

Resolving Abuse and Trauma

Outline of Behavioral Issues

- I. Behavioral problems can be spiritual, emotional, and physical in orientation.
 - A. We must use good discernment to know where the problem exists.
 - B. I always evaluate spiritual issues in a person's life first.
 1. Salvation
 2. Spiritual/emotional maturity and relationship with Christ
 3. Root issues: bitterness, unresolved hurt, pride, guilt, lack of faith, etc.
 4. Desire to change their behavior
 5. Performance-based acceptance
- II. Behavioral problems come primarily from an inability to self-regulate negative emotions. You need to understand what the causes are behind your inability to self-regulate.
- III. Two Types of Trauma
 - A. Type A Traumas
 - B. Type B Traumas

Type A Traumas

Characteristics

- Comes from the *absence* of good things we should all receive—things that help us have emotional stability.
- Felt when the person understands the good thing that has been absent. The person responds when the painful feelings begin to emerge, leaving a deep emotion of sadness.
- Makes a negative impact on our identity.

Most people find it hard to see that Type A traumas are the cause of their pain, depression, or isolation. Healing is brought about by the presence of real loving relationships.

Attachment pain is a grieving pain that people feel when they experience the loss of what was needed, or when what they needed is pointed out.

Cause of Type “A” Traumas: Not receiving as a child from my caretaker what God designed for me in the bonding relationship.

1. Not being cherished and celebrated simply by virtue of your existence (*Eph. 1:4*)
2. Not having the experience of being a delight (*2 Chronicles 9:8, Rom. 12:10*)
3. Not having a parent take the time to understand who you are—encouraging you to share who you are, what you think and feel (*Job 12:13, Psalm 147:5, Proverbs 14:33, Isaiah 11:2, Proverbs 22:6*)
4. Not receiving physical nurturing—laps to sit on, arms to hold, and a willingness to let you go when you have had enough
5. Not having your basic needs met without your asking or feeling shame (*Phil 4:19, Isaiah 58:11, Matt 6:8*)
6. Not being taught and encouraged to do the hard things
7. Not given opportunity to develop personal resources and talents
8. Not experiencing the bonds of unconditional love (*1 John 4*)
9. Not receiving enough safety and companionship during difficulties so the child can return to joy from the big six negative emotions

Healing

- Healing takes recognizing the extent of the wound, facing (grieving) the pain, and welcoming new life-giving relationships that satisfy the long-neglected absences.
- Healing comes as we forgive those that have caused our pain.
- Attachment pain is subcortical and often unrecognized; someone needs to help point it out. It is obscured by insecure attachments. There are no stories told about it.

Disrupting our Attachment Pain

- Misdirecting our attachment
- Things and short-term relationships
- Blocking our attachment response through sex (orgasm), drugs, and other addictions

Overcoming Attachment Pain

- Recognize attachment pain.
- Learn to return to joy from shame and the other big six emotions.
- Reach adult maturity.

Type B Traumas

Characteristics

- Come from bad things happening to me.
- Are fractures of the mind.
- Can be automatically forgotten if events are particularly bad. This amnesia protects the person from remembering them.
- Inability to return to joy. The person will experience unresolved feelings or thoughts.
- Events can be remembered at a later time, recovered, and healed.
- Some type B traumas are more easily remembered, including the feelings and thoughts that are part of the event.
- When touched off, certain types of B traumas can produce intense feelings that can spill over into other relationships.

Examples of Type “B” Traumas

- Physical abuse, including face slapping, hair pulling, shaking, punching, and tickling a child into hysteria
- Spanking in rage or anger that becomes violent, leaving marks, bruises, or emotional scars
- Sexual abuse including inappropriate touching, sexual kissing or hugging, intercourse, oral or anal sex, voyeurism, exhibitionism, or the sharing of the parents’ sexual experiences with a child
- Verbal abuse or name-calling
- Abandonment by a parent

- Torture or ritual abuse
- Witnessing someone else being abused in the above ways

Healing of Type “B” Traumas

- In order to resolve feelings that come from Type B traumas, the memory that contains the feelings must be uncovered. A general prayer for healing everything in the person’s past does not typically help. The specific wound needs to be “opened up” in the presence of caring persons, along with a prayer for healing.
- Once the dissociative barriers are created to separate the two sides of an intolerable conflict, they will remain until the beliefs seemingly necessitating them are identified, challenged, and adjusted to eliminate the intolerable conflict.

