

## Have You Stopped HEALING?

Today we are in **Week 3** of our series called “**How Did I Get Here?**” As we have said each week the idea for this series comes from a book written by Christine Cain dealing with the concept of spiritual drift when it comes to our relationship with God. Over the course of this series we are highlighting 4 Signs to help you recognize when you are drifting spiritually and what to do about it to make sure you are properly connected to the true anchor of your soul - Jesus Christ

The passage that serves as our theme for this series is **Hebrews 2:1-4 (NIV)** **We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away.** Drift away from what? **2 For since the message spoken through angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, 3 how shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation?** The answer: our salvation in Christ!

**3 how shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation?** This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. **4 God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.** As the writer of Hebrews reminds us, we need to pay CAREFUL ATTENTION to our relationship connection with God so that we will finish our faith race well and not miss out on the benefits of our salvation. After all, Jesus died so that we may have life and have it more abundantly. He has removed the barrier between us and God so that we may have unhindered fellowship with Him. So why would we want to drift away from God by letting anything get in the way of what we have been given?

In **Week 1** we introduced the first sign of spiritual drift when we said that you are beginning to drift away from God when **YOU HAVE STOPPED TRUSTING JESUS!** When we stop trusting God in the everyday activity of our life we are beginning to drift. Rather than ask God how He is going to solve our current situation and trusting Him to handle it, we start taking matters into our own hands and looking to ourselves to find answers. We said, an anchor is only as strong as the rope that tethers us to it and if Jesus is our anchor then the rope that tethers us to Him is our FAITH in Jesus and His promises. Rather than let “WHAT IF” questions sever us from the anchor of our soul, we need to learn to counter our WHAT IFS with an attitude that says, “EVEN IF .... I will trust in the PROMISES of God.” If we want to prevent spiritual drift in our lives we can't afford to stop trusting Jesus.

Last Week we talked about the second sign indicating we are drifting in our relationship with God and that is - **YOU HAVE STOPPED HUNGERING!** Just like TRUST, when we stop hungering for God we begin to drift spiritually because we look to other things to fill the God sized void in our heart. In order to prevent this type of spiritual drift we highlighted three ways we can create a deeper hunger for Jesus? First we need to start by **asking for more of Him!** Too many times we get satisfied with what we have and forget that there is so much more of Him to experience! Secondly, we need to take time to **feast on Him!** When you realize how awesome He is you will only want more. We need to feast on His word. Feast in His presence through worship. Feast and marinate our soul in His presence through prayer. But whatever we

do we need to feast on Him for He is GOOD! And thirdly, we need to make sure to **fast from the things that cause us to drift from Him!** Just because something is lawful for you to do doesn't mean it is beneficial. There are some things (they may even be good things) that can become a distraction to your relationship with Jesus. We need to be aware of anything that may spoil our appetite for God and seek to remove these things from our lives. Btw, if you missed any of these previous messages you can go back and listen to them or watch them on the Vertical App or through our Vertical Youtube page.

And that brings us to today and the third sign indicating we are drifting in our relationship with God and that is - **YOU HAVE STOPPED HEALING.** Let's **PRAY** together and then we will unpack this concept a little further.

If you have ever had a deep flesh wound you know that it is vitally important to keep a close eye on it and protect the wound so that it doesn't get infected. This requires making sure the wound is cleaned, properly bandaged, as well as monitored for any signs of infection. We know that healing is taking place once the wound stops seeping and a bandage is no longer required.

Wounds of our soul can be very similar to flesh wounds. Some are just minor scrapes while others cut very deeply. And just like a flesh wound, those that cut deeper take a little longer to heal. You see we are physical, emotional, and spiritual beings and each part impacts the others. If you are wounded spiritually, it can affect you physically and emotionally and mentally. Also, just like a flesh wound, if a soul wound doesn't heal it will continue to seep. Sometimes it may seep with a low view of yourself that can impact your confidence. It may seep with anger and bitterness that makes you toxic in a relationship. It may seep with feelings of extreme betrayal thus keeping you from being able to trust others and so on. But one thing is certain. If you are not HEALING you are SEEPING and if you are seeping it is a sure bet that you are DRIFTING from God. **Christine Cain** says this, **"Seeping is always a telltale sign that we are drifting. That we have quit going to the Healer for healing."**

If we don't let God heal our wounds then our wounds will seep with fear, insecurity, shame, bitterness, frustration, and anger. This seeping will impact the way we love others, show mercy, extend grace, and even grant forgiveness. These wounds will drive us to isolate, lose ourselves, overwork, overthink, and overindulge. They will even lead us to feel deeply depressed, ready to give up, and utterly hopeless. If we don't let God heal our wounds this is what we can expect!

The reality is that if we live in this world long enough we will experience wounds of many kinds, but we have HOPE! Here is what Jesus says.

**John 16:33 (NIV)** "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. There will be things that will cause wounds in your life. **But take heart!** Jesus tell us. Why? Because, **I have overcome the world.**"

How did Jesus overcome the world? He did so with LOVE! In fact, He overcame the wounds inflicted on Him by our sin with His LOVE for us!

**John 15:9-17 (NIV)** **9** “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. **10** If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his. **11** I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. **12** My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. **13** Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. Notice how many times we find the word LOVE repeated in these first 5 verses - It is repeated 7 times. When God repeats something in His word that is important and we need to pay attention to that because it is significant. **14** You are my friends if you do what I command. **15** I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. **16** You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. **17** This is my command: Love each other.

