

Healing in Christ III

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[0:00] I'm not seeing the numbers. Yep, it's working. Okay, great. All right, let us pray.

O God of heavenly powers, by the might of your command, you drive away from our bodies, our souls, our minds, all sickness and all infirmity. Be present in your goodness with these gathered here, that our weakness may be banished and our strength restored, and that our health being renewed, we may bless your holy name through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. Well, you may have noticed that the stronger of the two of us is not here tonight. She has done a swoop with older daughter Laurel and granddaughter Allison to Disney World. I put them on the airplane in Albany early this morning, and she reports that they are having a wonderful time, but I am not holding it against her. So she'll be back for next week, but she's not here tonight, and I'm going to try to fill in for her. Once again, if I could have a couple of people do some passing out. Well, don't really pass out. Pass out the sheets.

We're going to cover several areas tonight. What we didn't get to cover last week was post-traumatic stress, which is a really important area in our lives. And then we're going to talk about the three big inhibitors to healing the heart. And those are anger, bitterness, and we go two ways with this, either depression or violent words and actions. And then we're going to talk about the 21st century family. To use some kind of cut short phrases, it ain't Ozzie and Harriet no more. And then finally, we're going to talk about addictions, 21st century. So let's jump right in to post-traumatic stress disorder. Most of us have had a traumatic experience in our lifetime, and it's normal to feel frightened, sad, anxious, or even disconnected. Usually that fades. When it doesn't fade, we are suffering from a trauma, post-trauma, and it can be really tough for us.

It can seem like you'll never get over what happened. I don't know if you've ever had an altercation with someone. You probably haven't. But you know, when you have an altercation with someone, that night you think of all the things you should have said. You could have wanted if you had just said that, and you play it and play it and play it and get grooved into your head.

[3:35] Well, with trauma, that's what can happen to the point where we're not functioning the way we'd like to. And so we sometimes think we're not normal. And guess what? We're not at that point. And so we need to look at how we can deal with trauma and its effects on us. Now, I know that Forrest was in the thick of fighting and war, and I was. I don't know if anybody else was. But when bullets are flying at you, and you're firing at people, that kind of ruins your day. And Forrest was going bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang. And I was going like, drop bombs, drop bombs, drop bombs.

And people were going bang, bang, bang, bang, back at him. And people were going bang, bang, bang, bang, back at me. And we suffered a lot of months of that kind of situation. A lot of times with this post-traumatic experience, we can be okay after we get out of the trauma for a while, and then it kind of comes and bites us. In my case, I had to deal with some things like, from the time I left Vietnam until today, I don't dream.

I think my mind doesn't let me dream. Isn't that something? But every so often, I'll wake up punching. Now, a lot of people do that without trauma, but one time I put a hole in the closet door, and I had no idea what was going on. It was post-traumatic stress.

Another thing I had to deal with, and I got some prayer for that, and it helped. You know, up here in the northeast, it sometimes snows. Have you noticed that? And sometimes in a driving rain, a snowstorm, the snow's coming in your windshield.

You know what that looks like? Anti-aircraft fire. And just as I spoke it, I had chills down my back. Now, I'm not dramatizing this for any other reason to say that.

[5:46] You can be affected by a trauma. And guess what? It's not just war they figured out. It can be a natural disaster you were involved with, or a plane crash, or a car crash, an attack, a sudden

death of a loved one, a rape, a kidnapping, an assault, abuse, either sexual or verbal, or childhood neglect.

Have I missed anybody? We have all suffered trauma. And sometimes we're not even aware that that thing that happened 40 years ago is still affecting us.

So the question is, what do we do about it? See, a definition of post-traumatic stress is psychological shock.

It is popped into our head, and it swims around in there, and we can't get rid of it. And it affects how we relate to God, how we relate to others, how we relate to ourselves.

Psychological shock. It can even affect your memory. So you could sit there and remember what happened when you were five years old.

[7:11] And you can't remember what you had for lunch today. Isn't that something the way that works? Sometimes it moves our memories in places we don't want to go.

It's a very, very serious kind of a condition in our lives. And it's not one that God wants, does it?

Does God want us to have post-traumatic stress?

Absolutely not. So how do you know when you've got it? Well, there are some key points here. One is re-experiencing the traumatic event like it's happening again.

It just comes upon. Sometimes it's a flashback that'll do it. Sometimes something triggers a memory. I was talking about the snow coming. Sometimes it's something somebody says, but you find yourself re-experiencing that traumatic event.

And it upsets the insides of you. You might have, your blood pressure might spike. You might, you know about alcohol and drug use.

[8:23] We'll talk about that later. At my age, I don't have to drink alcohol or smoke dope to get the effect. All I have to do is stand up quick. Or anyway, so, that went right on by.