Effects of A & B Trauma

- Negative emotions to self-regulate
 - **Shame**—I am not bringing you joy... (Shame causes a person to want to hide or react in anger.)
 - **Disgust**—I do not want anything to do with that! (Not life-giving)
 - **Fear**—I have got to get away. (Fear controls me.)
 - **Anger**—I just want to make it stop! (Typical primary emotions are shame or sadness.)
 - **Sadness**—I feel a loss of life and relationship.
 - **Hopeless despair**—I do not have the resources to make it happen!
- Two kinds of emotional regulation
 - ◇ **Self-regulation** of emotion—God and me
 - ◇ **Mutual regulation** of emotion—God, me, and someone else

Effects on Behavior

- Borderline personality issues
- Fear disorders (i.e. OCD)
- Depression
- Addictions
- Dissociation

Three Kinds of Fractures

A simple way to think about dissociation is to think of it as instant forgetting—amnesia of a fractured mind.

The brain has a switch that can deal with overwhelming feelings and record them in a place that does not contact the conscious memory.

“DID”	Rotating Dividedness It results when traumas reach the overwhelming level, dissociation occurs, and the personality is fractured into distinctive parts. There may or may not be amnesia, but there is always separation between the feelings, states, or parts. There are very negative feelings stored in some of the parts. Not all these parts get connected to Joy Camp and therefore, they remain stuck. When the stuck parts rotate out, the people remain in fear because the path to Joy Camp is not found.
“Borderline”	Alternating Dividedness People go back and forth between the part of them that is successful and the part that is wounded. The defeating aspect of alternating dividedness is that the successes do not get very far because the wounds keep interfering. The unhealthy responses to pain (eating disorders, alcoholism, abusive or self-abusive behavior) were learned during childhood, and the person senses that there is not other way to respond when the unhealthy patterns begin.
“Split Personality”	Reacting Dividedness These people seem very solid most of the time, but once in a while they just lose control. They have some unresolved traumas both A and B, which are mostly controlled. But when strong feelings surface, they find themselves reacting from the build-up of unresolved feelings that have been stored up inside. Surprised at the intensity of their own reaction, they can lose confidence and start isolating, or get severely depressed and hopeless.

Adapted from *The Life Model*, p. 81-83

Self-Regulation of Emotion

The joy of the Lord is your strength!

- Jesus came to bring us joy (*John 15:9-12*).
- The joy of the Lord is our strength (*Nehemiah 8:10*).

What or who are you looking to for your joy strength?

- Spouse (husband looks to wife for affirmation, wife looks to husband for love and security)
- Performance (in what I do, career, job, children, church, etc...)
- Things of this world (temporal pleasures)
- Your Heavenly Father and relationship with Jesus Christ

Joy and Belonging

- The importance of belonging
 - Adam had a place where he belonged; he fellowshiped with God in the garden. (*Gen. 2:8*)
 - Jesus came to the disciples and brought to them the kingdom of God. (*Matt. 4:17*)
 - Marriage is a place where we belong to another person. (*Gen. 2:24,25*)
 - We are God's children and we belong to him. (*Rom. 8:14-16*)
- We experience joy in our lives when the personal people we belong to take joy in our existence. Joy relationally means that we are "glad to be together."
- Joy strength comes from understanding in our hearts of our belonging to the Lord Jesus Christ and that "in Christ" my needs for love, acceptance, security, and significance are met.
- Our joy is most fulfilled and enjoyed in our relationship with each other. (*1 John 1:1-4*)

Relationships: 3 faces we evaluate (*Mark 12:28-31*)