Wounds will be inflicted on us by others. The question is, **Will you let JESUS heal your wounds with His LOVE?** **Isaiah 53:5 (NIV)** "But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed." If you have let Jesus heal you of your wounds then it will be evident in the way you live out your daily life and your life will look like what Paul is urging the church at Ephesus to do in **Ephesians 4**

**Ephesians 4:1-2 (NIV)** As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. **2** Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love

This is how those who have been healed by God’s love should live: like one who is following Jesus and been healed by Him

- 1) Are you walking in **HUMILITY** and **GENTLENESS** instead of arrogance(considering others above yourself as Jesus did you)?
- 2) Are you walking in **PATIENCE** instead of being short tempered (extending grace as you have been given grace by Jesus)?
- 3) Are you walking In **LOVE** instead of hatred and wrath (as you have experienced from Jesus)?

Do these characteristics describe how you live? Because here is how the unbeliever lives.

**Ephesians 4:17-19 (NIV)** **17** So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. **18** They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. **19** Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed. The one who does not know God and has not been healed by his love, it stands to reason that they would live for themselves because their hearts have been hardened by the wounds inflicted on them by others and by their own sin. Rather than run to God for healing they have built up a wall around their heart and they have made their own way looking out only for what benefits them. Notice what Paul says next.

**Ephesians 4:20-32 (NIV)** **20** That, however, is not the way of life you learned **21** when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. **22** You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; **23** to be made new in the attitude of your minds; **24** and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

**25** Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. **26** "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, **27** and do not give the devil a foothold. **28** Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.

**29** Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. **30** And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. **31** Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. **32** Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

If you want to experience the true HEALING of your soul it is imperative that you exchange revenge and retaliation with **FORGIVENESS!** This is what God's love for us teaches us and this is how you experience true healing of your soul. As we have embraced and experienced forgiveness from Jesus we should be willing to extend forgiveness to those who have inflicted wounds on us. Forgiveness unleashes healing ointment on our soul. But if you refuse to do so it is hard for you to experience healing in your own life.

However, when it comes to experiencing God's healing we need to be mindful of a couple of things lest we become disillusioned with the healing process that God wants to establish in our lives:

- 1) **Healing takes time!** Soul wounds do not fester overnight and very rarely do they heal overnight. Healing is a process. Sometimes God is trying to grow your faith in the process and so healing will come in stages as you walk with Jesus by faith. The blind man in Mark 8 experiences this very reality.

**Mark 8:22-23 (NIV)** They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him. They knew Jesus had the power to heal so much so that all He needed to do was just touch Jesus and he could be healed. But in this case Jesus was up to show us something different. Because even though Jesus touches him he isn't healed immediately. **23** He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. This was stage one. Jesus was testing the man to see if he was willing to walk with Jesus even if it didn't happen instantly? Are you willing to walk with Jesus even if He doesn't bring healing immediately? Sometimes it is about the journey, not just the destination.

**Mark 8: 23-24 (NIV) 23** He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. When he had spit on the man's eyes and put his hands on him, Jesus asked, "Do you see anything?" **24** He looked up and said, "I see people; they look like trees walking around." This was stage two. He is making progress but he still can't see clearly. Don't we have places where we are walking with Jesus and we are somewhere between healed and not healed. Notice, Jesus is still with Him and He is very well aware of the situation. He is also with us and fully aware of our situation as well. Do you believe He can bring it to completion? **Philippians 1:6 (NIV)**"being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." -

**Mark 8: 25 (NIV)** Once more Jesus put his hands on the man's eyes. Then his eyes were opened, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. How often do we walk away half way through the healing? If we keep our eyes on Jesus and stay near to Him without drifting away He will see our healing through. **Healing takes time!**

2) **Don't allow yourself to become isolated!** Sometimes when we have been wounded we want to isolate ourselves from others around us while God wants to use others in our life to help with our healing. The body of Christ is designed with this in mind.

**2 Corinthians 1:3-7 (NIV)** Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, God wants nothing more than for you to be comforted and healed. **4** who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. One of the things that helps us make sense of our difficulties and wounds is how part of our healing process includes our ability to help others who may be in a similar place. You allowing someone to help you will not only aid with your healing but may also help them with theirs as well **5** For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ. **6** If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. **7** And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort. Times of difficulty are best experienced in community with others around you and allows others the opportunity to be the hands and feet of Jesus Himself. You can't heal outside of a sterile environment. If you are surrounded by infectious elements and contaminants, your healing process will be dramatically hindered. The Body of Christ should be a sterile environment that will help with your healing.

**Hebrews 10:23-25 (NIV)** Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. **24** And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, **25** not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. Until Jesus returns and completely heals all wrongs and takes away all suffering, we have the church to encourage us and help us find encouragement and healing through LOVE. **Healing takes time and don't allow your wounds to isolate you from the Body of Christ!**

3 ways that scripture says God brings healing:

**Through Jesus's sacrifice on the cross:** "But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed." - **Isaiah 53:5**

**Through obedience to God:** "5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. 7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil. 8 This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones." - **Proverbs 3:5-8**

**Through prayer and confession with other trustworthy believers:** "15 And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. 16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective." - **James 5:15-16**

To try to skip any of these, means we may be avoiding God's process of healing. We need to trust the Lord through these 3 ways and not avoid it.

Are you HEALING or are you SEEPING? A heart that is drifting is a soul that is not **going to the Healer for healing.**

## **Worship Comes Back Up**

### **Invitation:**

Have you been healed from your sin by trusting in Jesus?

Are you experiencing daily health and strength through obedience?

Have you drifted and you need to come back?

Is there someone you need to FORGIVE?

Are you on the brink of a healing breakthrough but you have grown impatient and started drifting from Jesus