Another thing we can do is avoid reminders of that trauma. So if I got hit on 4th and Elm, I'm not going by 4th and Elm anymore.

I'm going to drive miles around it so I don't have to be there anymore. If I was assaulted by someone, and even if that person says I'm sorry, I don't want to be by that someone anymore.

I don't want to be there. I want to avoid the reminders of the trauma. If you find yourself just continually avoiding the situation or the person, you may have post-traumatic stress.

And then finally, an increased anxiety or emotional arousal. We talk about that with people who lived through a lot of bombings.

[9:38] They are hyper-vigilant. And just even fireworks, maybe a car backfiring, sends them right back. We talk about our troopers who were in Iraq and those who were in Afghanistan today.

What's the big thing that gets a lot of them? Some roadside bombs. Some of these troopers report to me that they're in beautiful, sunny Arizona.

There are no roadside bombs. What are they doing? They're driving along, watching for roadside bombs. So those are symptoms. We get intrusive, upsetting memories of the event.

We get flashbacks. Some people get nightmares. Feelings of intense distress, especially when you're reminded of the trauma by a word or an action.

And we get intense physical reactions. Pounding heart. Rapid breathing. Nausea. Muscle tension. Sweating.

[10:49] These are all my body saying, you've been traumatized. All right, so what do we do about that? Is that something we live with?

And another slight problem is if you're attached to somebody, if you're married, you can visit that on your spouse. And that's called secondary PTSD.

Because, like for instance, now Mary Ellen is standing right here beside me. For a while, she had to be careful sleeping beside me because she didn't know if she was going to get punched out. Now, fortunately, I never hit her.

I would never hit her. But even in my, whatever, nighttime trauma. Sometimes the spouse has to deal with alcohol abuse. Anger coming out of nowhere.

These are all kind of symptoms that affect my life and those that I'm involved with. Now, this anger thing, boom, like, have you ever heard, have you ever had somebody that just out of nowhere, they get really angry?

[11:57] Why is that? You know, just, just because I'm missing a sock from the wash. Why would I get so angry about that?

Okay, you know, there was a couple that, that was a normal thing. You lost my socks. Finally, the wife said, you know what, I don't think this argument is really about socks.

So what do we do, all right? So if we are people who are involved in the healing ministry, or if we are people that need healing in this area, there are some points we need to ponder, some hints. First of all, John 16, 33. Anybody, does that come to anybody's mind? John 16, 33.

Somebody have a Bible? Look that up, would you? Oh, great. Would you look that up? John 16, 33. 16, 33.

[13:03] 16, 33. I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble, but take heart, I have overcome the world.

that word, trouble, is the same word as trauma, tribulation.

So Jesus said, I've told you all this so that in me you might have peace. In the world you will have trauma, but be of good cheer because what? I have overcome the world.

Jesus can overcome post-traumatic stress. It happens. It's happened. It's going to happen.

Some of you know a wonderful guy named Nigel Mumford. Yeah, okay. Yeah, we, most of us know Nigel Mumford. Where do you, what country do you think Nigel is from?

[14:05] England. And he was a Royal Marine and he was involved in the troubles in Northern Ireland. He went along after Ireland for like five years, four or five years, and then he got a report that some Marines had been killed in Northern Ireland.

He thought they were his recruits. He was a drill instructor. He lost his voice. He couldn't speak. He was put in the hospital.

He spent months in the hospital. And finally he was medically retired. Post-traumatic stress disorder. Today he has a ministry to combat veterans to deal with the trauma.

To get free of that which holds people back from experiencing what God wants them to experience. They're captive. In many ways of life we become captives.

God wants us free. Set the captives free. Nigel's been healed. He's now a wounded healer. We are called to be wounded healers as Christians.

[15:22] So the first thing in dealing with this is to either understand I got it or if we're praying for someone to diagnose it in our minds, you've got some post-traumatic issues they have to deal with.

Those things in my experience don't usually get thrown out with a one minute prayer session. Some individual prayer ministry is required for God to get at the root of that trauma and cast it out.

Normally what that entails is helping the person go back to that point where the trauma happened. A lot of people don't want to do that.

But the healing is a lot easier once you can go back to that point, experience the senses of what you went through there and then recognize Jesus pulling you through.

Now I worked with a young Marine. He was not young anymore. He was when I worked with him probably 60. He had never been able to get over and his incident that happened to him in Vietnam.

[16:40] He was what was called a point man. You know that term for us? In a patrol sometimes the sergeant or the commander will put somebody on point that they don't like very much because the point man is going ahead and guess what happens?

