minor inconvenience feels like a major attack, and your mind constantly lives in a state of fight-or-flight.

The Impact on Life and Relationships

You end up punishing the innocent. You snap at your kids because you had a terrible day at work. You scream at a stranger because you are secretly mad at your father. When you mismanage hurt this way, your home becomes a war zone. The people who love you the most have to walk on eggshells around you, never knowing what might set off the explosion.

4. NUMBING THE ACHE WITH CHEAP SUBSTITUTES

Scripture

Jeremiah 2:13 KJV

For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold

no water.

The Psychological Effect

Pain demands to be felt. If we refuse to process it with the Lord, we will try to outrun it with a distraction. We self-medicate.

Psychologically, this is where escapism and addiction take root. We use alcohol, endless social media scrolling, shopping, overworking, or toxic romantic relationships to get a dopamine hit that masks the pain. The problem is that numbing is never selective. When you numb the pain, you also numb your joy, your passion, and your purpose. Your mind becomes sluggish. You lose your spiritual sharpness.

The Impact on Life and Relationships

You stop being present. Your family is sitting in the same room with you, but you are a million miles away, lost in your phone or lost in a bottle. You bring a fractured, distracted version of yourself to every situation. Eventually, the temporary high wears off, the broken cistern runs dry, and you are left staring at the exact same pain, only now you have added a destructive habit on top of it.

5. BUILDING PRISON WALLS AND CALLING THEM BOUNDARIES

Scripture

Proverbs 18:1 KJV

Through desire a man, having separated himself, seeketh and intermeddleth with all wisdom.

The Psychological Effect

After a severe hurt, the enemy will always tempt you to make a silent vow: I will never let anyone get close enough to hurt me like that again. We isolate ourselves. We build massive walls of stone around our hearts and try to dress it up with therapy language, calling them "healthy boundaries."

Psychologically, isolation breeds a distorted reality. When you cut yourself off from community, you only listen to your own thoughts, and a wounded

mind is a terrible counselor. You start to believe your own worst fears.

The Impact on Life and Relationships

Walls keep the bad out, but they also keep the good out. You miss out on the healing power of a supportive relationship. You miss out on iron sharpening iron. You stop letting brothers and sisters in Christ speak life into you. You become lonely, rigid, and unteachable. God designed us for connection, and when you let unhealed trauma convince you to walk alone, you walk right out of the destiny God has for your life.