1. God (Jesus) (*Psalms 16:11, Acts 2:28*)
2. Ourselves
3. Neighbor (third face)

- Our joy relationship with the Lord is not an intellectual knowing, but an experiential knowing. This “knowing” will impact our ability to live from our hearts in love relationships with others.
 - **God takes joy in our wonderful and unique existence.** (Ephesians 1:3-13, 2 Chronicles 9:8)
With this understanding, we experience true joy.
 - **God loves us with unconditional agape love.** (1 John 4:10, 1 John 4:16)
With this understanding of love comes the ability to trust.
 - **God meets our needs without us asking.** (Phil. 4:19, Isa. 58:11, Matt. 6:8)
He brings us life and care that matches our needs, and we can learn how to receive.
 - **God helps us understand the true characteristics of our new heart.** (Ezek. 36:26, Rom. 5:17, Rom. 6:4,11, Eph. 2:4,5, Matt. 12:33, Gal. 2:20, Romans 7:14-26)
Scripture tells us about our new identity in Christ and we begin to organize our lives into a person through relationships.
 - **God provides for us a place of safety and companionship in our time of difficulties.** (Ps. 27:5, Ps. 91:1-2)

Self-regulation of Emotion: God and me (Galatians 6:5)

1. Identify and understand the emotions you are experiencing:
 - **Shame**—humiliation, guilt
 - **Disgust**—not life giving
 - **Fear**—terror, worry
 - **Anger**—irritation, frustration, rage
 - **Sadness**—hurt, sense of loss
 - **Hopeless Despair**—depression, discouragement
2. Rate the emotional level from 1—10 in relation to the event that caused it.
(People will often transfer unresolved emotional issues onto others unknowingly.)

3. Ask these two questions:
 1. Is it healthy for me to feel this emotion at this level of intensity?
 2. Am I willing to look to the Lord while I am feeling _____?

4. Reduce emotional vulnerability.
 - **Look at the event from God’s perspective (faith).** On a scale of 1 to 10, what level would the Lord put on the event?
 - **Pray.** Ask God to bring to your mind any negative thoughts or lies of Satan that are a part of the emotional intensity.
 - **Read God’s Word.** What truth brings encouragement to your heart and exposes the lies that you feel? (*Philippians 4:8*)
 - **Read Proverbs and Psalms** on a regular basis.
 - **Journal** your thoughts and feelings to God.
 - **Seek mutual regulation** if needed.

2 Corinthians 10:5— “*We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ*”

We learn how to handle emotional upset and still “act like ourselves.” (*Psalms 9:9, 59:16*)

Mutual Regulation of Emotion (Galatians 6:2)

(*Ephesians 5:15-32; 1 John 4:7-21; 1 Peter 3:1-17; 2 Timothy 1:7; 1 Corinthians 13*)

Joy-bonded relationships with others mean that someone is glad to be with me.

- Husband/wife (*Ecclesiastes 9:9, Proverbs 5:18*)
- Fellow Christians (*1 John 1:1-4*)
- John’s desire (*2 John 1:12*)
- Paul and Titus (*2 Corinthians 7:5-7*)

Joy strength spiritually, emotionally, and physically is developed through loving relationships. Joyful bonds create our identity (how we see ourselves), our ability to act like ourselves in distress, and our capacity to handle painful emotions. We can build joy strength in our lives if we know how.

1. Accept fear bonds as your first connection (it is often all a person knows) and develop love bonds with others.
2. Stay calm during intense emotion and then move close after the intensity has started to subside slightly.
3. Expect pain and suffering. The stronger the bond, the more pain it will likely have to sustain.

Returning to Joy: Meeting people in their unhappy feelings (empathy), sharing the feeling (sympathy), and letting them know you are still glad to be with them, returns people to joy. Six emotions to return to joy from are shame, disgust, anger, fear, sadness, and hopeless despair.

- Remember bonds form best during difficult times.
- Admit failures and forgive each other, but do not break bonds. Matthew 18
- Learn to resynchronize with someone who is out of tune with me brings joy.
- Return to joy at the end of every day. (Ephesians 4)
- Be glad to be with them in their distress, even if they caused it.
- Share their distress and help them calm down.

Building Joy: Joy comes from attachment and produces love bonds when people are genuinely glad to be together. The main sources of joy are nonverbal: a face that lights up to see us and a warm tone of voice. Touch is third but may have opposite results with sexually abused people (they can initiate).