He gets shot first. Well in this case this gentleman said to his sergeant I've got a bad feeling about going around this corner.

Sergeant said get your butt in gear and get around the corner. Well the ambushers were really smart. Guess what they let the point man do? He walked by and then when the main element came they crushed him.

everybody got killed except the point man and he carried false guilt for 40 some years.

Well we had to go through that experience. The sweat was coming down his face as he relived what he had gone through and in the end Jesus showed up and said blank blank that was not your fault.

[17:59] And he believed it. From that day on he was healed from the trauma. That's what's got to happen to us. Much of what we are traumatized about has nothing to do with us personally.

Some of it does. Most of it doesn't. But we're carrying that. It's almost like this big bucket of guilt we're carrying. It's called if only. And you know what God likes to do with buckets of guilt?

Dump them. And sometimes in prayer we need to help someone just dump it. So that's just an introduction to post traumatic stress and how we can either be healed by approaching someone we respect or a clergy person or a person that's a good Christian person and laying it out.

Reliving it. Let them carry us along. And sometimes we can do that for others. Sometimes treatment is important. What we might call medical treatment.

With some people they're doing some of the eye movements. There's something Yes, yes, right.

And the VA is doing a pretty good job with that.

[19:27] Often our eyes get triggered. Random eye movement. Yeah, that's good. That's right.

Random eye movement. And our eyes will trigger an experience.

And they're doing work with how to work with our eyes so that it doesn't trigger us. So sometimes a medical professional can help us with that.

But it takes more than medicine to heal us. It takes Almighty God working with someone we love to get us clear of that. And so it could be that one or more of you have to deal with that.

Or maybe you have a special call to be with others who may have suffered a trauma such as you have. So put that in your prayer bank and see where that leads you. I'm going to move on now to the next subject.

The big three inhibitors to the healing of the heart. Have you ever had a dog that when injured goes off by itself and what will it do if you try to help him?

[20:33] It'll bite you. He doesn't know that you're trying to help him. So he's in a sense nursing his own wounds and that doesn't always work. We have a little of that in us.

We live, our energy often comes from anger which comes to bitterness which then comes to depression or violent words and actions.

Now depression doesn't always come from anger by the way or bitterness. Depression as we mentioned several weeks ago is a wicked monster that wants to grab us.

especially women. So I'm not saying that if you're suffering with depression it's because you're bitter. But it's one of those three that often captures us and keeps us from experiencing healing in our lives and our bodies even.

So let's talk about those three. Anger. Anger is a feeling. Bitterness is an attitude and depression or violent words or actions is an action.

[21:46] So we've got the feeling, the attitude and the action. What did James say about your anger?

Remember in James 1.19 anybody remember that? Well that was Paul. don't let the sun go down upon your wrath.

And he got that straight out of Psalm 4 verse 4. In other words if we carry anger for a long time it will capture us. All of us are going to get angry.

It's a human feeling. It's what you deal with it that counts. Now what did Paul say? Be angry and sin not.

So there are ways obviously Paul is saying there are ways of handling anger and there are ways of not handling anger. And I still haven't gotten that figured out yet. Mostly I've got it figured out.

[22:45] Don't let the sun go down in your anger. Yeah. That means if you're married to someone you try to have it out before you go to sleep. And as one husband says I've been awake for three weeks.

But it's try to work it out now rather than gunny sack all this stuff. You know what I mean? You take the anger and you throw it in the backpack. And what happens after a while? The backpack's too heavy.

It'll knock you right over. So the scriptures say we need to deal with anger. And we need to deal with it constructively. bitterness. Okay. What happens if we don't deal with it constructively?

It moves into the category called bitterness. Anybody have an idea of bitterness in the Bible?

Somebody look up James 3.14.

James 3.14. But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth.

[23:59] Okay. So I think that James is not fond of bitterness. Do you think? No. And who inspired James in writing?

The Holy Spirit. I.E. Or not I.E. What's the word we use for equals? Equals. Okay.

Equals the Holy Spirit not being happy with bitterness. Someone look up Hebrews 12.15. Okay.

Who's got that? See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God, that no root of bitterness bringing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled.

Thank you. What's called in the Bible the root of bitterness? It digs down into your soul. It is an attitude.

[25 : 03] Bitterness, whereas anger is a feeling, bitterness is an attitude you develop from harboring anger. Everything's bad about bitterness.

Nothing works right when you're bitter. Nobody treats you right when you're bitter. bitter. You don't wonder about God doing the right thing because you're just bitter inside.

Have you ever had bad water, bitter water? It's awful. You just spit it out. Something that should refresh you just turns your stomach. Bitter wine.

Ever had a bad swallow of wine? Oh, Sally knows. Whoa. That's a good thought. I love your face on that. Well, that's what happens.

