

Should We Recover?

So many hurting people ask these questions:

“Should we recover, and if so, how”?

“Is it even sensible to make an attempt at getting over the past or should I just let it go”?

“What in the world do I need to recover from? I’m not sick! I just have a couple of behaviors I’d like to get rid of, but people will just have to learn to put up with my idiosyncrasies until God takes them from me. I put up with theirs, and anyway, it’s just who I am! I’ll just pray about it and God will take this from me.”

Others have prayed and pleaded for needed relief for years, but it doesn’t seem to come. Disappointment leads to discouragement, and eventually they give up on God and everyone else. Is there any hope? Are there solutions? Does God’s word have an answer to this dilemma? Most definitely so!

First of all, we need to understand that God’s enemy has an agenda. His agenda is to see to it that we are destroyed, that we are un-savable. Read in Ephesians 6:12 that **“our struggle is not against flesh and blood but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”**

In II Timothy 2:26 we are told about those who the enemy has ensnared – who need to “escape from the trap of the devil who has taken them captive to do his will.”

We believe that the enemy has created a paralyzed condition of our senses so that we don’t even hear warnings or if they are heard, they do not effect our hearts and reform our lives.”

Secondly, we must realize that **God** has an agenda, and in the end, He **is the victor**. His agenda is spelled out from Genesis through Revelation, and simply stated is that that **we are worth saving** and that **He will supply all that is necessary** to see that we are saved. Beyond saving, He wants us to experience life in its abundance.

The enemy has been using his method for many years. He sees to it that, in our character-forming years, we do not receive all the emotional nutrients necessary for a healthy emotional life. One of the greatest pains he inflicts, is rejection, which inevitably creates feelings of hopelessness. When we are hopeless, we doubt God and doubt that we are redeemable. Remember what doubting God did to Eve? We stray from the Father with whom we truly long for a relationship. We develop unhealthy methods of getting our unmet needs met, and these methods create self-destructive addictions and destroy our relationships. And who gets the blame? God does. And who suffers? We do!

We are instructed that the one thing we take to heaven with us is our character. **Character is the sum total of our thoughts and feelings**. When we harbor resentments, bitterness, anger etc., we

severely damage the immune system of the body and eventually destroy ourselves physically, emotionally and spiritually. That's accurate science.

Ephesians 4: 30-32 counsels us: ***“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate one to another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”***

The Old Testament counsels us in Lamentations 3:40: ***“Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord.”*** In the New Testament, speaking of partaking in the Lord's Supper, we are told: ***“A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.”*** II Corinthians 13:5 counsels: ***“Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves.”***

This process of self-examination is not an easy one, and we may feel that we are being torn to shreds by what we confront, but this is a work that must be done.

If we look at the story of Saul in the Bible we can see that it was his stubbornness, his refusal to acknowledge his sinful thoughts and behaviors that made him a hopeless case. The Lord in His mercy sends words and experiences of reproof to save us from ourselves, but most of us will not submit to the reproof and admit our wrong ways. We stubbornly insist that there is nothing wrong with us and that we have done nothing wrong.

Often in the Christian life, we seem to allow the atoning blood of Jesus to go as deep as the stain of our sin, but we must also allow it to go deeper – down to the pain in the life that causes us to sin. **Jesus came to relieve the pain as well as the stain!**

So we begin to look at the causes for the symptoms felt and experienced in the life. Just as a physician seeks the causes for a pain or a body malfunction, and seeks to treat the cause rather than the symptoms, so we must seek the cause of the emotional malfunction. Once discovering that childhood is what sets us up for adulthood and those experiences to discover what damage then has caused the pain we feel today.

First of all, we need to understand a simple explanation of how the mind works. **Human beings are designed to remember – not to forget.** We store the memories of every experience we have had in life, and those that have emotion attached to them are the easiest to recall – like it or not. Some memories are hidden, as it were, in a locked file drawer so that they won't sneak out to hurt us again. When a stimulus comes to us, from the outside world or from a thought that we generate, we automatically go through our memories and pull out those that relate to the stimulus, especially those containing emotion. We respond out of the one or more with the greatest emotion. This is why so many of our reactions are overboard, rather than just responses to the current situation.

While it is impossible to alter history, **it is possible to remove the negative emotional charge from the memories**, thus making them less effective in orchestrating today's thoughts, feelings and behaviors.

Matthew chapter 18 tells us that if we have an aught with our brother (or sister, mother, father or another) we should go to them. Why? We are to tell them what they have done and how it has affected us, and then be reconciled. Reconciliation might not be possible. Perhaps your offending party is dead or missing from your life. Perhaps if you went to them, you would only come away hurt again because of their denial or further abuse. Perhaps it is wisest to not return to an intimate relationship, but just clear the air and create a civil relationship.

However, all is not lost. You CAN go to them on paper. As a matter of fact, we know that **"The hand will write what the mouth cannot say"**. You see, YOU are the one who needs to be emptied of the resentment or whatever negative feeling is creating your feelings of worthlessness, sadness, fearfulness, anger, need to control, etc. That's what David did in the Psalms. He worked through his fears – his feelings on paper!

The field of mental health tells us today, that the **greatest tool available** is not a medication or a treatment or even psychotherapy. It is **a pen and an empty notebook**, in which you write your thoughts and feelings. In recovery, you can write the letter of a lifetime, one that empties your negative emotions, and never send it. It's for emptying your bitterness not for revenge or retribution. That belongs to God!

Once this work is done, your attitudes change for the better. All those around you find you a safe place of refuge. You become the conduit through which the love of God flows toward your fellow man, and those who live closest to you will be most blessed!

This **recovery work is the work of sanctification**. It is the process of becoming whole, and holy. God Bless you as you do it either in a supportive group with the directed study known as The Jour-