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Here's Hope

By Rev. Jerry Rea

Forgive/Heal and Serve

Unforgiven sin is a terrible burden. The load of guilt does not ease over time; we just get "used to" it. I've seen some with the problem of a bad leg or foot. They adjust and carry it. Sometimes there's a limp or a tilt in their back or foot. Quick and fluid movement is not there. The rest of their body adjusts as well. If you have a bad foot, the rest of the body compensates. Muscles in other areas grow larger to make up for the loss you carry. In our hearts, I believe it to be exactly the same way. We avoid some subjects because we can't bear to look at or contemplate the circumstances again. We avoid some people who might bring up the event or our failure. Just to look at some things is like a knife in our soul. I believe forgiveness cleans the wound and allows healing to begin.

There are clean and dirty wounds in our bodies. A dog bite is a dirty wound, but a knife wound is much cleaner. The dog bite has the bigger potential of getting infected. Both require time and attention to heal. Your soul is just the same. A word someone said to you can sometimes cut deeply. You need to heal. Being left out or made to feel unwanted is just the same. You often have to assess or reassess things again and again to bring yourself to the point of spiritual health. Some of these wounds are easily "*overed*," and others seem to take an eternity. Here's an example. I'm not sure how you get over being abused. For those of you who have won this victory, my hat is off to you. For most people, winning this battle takes a long time. There is forgiveness, and then healing. There is forgiveness, and then healing again. Counseling helps. Don't be ashamed nor reluctant to seek someone to walk with you through the process. Some of you have trusted friends with whom you can be transparent. You are very lucky (blessed). A confidant is worth his/ her weight in gold. Until you get to the root of the problem, it (likely) will pop up over and over again. Here's another example. Perhaps you've had a bad experience at church. It is one-hundred wonders to me why *more* people are not hurt at church. After all, you get that many babies in one place, and someone is bound to be pushed down. So many have this testimony. They say, "I used to go to church." Then, they begin a story of offense, or sometimes the tale is one of downright wickedness. The church is brimming with sinners. We ought to know that. We say "we are all sinners." Even if we say those words the harsh reality of all those sinners in one place does not set in until it's you who finds yourself on the receiving end of pain.

As I've studied God's Word across my own journey, I've been encouraged again and again to find in its pages numbers of people just like me. The characters included there hurt and are hurt time and again. To their credit most of them don't quit; they find a way to forgive... and heal. Then, they serve again. This is my prayer for you who are reading this little ditty. I pray you'll find a way to forgive others. Then perhaps you can find a way to heal and find a way to service in rich happiness once again. God has forgiven you. All of these things were put into place on the cross with the sin bearer, Jesus, the Christ. The same God who forgave you can also heal you. He is definitely not finished with you. He has not quit on you, even if you have quit on Him.

Praying for your healing!

Jerry Rea