That's what happens to our souls. When we allow the root of bitterness to blossom, to grow, it just puts everything into a down attitude in our lives.

[26 : 11] And then, if we don't deal with that root of bitterness, the action might go in one of two ways. If we're really nice people, we will turn it in on ourselves and become depressed.

If we are more aggressive people, it will come out with violent words or violent actions. A lot of people who do verbal abuse are angered about something that was done to them that they've never reconciled.

It turned to bitterness and then it turned to violence. They're not inclined to go bump off a 7-Elevens store. You have 7-Elevens in Syracuse? You got some?

Okay. You know what I'm talking about then. A burned dairy store. Okay. So, they won't do that, but they're inclined to visit on those they love ridicule, verbal abuse, or even worse, sometimes punching your lights out.

So, you can see that there's a downward spiral in this whole thing. somebody look up Isaiah 60, verse 18. Got it?

[27 : 44] Go ahead. violence shall no more be heard in your land, devastation or destruction within your borders. You shall call your walls salvation and your gates praise.

God does not want, nor has he designed us to be violent. Now, sometimes in our world we have to use what's called managed violence.

cops, soldiers, managed violence. But God does not have a desire for us to be violent people. Neither verbal violence, nor physical violence. We can defeat that. God really wants us to be freed from depression.

depression is, I don't think that started in the mid-20th century for women, by the way. I think it's been a chronic thing for women.

[28 : 49] I'll use a stereotype. You spend time with this wonderful husband who spends wonderful time at his job. When you're 30, you've got two kids.

Your husband is too tired, tired of giving baby talk, and you want to escape. Mary Ellen would not mind me telling you this, but when she was 30 years old, she said she wanted to have an adult conversation with me.

I said, okay, let's do that. She said, I'm moving to a hotel. I said, I don't think this is an adult conversation I want to be a part of.

Well, that certainly got my attention, didn't it? She didn't want to move to a hotel. She just wanted to get free because depression was doing her in.

Thank the Lord, we were able to work that out. Just last week, she started to get better. It's worked out really well. She told you about her episode with depression a couple of weeks ago.

[30 : 03] So, this has been a style for a long time. And then, you know, for some women, their husbands die before they do.

And that's, I don't know, I have not lost a spouse, but a lot of you have. That can be really hard. And sometimes depression is what sets in when we haven't been able to grieve well.

God wants us to be free from that. Now, one of the basic ways of getting through all these is the word forgiveness.

To forgive and be forgiven. I mentioned this morning that when Jesus taught the Lord's Prayer, it had three things asked of God.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, and hallowed be thy name. Right? If we could live that way with God, asking that we just totally hallow his name and we don't use it for other purposes, if we continually pray that his will could be done, that his kingdom could come on earth, we would start to

get healed right then.

[31 : 24] But then Jesus gave three petitions that we give as human beings. The first and foremost, forgive us our trespasses. As, by the way, we forgive those who trespass against us.

And then the others are, help us to avoid temptation, give us victory over the evil one. You know, it's funny, deliver us from evil. In the Greek, that's the evil one.

It's actually, Jesus is telling us to pray for deliverance. Isn't that amazing? We don't often think about that when we say the Lord's Prayer. So, the forgiveness part, or as they say today, the forgiveness piece, is really important to healing for us.

But it's also the hardest. I think if, you know, in the calmness of life, we would all love to forgive people who have hurt us.

And we'd all love to be forgiven by those we've hurt. It doesn't always come quite as easy. My good friend, his name is not Jorge, I'll just use it, my good friend Jorge was with me in the Marine Corps and he was always a little jumpy.

[32 : 46] I don't know why he was jumping. Forty years later, I had coffee with him and he said that he had been abused by a pedophile priest when he was 10 years old and an altar boy.

And it wasn't just one time. He was stuck into this episode after episode after episode. And he said, I am so mad, I wanted to kill myself.

And I said, well, let's talk about forgiveness. He said, I knew you were going to say that. I'm not forgiving that guy. He ruined my life. And he bounced right back.

You know, to this day, I don't think my friend Jorge, that's not his real name, I still don't think he has peace in his soul. Is he able to forgive that priest? Yeah.

It's an act of the will. Will he forgive that priest? Not yet. he's clutching it. It's hurting him.

[33 : 49] On the other hand, the story I gave a couple of weeks ago about the young woman who had been abused by her father. Eventually, she was able to forgive her father.

He'd been dead for a long time. She was able to actually forgive him. And life returned. forgiveness is God's way for us to get healed from these things.

So, hints to prayer, hints for healing on these things. I've got a sheet for us to look at.

