

**A WOUNDED SPIRIT**  
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God never shames or embarrasses us when we come to Him. His house is always a safe place, where we are protected. The same is not true of our world. In this world, we will get our feelings hurt. Jesus spoke of these offenses in **Matthew 18:1-10**. This was in response to His disciples' questions about greatness in His kingdom. He set up a child's humility as an example of what to strive for to excel with God. Then he warned His disciples not to offend a little one believing in Him. He basically said we would be offended, but don't even be the one who offends. He warned those who despise children in God's kingdom that these little ones have angels who report directly to God. So we know offenses will happen. It is impossible to go through life without people hurting us at some point. Solomon spoke of it in **Proverbs 18:14**, telling us physical sickness is easier to deal with than emotional damage.

We can handle problems caused by disease, but when offended, our spirits are wounded. Who can bear that? These inner wounds carry unseen scars and unanswered questions. How could this happen to me? Why did God allow it? Did my parents even care about me? Am I unlovable? Will I ever feel self worth again? Many times, healing will not begin until we talk about our pain. It needs to come out in words, whether written or spoken. **Romans 10:10** advises that "with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Wounds heal faster when exposed to air and light, but when covered, they fester and grow inside. What stays in the mind stays till we die. Once it comes out, healing can begin. Many victims of abuse feel dirty and unworthy of love afterwards. They feel they must have done something to deserve what has happened. If left unresolved, a life of anger is often a byproduct of being abused.

We often blame either God or Satan for evil. Either God allowed us to be hurt or Satan caused someone to hurt us. But everything that happens is not the will of God or even the result of Satan's power. Most of what happens to us results from the will of man, a very powerful force. Even Jesus struggled with His human will in fulfilling the commandment of His Father. It took Him several tries to subdue His human desire. God doesn't direct people to hurt us; people hurt us because they want to. God is not usually involved in what evil people decide to do. He does not control them like robots. If God violated one human will, free will would become a moot point. If God were willing to violate a human will to prevent them from sinning, He would have stopped Eve in the beginning. Free will, the crowning glory of His last creation would have been destroyed. Evil is not what God allows. It is what men freely choose to do.

Note again that **Matthew 18:7** promises **our** offenses will be neither unnoticed nor unpunished. These actions, that we freely choose to engage in, are a poor way to prepare to enter eternity. What if we viewed even those living in our homes as children of God first and family members second? How much more careful would we be not to offend? Next time we want to scream at, or say something nasty to someone, imagine them on Jesus' lap or having angels repeating every word to God, then decide how badly we want to proceed. We are not getting by with anything by offering excuses. We choose to act evil and nothing forces us to do anything we really don't want to do. The demoniac in the tombs in the **fifth chapter of Mark** had thousands of devils in him, but was still strong enough to cry for deliverance when he got a chance. That was before he even had a relationship with God. Our will is far stronger than we admit when seeking to shift responsibility elsewhere. We are not helpless or hopeless before devils. It is we who decide to hurt and wound one another.

In **Malachi 2:16**, we are warned to be careful with the self esteem of our spouses. In it, God equates divorce with violence in a family and tells us He hates both of these behaviors. Now both divorce and violence are prevalent in American families. Statistics involving family violence do not decrease with church attendance, but increase. Why does it exist? Because it is ignored, not talked about, swept under the rug. It is like having an elephant living in our home we feed and clean up after, but no one admits it is there. Resolving our problems with violence reduces us to the lowest form of life. We often use the threat of violence as a form of power, to get others to behave the way we want to. We fly off the handle just often enough to teach those we "love" to fear upsetting us by not letting us get our way. This is emotional abuse. It is evil. If we have this problem, we do not pray for God to help us. We admit we are sorry creatures, we ask forgiveness, seek counseling, and do whatever is needed to get our flesh under control.

Knowing we will be wounded, how will we respond? What is the difference between a scarred and a wounded spirit? A wound is still festering. A scar is what is left after the wound has healed. There are too

many wounded spirits festering with hate and not enough scarred ones. It is not okay to hate those who have hurt us. Jesus said in **Matthew 5:44**, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." The day we decide to hate those who hurt us, we willingly walk into a self made prison. Wealthy therapists have convinced us that with lots of expensive therapy, so long as we pay, we can go back and fix our past. We cannot change one thing about yesterday. The past is over. Forgive it and forget it!

The first thing we have to do about the past is to learn some lessons we have been taught are lies. We are not trapped in cycles or in lifestyles. This is America. We can live any lifestyle we choose to live and are willing to work to make a reality. Change requires repentance, a hard and fast decision not to do certain things any more, things such as hating. Then we forgive those who hurt us. **Mark 11:25** says this allows our Father up to answer our prayers for healing. It permits Him to turn our wounds into scars.