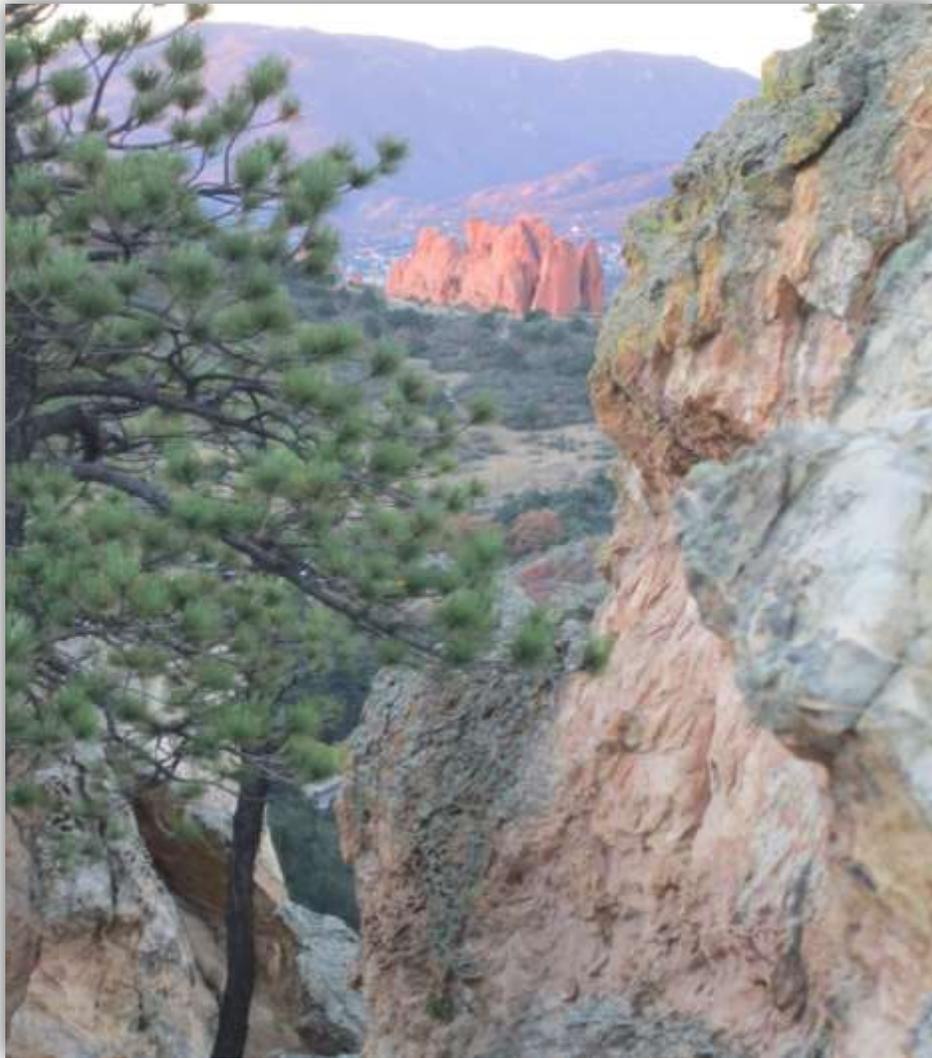


# JOURNEY FROM DESPAIR TO HEALING PART 3: FEAR



**Fear can be a big hindrance. In this section we explore some common types of fear and how to overcome them. Join me as we continue the journey to healing.**

# INTRODUCTION TO JOURNEY FROM DESPAIR TO HEALING PART 3: FEAR

Thanks for your interest. I pray these teaching materials will lead you into a deeper understanding of yourself and of God.

This series on Abuse Recovery is divided into five sections. Each covers an aspect of the journey, including preparation, hindrances and helps, shame, fear, and hope. You may find benefit in studying any or all of them.

The teaching portions are divided into sections short enough to read during any brief time period. They are designed to provoke thought and introspection and to direct you to more study as needed.

You will find a study guide at the back of each piece. It is also divided into sections that correlate with the teaching portions. The study questions can be used on your own or with a group for discussion. Like the teaching, they are meant to stimulate soul-searching, as well as God-seeking.

Each teaching and study guide section may be removed and perused separately. Reorganize them as you wish!

The materials are taken from my own experiences, study, and understanding. They are not intended to take the place of teaching or counseling, but to supplement them. If you are seeing a counselor, you may consider them as a part of your healing journey.

Blessings—

CF Sherrow

Cords of Grace Ministries

## PART 1 IS FEAR HINDERING YOUR HEALING?

### What makes you feel afraid?



If you saw an angel, for example, would you be afraid?