But first of all, I'm going to say a prayer for us, okay? Let us pray. Lord, open our hearts to your Spirit's comfort.

Father, we thank you for the example of your Son. He qualified to be our Savior by experiencing the full measure of our human pain.

[34 : 57] He not only knows what we think, but he knows what we went through. As David cried out, so did Jesus, in anguish and suffering.

and in such a way as to teach us how to live, how to understand, how to accept our emotions without being controlled by our emotions.

Help us, Father, to share in the suffering of Jesus for his sake. We simply want to be like you. Help us to open our hearts and listen to the messages inside our hearts.

Help us to remove the barriers which lock us away from our loved ones, from ourselves, from you. These barriers which keep us from truth and intimacy. Help us to see when judgments power our negative emotions.

[36 : 03] we want to forgive those who have taught us to close our hearts because of their hurtful actions, words. We ask your forgiveness for judging them.

For Jesus, we choose to be real as you are real. Amen. And let me also now say a prayer for depression.

Let us pray. Father, we ask you to come into the darkness that is our life right now. All our energies, spiritual, emotional, and physical are used up.

Lord, we are calling out to you. We think we have heard no answer. Because nothing changed. So now everything has come to a standstill.

There's no more will to try. There's no hope. There's no point to living. We're depressed. We ask you, Lord, to come and kindle the pilot light of our spirit.

[37 : 18] Little by little, and at a pace we can bear, please increase your light and energize our spirit. Jesus commented, let the warmth of your present flow from the center of our very being.

Flow outward. We may not feel anything right now, Lord, but that's okay. today we know that you in time touch our lives step by step, rising us, raising us from depression.

And, Father, we ask that you bless our sleep so that rest reaches deep into the exhaustion of our bones. Begin the renewal process.

Lord, we ask in faith and confidence, Father, in the name of Jesus. Amen. So, let's move on to the next subject.

Are we having fun yet? 20th century family. It is not Ozzie and Harriet anymore.

[38:41] things have changed. Have you noticed? Everything seems topsy-turvy. And it even affects our own families.

It even affects us. So, I've got several issues there. One, parent-child issues, spousal issues, sibling issues. Let's talk about parent-child issues.

kids. The setup is already there. As kids grow older, they push their parents away because they want to be independent.

The other day, I was walking hand-in-hand with our little granddaughter, who's 19 months. We came to the steps, and I started to lift her up the steps.

She pushed me away and climbed up the steps herself. It was like, I don't need you to do that.

That's what happens as children grow up, and the arms come out.

[39:41] At the same time, we try to grab our kids. We want to protect them. We think they're stupid. They're dumb things. We want to grab hold of them and pull them in.

That's a setup, isn't it? And so, we cry when our kids get old enough to say, I don't want to be here anymore. And not only that, but I've got the means to get out.

And we don't understand what happened. In the scriptures, it says, parents do not provoke, I think it may have said fathers, do not provoke your children.

I have to tell you, I think I provoked one of our children. I didn't know I was doing it. I was just trying to get her straightened out. But you see, that sometimes is called nagging.

And how do you like, anybody like, hand up if you like being nagged. Okay, the only people that like being nagged are the people that walk around with a sign on the back of their shirt that says, kick me, please.

[40:50] So what happens is, when we provoke our children or continually nag them, it has the opposite effect of what we'd like.

And sometimes years of contention follow. In the same way, it says, children, obey your parents.

See, the Holy Spirit has set down some great guidelines. But sometimes when I'm growing up and I'm feeling rebellious, I don't want to obey. I just don't want to do it.

Part of that is honestly just growing up, but it gets turned sour. And I turn my parents off to me. Same thing happens.

Years of contention results. Did you ever hear of King David? what was his son's name that he had a little bit of trouble with?

[41:51] Absalom. Absalom was I'd like to wring his neck. He did everything you could do to punish your dad.

And in fact, he suffered for it, didn't he, in the end. Yeah. The Bible over and over again talks about parent-child difficulties.

we should not be surprised if that happens in our lives. There's a way to pray about it. There's a way to come out of it. Sometimes we're going to be very old when we finally come out of it.

In a few occasions, we're going to have to deal with it when we get to heaven. That's going to be positive, but the way we're going to deal with it is look at all the years on earth that we just had ourselves in the pit when we could have worked it out.

Spousal issues. Probably nobody in this room has ever had an issue with their spouse. I'm going to go back to premarital counseling now.

[43:00] If you got married, you did not marry that person you married to. You married the person you wanted to be married to. There was a mask that you plastered on that person you married.

That's called the romantic stage of marriage. How long does it take for the mask to come off? About one wedding ring. Sometime in that first year, you begin to realize, this is not the person I married.