Abuse (Type “B” Trauma)

We can be damaged by others in a number of different ways. If we want to resolve the damage from our past, it is important that we understand how that damage occurred and the effect it has had on our lives. Many individuals who have been hurt never realize that their feelings of rejection, anger, withdrawal, or negative responses to others are all a result of past abuse. They have learned to lock their hearts and build walls to protect themselves from further pain. However, after obtaining a true understanding of their past abuse, they will be able to follow Biblical steps to resolve the pain through forgiveness and the healing of the Spirit of God.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE is caused by the pressure others place on us, forcing us to react negatively and feel rejected. A submissive, tolerant person may react to a dominant person who seeks to control. A parent may try to break the will of a child without showing love, leading instead to the child’s spirit being broken. The child, not sensing love from the parent, feels rejection. Inwardly, the child rebels, and due to his fear of rejection will emotionally lock inside. Emotional abuse can also occur in a marriage when one controls in the absence of understanding the needs of the spouse, or when one withholds affection to pressure the other to respond.

PHYSICAL ABUSE occurs from inappropriate physical acts that hurt others. It can occur from a parent disciplining too harshly or inappropriately, causing the child to feel rejection and anger from a lack of consistency and love. Physical abuse also happens between siblings or between husbands and wives when one physically hurts the other. People who have been physically abused will be afraid of those who have physically hurt them and will put up emotional walls to protect themselves from further pain, leading to emotional distance in relationships.

SPIRITUAL ABUSE occurs when people are forced to respond against their wills to spiritual principles. People feel pressured and used when truth is communicated without love and acceptance. When Biblical principles are forced on others without love, it causes rebellion in the heart. Out of anger, they react negatively toward God and reject those Biblical principles. Those who have been spiritually abused have a difficult time being intimate with God in prayer. They cannot move toward a close relationship with Him because they cannot trust Him.

SEXUAL ABUSE occurs when a person is used for another’s sexual satisfaction against their will or when they are too young to understand what is happening. There are many forms of sexual abuse all involving taking advantage of another’s sexuality. Feeling uncomfortable in the presence of one who uses you as the object of his lustful thoughts is a form of abuse. Parents inappropriately exposing themselves to their children is another. Abuse also occurs through inappropriate touching of personal areas of another’s body. It occurs through children exposing themselves and fondling each

other. Many children have been abused by siblings or neighbors who have been exposed to immoral activities and want to practice them on others. Also, exposure to another person's pornography is a form of sexual abuse. Being exposed to this leads to thoughts and desires that enslave a person for years to come. Sexual abuse greatly damages an individual. A boy exposed to his father's pornography will be stirred to thoughts and desires that will enslave him to pornographic pictures—leading to masturbation, fondling of others, and other immoral activities. These practices will dominate his life and destroy his ability to be emotionally open in marriage. A girl who has been exposed to her father's pornography will have inappropriate desires such as being touched in a sexual way by young men, and she will dress in ways that sexually attract men.

The guilt and shame associated with sexual abuse prevents emotional openness in marriage. A woman may not be able to trust men, even her husband. Many girls who have been abused struggle with even the thought of marriage and physical intimacy and end up destroying one dating relationship after another. Many men who have been sexually abused are unable to be emotionally open with their wives because of their inner shame and guilt. It is particularly difficult for men to acknowledge abuse from their past. However, it is essential that each area of sexual abuse be resolved so that individuals can be free from the damage of the abuse and be free to respond to their spouse as God intended.

Step 1: Pray. From your heart, pray aloud the prayer on the next page.

Step 2: *Emotional, Physical and Spiritual Abuse Worksheet*

Resolving emotional abuse. In the first and second columns, list each person who emotionally abused you and the way you were abused. In the third column, describe the emotional pain you felt. A list of emotional pain words is provided to help you. If you did not experience emotional abuse, go on to the next step.

Step 3: Resolving physical abuse. In the first column, list each person who physically abused you. Describe the abuse in the center column and your emotional pain in the third. If you did not experience physical abuse, go on to the next step.

Step 4: Resolving spiritual abuse. In the first column, list each person who spiritually abused you. Describe the way that the abuse occurred in the center column and your emotional pain in the third column. If you did not experience spiritual abuse, go on to the next step.

Step 5: *Sexual Abuse Worksheet.* List each way you have been sexually abused. Include the name of each individual or the circumstance and the emotional pain and consequences of the abuse.

Step 6: Pray to resolve each issue of abuse. Using the prayer at the bottom of the corresponding chart, pray through each memory of abuse. This prayer is designed to break the emotional stronghold in order to open your heart again and to assist you in releasing your inner pain through forgiveness. As you are praying, if you feel overwhelmed and tears come to your eyes, stop reading, close your eyes and tell Jesus the pain you are feeling.