When an angel appeared to folks in the Bible, they were always greeted with “Don’t be afraid.”

Even the Luke account of the most joyous occasion in history, Jesus’ birth, tells us the announcing angel said, “Fear not.”

Honestly, there are too many kinds of fear to number. Studies tell us that fear of public speaking tops the list for most people, along with fear of death. **But fear of change is right up there, too.**

*Healing is change. And we fear what we don’t know.* Clients have told me they are afraid of being healed because they don’t know who they will be. (Been there.) Will they even like themselves after healing? Will they lose their sense of humor, their problem-solving skill, their empathy?

**The fear of the unknown fights with the fear of staying in the familiar.** At least we know how to deal with our current pain. It may not be what we truly want, but it’s what we know.

*God understands our fear of change. After all, He knows the future. And **while He heals us from our past, He helps us live in the present.***

As He rebuilds us, He doesn't "toss out the baby with the bathwater." No, He takes the portions He created and restores them to their original, sanctified and healthy state.

*The only parts that are gone are those that were created in self-defense. Those parts were never meant to be there in the first place.*

Don't let your fear of the unknown stop your progress. Remember, God is already there. Jesus walks the path with you. And Holy Spirit guides your way.



Put your hope in God.

Allow His perfect love to overcome your fear.

He knows who you were meant to be.

**And it's glorious!**

## PART 2 I'M AFRAID I'LL NEVER BE HEALED!

I always had this fear during my healing journey: *This is all God has for me and I shouldn't expect more.* Does that ring a bell with you?



After going through all the torment in our lives, it's easy to slip into thinking like this. We can feel like we don't deserve any more than what we already have. We don't deserve to be completely healed. We don't even deserve God's love.

Well, guess what? Like all of the enemy's lies, this one has a kernel of truth. *You and I DON'T deserve His love or His gifts.*

Our feelings lie, too. **The truth is that our healing has absolutely nothing to do with what we've earned or deserve.** Or how we feel about ourselves.

Our emotional healing is dependent upon only three things:

1. **God's love for His children.** *That love is His very make up, and can't be changed.*
2. **Our obedience.** *We have to cooperate with the process. (Don't you just hate the "P" word? It always means we can't get what we want immediately. We have to have patience—another "P" word!)*

3. ***Our willingness to accept and receive.*** *If just our minds accept His healing and love, those gifts don't have an opening to our hearts. That's the only place the truth can take root, grow, and change us. We can accept cognitively that healing is our birthright as God's children, but we don't receive it.*

So when you hear that little voice in your head saying, "you don't deserve to be healed," or loved, or whatever, try this little maneuver:



**AGREE WITH IT. JUST FOR A MINUTE.**

Say, "You're right, I don't deserve it. But I belong to Jesus, so I'm going to talk to Him about it." Then ask Jesus what He has to say. You can bet He'll reassure you of His love. Then He'll tell you He paid the price for your healing and you don't have to earn it. It's part of your inheritance in the Kingdom.

**You are a child of the King.**

All you have to do is ask and then wait for the answer. That little voice will be stilled. Oh, it will come back and try again, but just keep taking it to Jesus. He never fails.

And eventually the voice will give up.

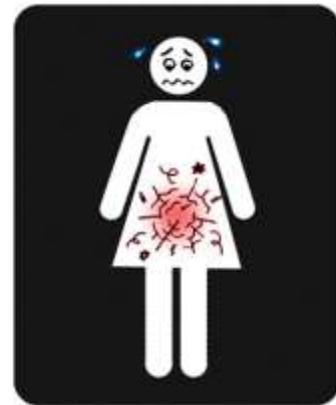
## PART 3 I'M AFRAID GOD MIGHT NOT WANT ME TO BE HEALED!

*Have you ever thought something like this?*

*“Maybe God has a higher purpose for my emotional pain. After all, He put me in the family (or any other situation) where I was abused. It’s probably His will for me to live with this pain—He can get glory from it.”*

I’ve heard people say things like this. And it really hurts to think they truly believe it. (If you are in the group, ask Jesus if He will get glory from your pain. Don’t take my word for it!)

**Of course, we will have trials and tribulations—Jesus said so. But temporary troubles aren’t the same as lifelong pain.**



Scripture is chock full of references to healing, mostly physical but some emotional. Jesus Himself declared in Matthew 15:26-28 that healing was bread for the children (God’s kids, like you and me!). That sounds to me like He wants us to be healed. **And not just partway, but completely.**

*The sentence at the beginning is simply a lie.* And like all the lies the enemy tells us, it has a kernel of truth: God CAN get glory from any situation. But to think that He wants us to continue to live in torment, in emotional anguish, so that He can garner a bit more glory?