What happened? Somebody switched people on me. They don't do it the way they're supposed to.

This only happens in 100% of all marriages. The disillusionment sets in.

Now, if we can live through it and not say it was a big problem and we ought to get divorced or, well, let's just stay together, we'll just hate each other, you can come to the third stage and that is you actually marry the person who's there in front of you.

Warts and all. And you reach an agreement, a detente, where you're going to live with each other, you're not going to try to change each other, you're going to love each other into beauty.

[44:16] Now, does that always work? No. You ever hear the story about the couple? They have been enjoying, fighting for the last 40 years. They've enjoyed a bad marriage for 40 years now.

It's called, remember that movie, what was it, the Battle of the Roses? The War of the Roses.

Neither wanted to back down. And so each thought the other was pushing them.

Did they ever work it out? Anybody remember the movie? Sort of. God wants us to work it out, to work through it. We can do that.

God wants to work through that so that the joy becomes part of our lives. Retirement is a time when this sometimes crops up. When one spouse retires, usually the guy, the woman remembers, I married you for better or worse, but not for lunch every day.

go do something. And then you have to renegotiate the whole marriage. Well, marriage is a series of renegotiations.

[45:30] That's just what it is. But unless we get prayed through and unless we pray for each other, unless we eventually come to a point where we're prayer partners, we're missing God's beauty in marriage.

One of the neatest things for me is to, to hold Mary Ellen's hand as we pray together. Wow. You know, it took 15 years before we could do that. We started by just, an old priest told me what to do, so I thought I'd do it.

All right. He said, first of all, just hold hands for a minute before you go to sleep. And each of you pray silently. Okay, we did that. That was a success. Okay, now hold hands and say the Lord's prayer together.

But we did that for a couple of months. That was, that was neat. That worked all right. Had to fight about who said R first. Okay. All right. So we decided to divide it up.

It's my turn to say R. Okay, your turn tomorrow night. And then finally, we got to say, let's, what, what prayer concerns do we have before we go to sleep? Incrementally, we became prayer partners.

[46:43] I think for people who are married, I think God wants them to be prayer partners, to share everything about our lives together, not to wall off prayer.

Okay. And then, oh boy, sibling issues. First murder in the Bible was what? Cain and Abel.

Who killed whom? Yeah, why did Cain do that? He was angry and he was jealous. He thought he'd been rejected by God the Father and that Abel was the fair-haired son.

He slew his brother. And we've been having sibling things happen ever since. I mentioned to you before, I was the fifth of six children.

My little sister and I came late in life, so we got to watch our brothers and sisters fight. Wow. I mean, I didn't need to go to the movies. I could just kind of watch my brothers and sisters.

[47:52] It was really exciting. You know, and we all loved each other and we all got over it eventually. Sometimes, though, we don't get over it. And the hard part is when one of the parents or both of the parents die, isn't it?

And then the siblings have to deal with the property. About 80% of those problems bring Raymond Dague into the arena.

It's really a tough thing. Sibling issues really eat away at us. My brother closest to me, we were in college together, he went to Oswego State.

I went to college in Florida. I still remember the day when I was a junior when I heard he had been elected president of his fraternity. What do you think I did?

I maneuvered myself to get elected because I didn't want my brother to be president of the fraternity and not me. Isn't that amazing? We joke about that today.

[49:00] Hard part was he got elected, I didn't. But sibling issues can just take its toll on us. And finally, hints for healing.

Here we go, forgiveness. All of these issues deal with forgiveness. forgiveness. A lot of the times when you're praying for people, you're going to be praying for family issues.

At the same time you're dealing with your own family issues. That's why you're a wounded healer.

And one of the worst things to do when someone comes up to you and has a family issue is to say, now I have that family issue too and let me spend a half hour telling you about how I solved it.

That's the first temptation is to go into my memory bank, my experience bank, and tell you how it ought to be done. There are three rules for healing that I don't know who developed back at least in the 1930s.

Listen, love, and pray. We listen to the person without dumping advice on them. We listen to the feelings, to the hurts, to the misunderstandings.

[50 : 25] We don't correct. We listen for reality. Sometimes we help validate. Tell me more about how that happened.

Validate. And then love. If we don't have love for the person, we're going to become, and I love clinicians, clinicians. This is nothing against clinicians.

But we will become a professional clinician. Is a clinician supposed to get emotionally involved? No. In loving a person, we are going to get involved with them whether we like it or not.

The question is will we get so involved that it affects our reality? But loving has will and it has emotion. Our hearts go out to the person.

And then pray. Obviously, if they're coming to be with us, they really would like us to pray for them. And that's got to be the heart of what we do. As we've listened for feelings, for thoughts, for attitudes, for actions, we love them in spite of this difficulty or more because of what they've gone through, then the Holy Spirit informs us how to pray.

