

COUNSELING THROUGH CHURCH HURT



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Examples of what may be termed as Church hurts

- “My expectations were not met”
- “I was confronted for my persistent sinful behavior”
- “I did not get a position I wanted”
- “As pastor I was dismissed or resigned due to a power struggle in the church.”
- “I am struggling with the moral failure of a church leader”
- “I was deviously removed from leading a ministry by someone who wanted the position.”
- “I was sexually exploited by church leader.”

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The biblical counselor must begin with a sound, biblical understanding of the church.

- The church is the body of Christ with Jesus Christ as the undisputed head of the body. Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 1:15-18
- The church has a mission of giving witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and then teaching those who receive the message how to live as disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ. Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8

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- The church functions in the world through people who:
 - Have been redeemed by the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ Acts 2:47b
 - Are growing through biblical instruction and the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit. 2 Peter 1:3-11
 - Are exercising the gifts of the Spirit resulting in the building up of the body of Christ. 1 Corinthians 12

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The biblical counselor must begin with a sound, biblical understanding of the church.

- The New Testament sets the method the church uses to fulfill the mission of the church: Acts 2:42-47
 - Worship-providing the teaching, setting, and opportunity for people to personally encounter God.
 - Outreach-giving a continually expanding witness to the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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- The New Testament sets the method the church uses to fulfill the mission of the church: Acts 2:42-47
 - Instruction-teaching people the biblical instruction of how to live as faithful followers of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - Fellowship-growing deeper in love and unity among believers
 - Ministry-expressing God's love through acts of service toward believers and unbelievers.

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Some key points to consider.

- The church, the body of Christ, functioning under the lordship of the Head, the Lord Jesus Christ, results in the opportunity for people to grow and mature and does no harm. Ephesians 4:15-16
- The local expression of the church, the body of Christ, is composed of redeemed yet imperfect people who are not always living in submission to our Lord Jesus Christ. Galatians 2:11-14
- There is always also the real possibility that some of the people in the local church are not really a part of the body of Christ. 1 John 2:18-19

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The heart of the issue:

- Church hurts happen when people, in the context of a church, react to people or circumstances according to the flesh, i.e. driven by feelings and desires, rather than responding to people and circumstances based on the instruction of the Word of God as empowered by the Spirit of God.

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Sinful reactions to offenses in the context of church.
(Keep in mind offenses may be perceived, intentional, or unintentional.)

- Gossip
- Vengeance
- Isolation
- Bitterness
- Rebellion
- Despair

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Biblical instruction relevant to church hurt

- Forgiveness, Colossians 3:13
- Accountability, 1 Corinthians 12:14-27; Ephesians 4:16
- Handling conflict, Matthew 18:15-17; Acts 15:36-41
- Reconciliation, 1 Corinthians 5:17-20; Philippians 4:1-3
- Restoration Galatians 6:1-2
- Judgment Matthew 7:1-5
- The purpose and function of the church.

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When someone has been clearly sinned against.

- Some examples:
 - Sexual exploitation
 - Caught in a power struggle not their own making.
 - False accusation
 - Subject of slander or gossip.

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The person who has been clearly sinned against but desires to respond according to the instruction of scripture.

- Listen carefully for areas:
 - where their faith has been shaken
 - Where these events are revealing a misunderstanding or misapplication of scripture.
- Bring the appropriate biblical instruction to address these issues.

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The person who has been clearly sinned against and has reacted sinfully.

- Listen carefully for:
 - misunderstanding or misapplication of biblical truth.
 - heart issues that are being exposed through this ordeal.
- Thorough biblical instruction on forgiveness.
 - God's forgiveness for them
 - Their forgiveness toward the one who has sinned against them.

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The wisdom we apply to any situation will become evident in what it produces.

- *"Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace." (James 3:13-18, ESV)*

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Questions?



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