***I don’t think so!***

Jesus said that if His people didn't praise Him, the very rocks would cry out (Luke 19:40). **If dumb old rocks could do that, why would God need us to suffer continually for a bit more glory to be given to Him?**

Folks in wheelchairs can certainly live a full and fruitful life and can do a lot in this world. Certain professions offer great opportunity to them, but they still are limited by their physical condition.

Abuse survivors start out as though they are in wheelchairs. And, just like a physical handicap, that emotional pain hinders them. **Wouldn't God get a lot more service from someone who was emotionally healed, strong, and whole?**

I admit I was able to minister to others before and during my healing journey. *I ministered with what I had already been given, but couldn't go further than that (II Corinthians 1:4).* However, I can do a lot more now. I am surer of God's love and of Jesus' strength. I can talk about my stuff (with God's guidance) to those who are willing to listen, all without fear of being judged.

My healing has become a powerful base of operations. I could never have done this much before.

Remember, His love heals. And that Love is infinite, powerful, and YOURS--before, during, and after the healing journey.



**God wants you to be whole.**

Now that brings Him bunches of glory! He points to you and says, "Hey, look at my daughter! Isn't she beautiful and strong? She pursued healing until she reached it. **I am so proud of her!**"

## PART 4 I'M AFRAID GOD'S MAD AT ME!



**Does it ever feel like God must be mad at you?**

When do you feel that way?

For most of us, that feeling shows up when we think God is holding out on us. When He promised us something (like healing) and we aren't seeing it happen.

Or we can feel it when bad things are happening in our lives.

It can all be pretty scary, especially if it reminds us of past abuse. Or the actions of a past abuser.

Even if you were in trouble with Him, if you sinned on purpose or if you were following a path you absolutely knew was wrong, He wouldn't attack you.

Please be assured: **God isn't mad at you. Disappointed, possibly. Hurt, maybe. But not full of rage or malice . . . No matter what you may have done.**

*I think a lot of our concern comes from not understanding the differences between discipline and punishment.*

It's unfortunate that modern society has seen fit to lump them together, muddying the original meaning and often causing confusion. We have also confused justice and vengeance. (The language of accurate translations of the Bible, of course, relies on the original meanings. Thank goodness for concordances!)

According to Merriam-Webster,

***dis·ci·pline:***

*noun* \ 'di-sə-plən \

*training that corrects, molds, or perfects the mental faculties or moral character*



***punishment:***

*noun* \ 'pə-nish-mənt \

*suffering, pain, or loss that serves as retribution;  
a penalty inflicted on an offender through judicial procedure*

This definition shows clearly *that discipline and punishment, though related, are not the same things*. Discipline is guidance; punishment is the consequence or deterrent after bad behavior is practiced.

**God's discipline is loving**, no matter what your parents or your church or anyone else told you. The Bible says that He disciplines those He loves. If you are a child of God, you *will* receive discipline. In essence, **He will teach you right from wrong**. He will guide you in the way you should go.

Isaiah chapter 30 talks about the rebellious children of Israel. God promises to guide them if they return to His ways, saying in verse 21 (NAS) *"Your ears will hear a word behind you, "This is the way, walk in it," whenever you turn to the right or to the left."*

I find that very reassuring. He won't refuse to talk to me; my job is to listen.

Since you are His child, *if* you need to be punished (pretty rare, in my experience) it's not to injure you. **It's to get your attention and change your behavior before you cause damage to yourself or others.**

This subject has caused a lot of confusion. People have misused Scripture to justify abusing children.

*("Spare the rod and spoil the child", anyone? The "rod" referred to in Psalms and Proverbs is the tool shepherds use to guide the sheep. They tap gently on their sides to direct them to the right or left. Psalm 23 says "Thy rod and thy staff, **they comfort me.**" Doesn't sound like pain and destruction, does it?)*

Maybe that kind of spiritual and physical abuse happened to you.

I'm so sorry. I know how much it hurts.

But for healing to occur, our hearts have to learn the truth.

## PART 6 I'M AFRAID GOD WILL ABUSE ME, TOO!



*The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He makes (allows and enables) me to lie down in green pastures and leads me by quiet waters* (from Psalm 23:1-2).

You've probably heard Psalm 23 more times than you can count. It's a beautiful picture of peace and protection.

This Psalm explains the shepherd-sheep relationship from the sheep's perspective.