[51 : 43] Listen, love, pray. I've got another prayer. I'm going to say it on our behalf. Please listen into it and pray it as I pray.

This is a forgiveness prayer. You may not want to forgive. You may have someone you're never going to forgive. Well, okay, then try to work up the desire to forgive or the desire to desire to forgive.

Move along the continuum. So let me say the prayer. Lord, we don't know how to make forgiveness happen. We can't cleanse our heart or change our feelings.

We don't know how to trust and we're afraid to hold our heart open to another. But today, Lord, today, we're making the choice to forgive.

we know we'll have to choose again and again until you make forgiveness real and complete in us. But please, God, give us the willingness and the strength to persevere in choosing until forgiveness is accomplished in us by your power.

[53 : 01] we choose to forgive our father. We choose to forgive our mother.

We choose to forgive our siblings. We choose to forgive our children. children. We choose to forgive all those who have made our lives miserable.

Father, we right now want to let go of all resentments and bitterness stored in our heart. Wash us, Lord.

Wash us clean. Forgive us for condemning others. Forgive us for making judgments that we're not responsible for.

Lord, give us a new and right spirit within us that will enable us to hate sin, but instead to look with your compassion and love upon the sinner.

[54 : 19] to truly hate the sin, but love the sinner. Heal the wounded heart of the child within us. Lord, pour your love in and we even ask that you would bless those who have wounded us.

Forgive us, Lord, for projecting our childish pictures in relation to parents onto you. Forgive us for projecting our childish pictures onto others, especially those we love.

Bring those pictures, Lord, to death. Bring our childish ways and expectations which have been perverted to death.

Let your light shine into the hidden places of our hearts. Enlighten the eyes of our hearts, Lord, to see you and love you as you really are and to walk in your way through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen. we have time to talk about 21st century addictions. They are legion.

[55 : 44] You know, when I was a boy, addiction meant too much alcohol. People that took heroin or marijuana were those people who lived in Greenwich Village.

hippies. Well, even before they weren't called hippies. What were they called before hippies?

Bohemians. Wait a minute, I'm Bohemian. Anyway, so, oh, you're not talking about the nationality.

Okay, I'm sorry. All right. So, they came in onesies and twosies. Today, they just come flooding in. Usually, when someone has one addiction, they've got 20.

And, you know, there's a book called the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders called DSM. Medical people know about that book.

They used to have just one kind of disorder when it came to addiction. It was called substance abuse disorder.

[56:46] Some of you remember that. And, addictions were a chronic relapsing brain disease. dopamine was a reward from the substance and it flooded us.

And, what did we get out of it? Pleasure. Immediate gratification. And, we've seen the movies where they shoot up, they're all nervous and they shoot up and they go, relax.

If any of you, any of you had to take pain medication, you know where that piece just floods all over you and you say, you know what? this feels pretty good.

And, the guy on the radio Rush Limbaugh, remember him? He got stuck into that. He had to get healed from painkillers.

The dopamine gave him pleasure. The dopamine gives us pleasure. Well, so, substance abuse has to do with alcohol, stimulant use, drug use, coffee use, a lot of things that just, did I say coffee?

[57:58] No, is there any coffee? I'll wait until I have some later. Okay, so, okay, but today, the DSM has other kinds of addictions.

They're called behavior, nerve behavior addictions. gambling is today called an addiction, and it even has some of the same things happening in the brain.

I don't know if you've ever been caught in a gambling addiction. I have not, but I've talked to people who have. They will get money from anywhere to bet it because they know they're going to win, and if they lose, they've got to get more money because they know they're going to win, and they get a rush just placing the bet.

Another thing that's happening is now called internet game disorder. Same rush. Isn't that amazing?

We talked about if you want to really exact punishment on someone, take away their device. Some of you say, I don't have a device anyway, I don't care.

[59:10] But it's funny, we were, last night, the four of us, Mary Ellen, Laurel, Allison, and myself were in the restaurant, and there was a break.

We were finished eating, and we were waiting for the check. At one point, I glanced, and there were four people on their little device, and I said, the family that does devices together is going to stay together.

But I need to tell you, I'm not addicted at all. Let me check if I got any emails here. No, I don't. But if you play internet games, I've never gotten into that, but that really can grab a person.

You get a rush on that. I don't know how to do internet games, and I've asked Mary Ellen not to teach me, because I don't want to do that. Well, okay, we have sex disorders.

We've got food disorders. Anything that becomes obsessive or compulsive becomes an addiction for us today. And that's why they're legion.

[60:18] We've gone from substance abuse disorder to nerve behavior disorder. We're stuck.

