

# Working Through Pain

## FLESH SERIES

**“In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil.”**

—Ephesians 6:16, NLT

The enemy often attacks us through fiery arrows in the form of core lies we believe. This happens as a result of our painful life experiences. These painful experiences and lies lead us to develop ways to cope in life through emotional health issues and habitual sin. Throughout these exercises, you'll find practical solutions to begin the process of identifying pain in your life, working through it and renewing your mind in light of your true God-given identity.

## TOP 5 PAINFUL EXPERIENCES (From Living Free!)

Make a list of your top five most painful experiences in detail, focusing on occurrences that happened during childhood. Please note, some experiences may be infrequent but of high intensity e.g., the divorce of parents, a death in the family, sexual assault or physical abuse. Other experiences may be frequent but of lower intensity e.g., bullying, a physically or emotionally absent parent, a performance mentality, being controlled or manipulated or communication (words or actions) by friends or family that you have to earn their love.

For each of the five experiences, answer the following three questions:

**A. What part of the pain am I responsible for, and whom do I need to forgive?**

(Working toward forgiveness is a process that takes time. Forgiving others is crucial to the healing process and allows us to be no longer controlled by our bitterness or pain.)

**B. How did this event affect the important people in my life?**

(How did people respond? Did people stand up for me?)

**C. How has this event affected life for me today?**

(What faulty core beliefs about myself do I accept as true as a result of this experience? What sin or struggle do I face now as a result of this experience?)

Experience 1.

- A.
- B.
- C.

Experience 2.

- A.
- B.
- C.

Experience 3.

- A.
- B.
- C.

Experience 4.

- A.
- B.
- C.

Experience 5.

- A.
- B.
- C.

- A. What part of the pain am I responsible for, and whom do I need to forgive?
- B. How did this event affect the important people in my life?
- C. How has this event affected life for me today?

## RENEWING YOUR MIND (From Living Free<sup>1</sup>)

**“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind ...”**

—Romans 12:2, NIV

**“We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”**

—2 Corinthians 10:5, NIV

One of the most practical ways to renew your mind in light of your true God-given identity is through meditating on Scripture and a time you’ve experienced a biblical truth. Use these simple instructions to begin renewing your mind and healing from faulty core beliefs:

**Identify three core lies you believe about yourself,** e.g., “I’m not good enough,” “I’m worthless,” “I can’t trust people,” etc. These statements are often directly tied to some of the painful experiences in your life. Write them next to the corresponding numbers.

**A. Next, identify the truth and a verse of Scripture that combats each lie.**

For example, “I’m a loved child of God,” combined with this verse in 1 John 3:1a, “See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.”

**B. Finally, identify a time in life when you have tangibly experienced this truth.**

This part is crucial as it engages your heart and your mind. “I remember the first time I went to a Cru meeting during my freshmen year in college. I sat in the back while the worship band played, and I felt so loved by God and close to Him as I thought about the words in the song.”

**Lie 1.**

**A.**

**B.**

**Lie 2.**

**A.**

**B.**

**Lie 3.**

**A.**

**B.**

Meditate daily on the Scripture and the experience. As you meditate on the verse, close your eyes and visualize yourself back in the experience. Meditate on these two things whenever old, faulty core beliefs get triggered.

Lastly, we sin because we are sinful, but we also sin because we are sinned against. We develop ways of coping with our painful life experiences. As you find yourself reacting to stress, difficult situations in life or going back to habitual sin, ask yourself what pain from your past is getting triggered that may be leading to your specific reaction.

<sup>1</sup>Ben Bennett, Brett Butcher, Ted Roberts Living Free (Pure Desire Ministries International, 2016), 165. <sup>2</sup>Ben Bennett, Brett Butcher, Ted Roberts Living Free (Pure Desire Ministries International, 2016), 165.