“Jesus, I feel so... (tell Him all the pain you are feeling inside as a result of the abuse). Jesus, will You come in and speak cleansing and peace to the pain I feel from the abuse?”

Step 7: Jesus Heals the Pain Worksheet. The Holy Spirit may prompt your heart with a word picture, a thought, or a verse of Scripture that brings peace and cleansing to your heart. As the Spirit of God brings peace and cleansing, write the area of abuse in the first column of the chart, Jesus Heals the Pain. In the second column, list Jesus’ words of comfort. In the third column, write the lies you have believed that resulted from the abuse.

Examples of lies

Emotional abuse by parents:

- *“Nobody cares what I think or how I feel.”*
- *“No one will ever love me.”*
- *“I am unlovable.”*

Physical abuse:

- *“There’s no point in trying.”*
- *“I’m just dust under their feet.”*

Spiritual abuse:

- *“I hate God, He is harsh and unloving.”*
- *“God can’t love me, He has no reason to want me.”*

Sexual abuse:

- *“All men want is sex.”*
- *“All men are dirty.”*

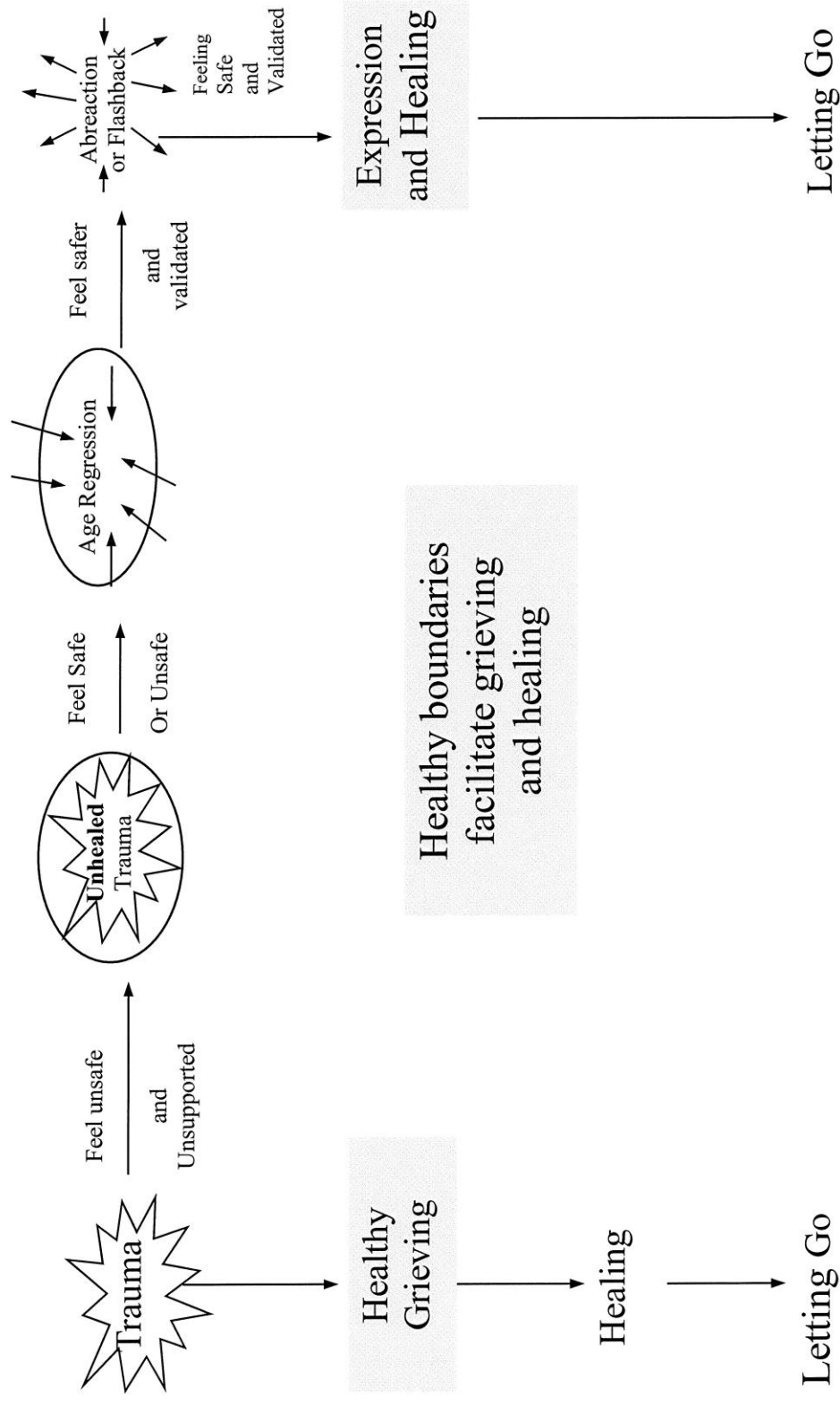
Step 8: Questions for Personal Study. Answer the questions at the end of this chapter for personal study or discussion.