And so, you know, they have the old explanation, how do you know when you have this disorder? disorder, when it makes you miss your responsibilities. You don't go to work, you don't go to school, you don't go to church, you don't make your appointments because you're doing that which you're addicted to.

That's one. Another is physiological tolerance to its effects. Whereas it used to take a six-pack, now it takes three six-packs, right?

Can you imagine? Some of you can. I cannot imagine drinking that much beer. But we get a tolerance to it. Need more. With all the other addictions, same thing that happens in our minds, in our hearts, in our bodies.

And then we crave the substance. The gambler craves betting. They'll do almost anything to get the money to bet, including stealing from their spouse, stealing from anybody, hawking stuff.

[61:45] And then finally, trying to quit numerous times and never succeeding. That's the tip off. You're caught. And then making excuses why I can't stop.

It's her fault. Okay? So, we also get caught up in, as we get caught in these addictions, other things pop out, and that's maybe good, so we can deal with them.

Obsessive compulsive disorder, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, Borderline personality, narcissism. They get all tied in with the addiction.

Now, you don't have to be addicted to have these mental situations, because usually that's chemicals, and you didn't have any control over that in the first place. But it gets all tied in together,

and pretty soon we're just a mess.

So, what are some hints? interventions? Well, intervention, anybody been involved in intervention? [62:52] Does anybody know what that means? Yeah, yeah. An intervention is having various folks go in to talk with a person who's caught, and explain the behavior and what it's doing, and maybe even give an ultimatum.

And the object is to get the person to seek treatment. I always recommend that there be a professional in that group of interventionists.

Twelve-step programs. There's a twelve-step program for almost anything. The reason there is is that it often works. The people that put together the twelve steps were Christian believers.

That's where you talk about a higher power, right? I worked in Manhattan for a while, and I was at the gym tying my shoes, getting ready to go out and jog, and there was a lady doing her exercises. And she was obviously talking to her sponsor. And the conversation went, well, sure I'm consulting my higher power. My higher power is the goddess of the seas.

[64:00] Well, she was serious, and I thought, you know this higher power thing, you know, could a refrigerator be your higher power? Yes. Higher power is anything outside you, you see.

Well, the guys that did the twelve-steps didn't think it was goddess of the seas or a refrigerator. They thought it was almighty God, the father of Jesus Christ.

And they believed by these steps, you went through an inventory, you confessed your sins to people, you made amends, you actually forgave yourself, you had daily activities, make a meeting a day for 30 days.

That's something. Often, people in twelve-step groups reflect the church more than we do, because they become brutally honest with each other.

together. And how does a twelve-step program meeting always end? They say the Lord's Prayer. Isn't that something?

[65:08] Doesn't matter where you are, when the meeting's over, you stand, hold hands, and say the Lord's Prayer together. That's not a bad situation, the twelve-step program. Sometimes we need detox to actually dry out from whatever it is, that's gotten hold of us.

And there are places you can go for that to happen. You can look that up. And sometimes a person needs to go into some therapy, not physical therapy, but mind therapy, to get at the root of why this happened to me.

You-ins and me-ins are the prayer. We're the prayers. We're called to help identify. Now, I'm going to finish here just in a short minute.

Alcoholics Anonymous is anonymous. But my oldest daughter is happy for you to know this. She went down the aisle in a Baptist church when she was 22 and gave her life to Christ.

The counselor said, something's up with you. I think you're hooked on alcohol. And guess what? She was.

[66:29] She's been a faithful member of AA for 25 years. She's been a sponsor. But part of that was just coming to grips with who she was.

Sometimes we can identify that in a person and help them come to that reality. Sometimes someone does that for us. And it's really important.

The last thing I want to do is pass out one more sheet. Let's see, you were one of them and you were the other. We're going to end tonight with the whole deal of a curse on one's life.

I don't know if any of you have ever heard of that. We had a really good rector in the Episcopal church. This is some years ago.

Named Jeff. Sorry? No. And I just made that name up. So named Jeff. And Jeff got, you know, a bigger and bigger church and pretty soon he became rector of a really big church.

[67:43] And one day he got up in the pulpit and he said, I'm going to resign my position and resign my holy orders because someone put a curse on me 20 years ago and I haven't been able to shake it.

I've done everything I can and I can't shake it. And so he resigned. And I don't know if he ever got clear. Curses are something we don't think about much today.

We think when we are a curse, we think of some kind of a, I don't know, I'll use the word gypsy, a gypsy person putting a curse on us. But you know what?

Which is stronger? The Lord Jesus Christ or a curse? The Lord Jesus Christ is a lot stronger than a curse. We can break curses. And I don't know if you have a curse.