*All we like sheep have gone astray, and each has turned to his own way* (from Isaiah 53:6). **Could this be an illustration of . . . us?**

You see, domestic sheep are not all that bright. Not particularly brave. Certainly not coordinated. And they don't have much in the way of defensive weapons.

Did you know that if a sheep falls into a narrow ditch on his back, he can't get out? He doesn't have the flexibility or strength to extricate himself—and it doesn't matter if he fell in because of his own actions, or if another sheep pushed him (poetic license, here!). **He's stuck and has to wait for the shepherd to help.** And if the ditch fills with water, that poor sheep has had it. His fleece will weigh him down with all the water clinging to it.

**Kind of like us. Our fear, pain, and sin cling to us, making us vulnerable to the waves of adversity and attack.**

*"Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me"* (verse 4). How could a rod be comforting? Shepherds do not beat the sheep they take care of. The **rod**, a long

straight stick, is used to tap the sheep to show them the way to go. It's used like a horse's reins. **It's for guidance, not punishment.**

The **staff** is the thing that looks like a cane. **The hook on the end is used to pull sheep from precarious positions, like the poor creature in the ditch.**

The shepherd's equipment is intended to protect the sheep from getting lost, from predators, from their own stupidity.



**And that's how God trains us, His sheep.** Though the comparison may not seem flattering, Scripture says that we are His people and the sheep of His pasture (Psalm 95:7, Ezekiel 34:31). God directs us and guides us. He loves us.

**He shows us the way we should go and keeps us safe in it.**

***God does not . . .***

***Never has . . .***

***And never will abuse you.***

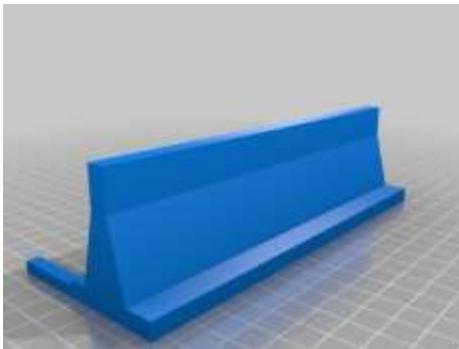
***He is not an abuser.***

## PART 7 GETTING RID OF THE LIES

### What can you do if you can't believe God isn't mad at you or He won't abuse you?

It's tough to get rid of the lies that have been inserted into your life and your soul. It can be hard to ignore that voice.

**But that voice *is* lying.**



Those lies cause a disconnect or barrier between the head and the heart. That's why a person can tell you all sorts of true and wonderful things, but you still won't be able to believe them. The barrier that walls off your heart has to be broken somehow. You have to be able to receive the truth from God—straight to your heart.

**Now is the time to reach for hope.**

(You may find it helpful to refer back to section two for suggestions on building up hope.)

You know, I've never really gotten into the whole "positive affirmation" thing. I always felt like I was lying to myself when I said things like "*I am a worthy and wonderful person,*" or "*I accomplish great things*".

You know the sort of statements I mean. Most of them are useless, in my book.

**But quoting scripture verses out loud is different.** The Bible says that God's word will not return without having an effect, but it will accomplish the purpose for which it was intended (from Isaiah 55:11). That purpose is to uplift you, His child, and to give you hope.

Here are a few to begin with:

- **Jeremiah 29:11**

*For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.*

- **1 Peter 1:3**

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*

- **Romans 15:13**

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.*

- **Numbers 23:19**

*God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?*

- **Zephaniah 3:17**

*The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.*

**God is the source of all truth.  
Ask Him to reveal His truth to your heart.**



**Then listen for the answer.**

## **PART 4 WHAT IF I CAN'T FIGHT LONG ENOUGH FOR MY HEALING?**

### **Courage, my friend!**

You have already proven your strength by surviving all the enemy has thrown at you. **You have the right stuff!**

God provides all we need to reach Him, and He wants us to reach Him even more than we want to. How cool is that?

**Paul declared that he could do all things through Christ who strengthened him.**

Do you believe Christ gives you strength? Even when your faith wavers, even when you feel like you can't take another step, Jesus is there. He reaches out His hand and draws us along the path. He lifts our feet above the rocks that make us stumble.



*I believe in you, too.* I know that you can and will make it.

Why?

***Because I did.***

This survivor of ritual abuse, growing up with a dissociative disorder and emotional shutdown, developing PTSD—made it!

God provided the people I needed, with the knowledge they needed, at the time I need them . . . TO HELP ME.