“Lord Jesus, I ask that You heal all the areas of my heart that were damaged through abuse. I give myself to You and ask You to free me from the emotional barrier caused by the abuse in my life. I desire that my heart be totally free to respond openly and not be locked to others or to You as a result of my past abuse. I want to experience Your peace and comfort in each area of my heart that has been damaged through abuse. I want to respond in love under Your creative plan. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.”

Adapted from *Biblical Concepts Counseling Workbook*, p. 68-71

The Continuum of a Traumatic Event and Attempting to Heal it

(From Whitfield 1993)



Emotional, Physical, and Spiritual Abuse

List each person who abused you, the way you were abused, and the emotional pain it caused.

	Person	Describe Abuse	Emotional Pain
Emotional Abuse			
Physical Abuse			
Spiritual Abuse			

*“Lord, I acknowledge and renounce the **(abuse)** that **(name of person)** perpetrated against me and ask You to break the stronghold in my life. I ask You, Lord Jesus, to take back the ground given to the enemy through the abuse, and I yield that ground to Your control.*

*Lord, I choose to forgive **(name of person)** for **(areas listed above)**, causing me to feel **(describe pain)**, and I am willing to pay the emotional pain and consequences that **(name of person)** has caused me.”*

Sexual Abuse

List each time you were abused or taken advantage of and the emotional pain it caused.

	Individual	Emotional Pain
Fondled - -		
Incest - -		
Sexual abuse - -		
Rape - -		
Forced abortion - -		
Forced defrauding - -		
Forced premarital sexual relationship - -		
Forced homosexuality - -		
Sexual harassment - -		

“Lord, I acknowledge and renounce the (abuse) that (name of person) perpetrated against me and ask You to break the stronghold in my life. I ask You, Lord Jesus, to take back the ground given to the enemy through the abuse and I yield that ground to Your control.

Lord, I choose to forgive (name of person) for (areas listed above), causing me to feel (describe pain). I am willing to pay the emotional pain and consequences that (name of person) has caused me.”

Inviting Jesus to Heal our Wounded Heart

“Jesus, I come into your presence now, and I ask you to surround me. I come under your authority and your claim upon my life. I give myself to you—body, soul, and spirit. I give my heart to you, in every way—including the broken places in me. I declare your authority over my heart, for you made my heart and you have redeemed my heart.

Jesus, I invite you into this broken place within me (this wound, this memory). I give you total access to my heart. Come, Lord, shine your light here. Reveal to me all that is going on here. What is this about, Jesus? Come and show me, meet me here, in this place.”

Repentance and Renunciation

“Jesus, forgive me for the ways I’ve mishandled my brokenness. You alone make me dwell in safety. Forgive me for all my self-protection and self-redemption, and for all my false comforters. (You’ll want to renounce specific sins you are aware of here.) Cleanse my heart of every sin by your shed blood.

I now break every agreement I have made with Satan and his lies. (Get specific here. What have you believed, bought into?) I renounce any claim I have given to my Enemy, and in the name of Jesus I command him to flee.”

Prayer for Healing

“Jesus, come now and do as you promised to do—heal my broken heart and set me free. (Listen here for what Jesus is saying.) Bring this place into your love and healing, bring this place home. I welcome your healing, and I welcome this part of my heart home. Come, bind me up and make me whole.”