

WORKING THROUGH PAIN & RENEWING THE MIND

By Ben Bennett

“In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil.” Ephesians 6:16 NLT

The enemy often attacks us through fiery arrows in the form of lies that have been rooted in our soul as a result of our painful life experiences. Often, these lies can operate at a subconscious level, causing great difficulty in identifying them, their source, and steps to practically work through them. These painful experiences and lies can easily lead us to develop ways to cope in life through emotional health issues and habitual sin. Throughout this document, you'll find a couple practical solutions to begin the process of identifying pain in your life, working through it, and renewing your mind in light of your true God given identity.

TOP 10 MOST PAINFUL EXPERIENCES EXERCISE

Make a list of your top 10 most painful experiences in detail, focusing on painful experiences that happened during childhood. Please note, some experiences may be infrequent but of high intensity. I.E. the divorce of parents, a death in the family, sexual assault, or physical abuse. Other experiences may be frequent but of lower intensity. I.E. bullying, a somewhat physically or emotionally absent parent, a performance mentality, being controlled, manipulated, or it being communicated that you have to earn the love of friends or family by their words or actions.

For each of the 10 experiences answer the following three questions.

1. What part of the pain am I responsible for, and who do I need to forgive? (Working toward forgiveness is a process that takes time. Forgiving others is crucial to the healing process and allows us to no longer be controlled by bitterness or our pain.)
2. How did this event affect the important people in my life? (How did people respond? Did people stand up for me?)
3. How has this event affected life for me today? (What faulty core beliefs about myself do I believe as a result of this experience? How am I still reacting to these experiences?)

RENEWING THE MIND

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind...” Romans 12:2 NIV

“We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.” 2 Corinthians 10:5 NIV

One of the most practical ways to renew your mind in light of your true God given identity is through meditating on something called Personal Promises. These are simply those times where you've experienced a promise from God about your core identity or who He is. Practically, these allow you to renew your mind and heal from faulty core beliefs.

1. Identify 3 core lies you believe about yourself, God, and others. Often these are directly tied to some of the painful experiences in your life. I.E. I'm worthless, unlovable, can never measure up, I can't trust people, if I let people close they will hurt me, God doesn't love me.
2. Identify a verse of scripture that combats each of these lies. I.E. 1 John 3:1 (I'm a loved child of God).
3. Identify a time in life where you experienced the truth of this scripture and when God communicated this to you. I.E. When I recommitted my life to Christ at a worship gathering, I felt so loved and accepted by God and others and experienced 1 John 3:1. This part is crucial as it engages the right side of the brain, the same place our woundedness is stored, so this helps the truth of scripture sink into our heart, renew our mind, and combat our painful experiences.

Meditate daily on the scripture and the experience. As you meditate on the verse, close your eyes and visualize yourself back in the experience. Meditate on these whenever old faulty core beliefs get triggered.

Lastly, we sin because we are sinful, but we also sin because we are sinned against. We develop ways of coping with our painful life experiences. As you find yourself reacting to stress, difficult situations in life, or going back to habitual sin, ask yourself what pain from your past is getting triggered that may be leading to your specific reaction.