I even asked Him about it. After a major episode of healing and deliverance, the people who were planning to move to America from England and base their ministry here found their visas were denied. The news dashed my hopes for them and for other survivors.

Then something glimmered in my spirit. I asked God a question: “You wouldn’t have sent them all this way just for me, would you?” (Not a lot of faith in that one!)

His answer blew me away: “Why not?”

*This wasn’t a time for me to feel proud, only privileged. And humbled.*

The message from Father was just that. He was my Father and, as such, would provide for my needs. Even if He had to move a powerfully ministering couple several thousand miles to do it.



*God Heal  
My Heart*

Of course, others received from Him through Joe and Sara King, too. God is economical in His workings. And He loves and provides for all His children. Whether they take advantage of the provision is up to them.

**Ask Him to provide for your needs.** He is faithful. Keep your eyes open to see His provision. Set your sights on the prize—health, healing, wholeness. Keep your feet pointed forward, even when it’s time to rest.

Soon you’ll be up and on the road again, making new discoveries about yourself and your journey, and about your God.

You’re bound to find shame along the way. It’s the most common complaint among survivors. Section Four explores shame.

## STUDY GUIDES

### Part 1 Is Fear Hindering Your Healing?

1. Try to put words to any fears about being completely healed. Write a list, present it to God, and ask Him for the truth about each one.
2. Do you think you are afraid of change? What evidence do you have?
3. Have you ever tried to overcome fear and failed? What happened?
4. Please ponder this: the fear of staying where you are vs. the fear of change. Do you feel either one? Which seems stronger? List three things you can try in order to get past the fear.

## **Part 2: I'm Afraid I'll Never be Healed!**

1. Have you sought healing/counseling/ministry/therapy in the past and felt like it did no good? What happened?
2. How have your expectations for healing been shaped by past experiences?
3. Have you ever wondered why you seem to believe things in your heart that your head knows are lies or just plain wrong? What have been your thoughts and questions about the situation? It is hopeless?
4. How can you obtain truth? How important is truth to the healing journey?

## **Part 3 I'm Afraid God Might Not Want me to be Healed!**

1. Have you ever felt like throwing up your hands and surrendering to your pain—forever? Where was God in your thoughts and feelings?
2. List some verses that tell us about Jesus healing people. (It doesn't really matter what type of healing!) What hindered or helped them receive healing? Were all healed instantaneously?
3. Refer back to your list from #2. How do these verses indicate God's love and desires for us? Remember, Jesus only did what His Father wanted Him to do.
4. Have you ever asked God if He gets glory from your living in such deep pain? If not, do so. Wait for the answer then write it down.

## Part 4 I'm Afraid God's Mad at Me!

1. What have you been taught about God's anger or wrath? Is it true or not, according to scripture?
2. How does thinking about God's anger make you feel? Why?
3. Make a short list of the differences between *discipline* and *punishment*. Use examples from scripture and from daily life.
4. Is fear of punishment hindering your relationship with God? How might it interfere with your healing journey?

## **Part 5 I'm Afraid God Will Abuse Me, Too!**

1. List some characteristics we have in common with sheep, flattering or not.
2. Think about some reasons the Bible may compare us to sheep.
3. In scripture, Jesus describes himself as the Good Shepherd (John 10:11). He makes a clear difference between a good shepherd and a "hireling" or employee. When you compare the two, do you feel safer? Why or why not? (You may also use a modern comparison of Jesus and certain "hireling" ministers.)
4. Does a good shepherd abuse the sheep? What would happen if he did?

## **Part 6 Getting Rid of the Lies**

1. Can you name some lies you've believed? Where did they come from?
2. How have you tried to counter the lies in the past? What success and/or failure was the outcome?
3. Have you ever been told, in essence, to "think happy thoughts" and it will all go away? Did you try that? What happened?
4. Do you have any favorite scriptures that help you counter the lies? How do you utilize them? Do you feel like God gifted you with any of them?

## **Part 7 What if I Can't Fight Long Enough for my Healing?**

1. Have you ever had to struggle to overcome something in your life (except for your abusive history)? How did you go about it? Where was God in your struggle?
2. Can you look back and see times when God sent just the right person(s) to help you? Or when He sent you to just the right place for healing? What does that tell you about Him?
3. Have you looked at God as being your father, but your father left a lot to be desired? Is there judgment in the way you see God? Does that judgment interfere with your faith?
4. Do you believe God will supply what you need for your journey? Why or why not?
5. I know you have a fair amount of internal strength. Otherwise you wouldn't be reading this and steeling yourself for the healing journey. Where do you think that strength comes from? How can you get more when it's needed?