



New Horizons Newsletter

"May the Lord show you His favor and give you peace." (Nu. 6:26)

386-760-0445; Toll free 888-760-0445

Director

Pierre J. Samaan, Ph.D.



Associates

Nona K. Damore, Ph.D.

Suzanne H. Dyer, M.A.
www.newhorizonscounseling.com
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SURVIVING SEXUAL VIOLENCE

PART 2 OF 2

Part 1 was emailed in July

Who Gets Blamed?

We learn from the Bible that when a man rapes a woman, God does not blame the woman:

26 But you shall do nothing to the young woman; she has committed no sin punishable by death, for this is as when a man attacks and slays his neighbor. . . (Deuteronomy 22:26 AMP)

To the rape survivor, justice can never be fully experienced. Courts and laws do not always provide punishment to the offender. However, we can

count on the fact that God will eventually deal out the final punishment.

5 This is positive proof of the just and right judgment of God to the end that you may be deemed deserving of His kingdom [a plain token of His fair verdict which designs that you should be made and counted worthy of the kingdom of God], for the sake of which you are also suffering. 6[It is a fair decision] since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with distress and affliction those who distress and afflict you, 7And to [recompense] you who are so distressed and afflicted [by granting you] relief and rest along with us [your fellow sufferers] when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in a flame of fire, 8To deal out retribution (chastisement and vengeance) upon those who do not know or perceive or become acquainted with God, and [upon those] who ignore and refuse to obey the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9Such people will pay the penalty and suffer the punishment of everlasting ruin (destruction and perdition) and eternal exclusion and banishment from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power. . . (2 Thessalonians 1:5-9 AMP)

6 Then the Lord said, Listen to what the unjust judge says! 7And will not [our just] God defend and protect and avenge His elect (His chosen ones), who cry to Him day and night? Will He defer them and delay help on their behalf? 8I tell you, He will defend and protect and avenge them speedily. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find [persistence in] faith on the earth? (Luke 18:6-8 AMP)

31 For their rock is not like our Rock, even our enemies themselves judge this. 32 For their vine comes from the vine of Sodom and from the fields of Gomorrah; their grapes are grapes of [poisonous] gall, their clusters are bitter. 33 Their wine is the [furious] venom of serpents, and the pitiless poison of vipers. 34 Is not this laid up in store with Me, sealed up in My treasuries? 35 Vengeance is Mine, and recompense, in the time when their foot shall slide; for the day of their disaster is at hand and their doom comes speedily. (Deuteronomy 32:31-35 AMP)

Rape is a sin against an individual, family, community and God. It is a sin against God because it is a violation of a person who is God's image

bearer. (Genesis 34:7; Judges 20:6; 2 Samuel 13:12)

Deterrence to Help You Feel Protected

A woman or man can help make themselves feel safer in preventing a sexual battery/rape:

- * If you're dating, tell your date in the beginning what you will not tolerate. This is boundary setting and if the potential offender knows you mean what you say, he is less likely to attack you.
- * Group activity is always a good deterrent. Try to never walk to your car at night without an escort. If you're at a public place like a grocery store, ask a bag boy to carry your groceries or wait until you can walk out with others who are leaving at the same time.
- * Take a self-defense course (preferably offered by a Christian instructor) that involves physical techniques to ward off an attacker. This will also give you a sense of confidence that sends an unconscious signal to the potential assailant that you will not be an easy target.
- * Stay alert wherever you may find yourself. Look around before leaving a house or store. If something looks suspicious, assume it is and wait or call someone for assistance.
- * Scream and run; don't let your assailant have time to think. Most are intoxicated, which slows their response time.
- * Drive with doors locked. If there is an attempted carjacking, stay in the car and keep your hand on the car horn until help arrives. Even if the carjacker drives away, immediately call 911, for instructions on what to do next.
- * Trust your intuitive abilities; If you have learned how to listen to your inner voice most of the time, those inner thoughts/spiritual thoughts will give you a warning and tell you what to do next.
- * Give absolute trust to no one except God; He's earned it.
- * Don't let yourself become intoxicated with alcohol, drugs, or love to the point that others can take advantage of you.
- * Internet matchmaking can set you up to be victimized. Look up everything you can find about the person with whom you are chatting. Make a first meeting in a public place. Insist on leaving separately and be careful that you are not being followed home. Give all the information you

have about who you are meeting with to a trusted friend or family member. Set a time in which you will be returning home. In this way authorities can be alerted sooner than later.

The Christian Life is a Life of Overcoming

Alan Nelson, in his book *Broken in the Right Place*, writes: "Somehow, pain, problems, and suffering do not fit into our concept of life and success."^[1] He talks about how he and his wife designated places for the toys belonging to their two sons. There were specific plastic tubs for toys as well as drawers for clothes and other items. Putting things away was an orderly process because everything had its place. When items don't have a place, what do you do? Unsure of what to do with an item that has no place, you stand in the middle of the room perplexed. For most people, that is how they handle their emotional pain, discouragements, and disillusionments. It is as if they lost their sense of direction. "They stall as they search in vain for a place to put it, to make it fit into their orderly lives. . ."

The question often asked is why do bad things happen to good people? If something bad happens to an evil person, we can understand why. Because we are good it makes sense that only good things should happen to us. We are upset when we see a bad person getting away without consequences. We are even more upset when we, seeing ourselves as good, experience victimization. We have no place to put the bad stuff in our "good person" design of things.

Read what God says about His system of being happy and dealing with bad things:

20Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears and listens to and heeds My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will eat with him, and he [will eat] with Me.

21He who overcomes (is victorious), I will grant him to sit beside Me

on My throne, as I Myself overcame (was victorious) and sat down beside My Father on His throne. (Revelations 3:20,21 AMP)

1There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. (Romans 8:1 KJV)

16For God so greatly loved and dearly prized the world that He [even] gave up His only begotten (unique) Son, so that whoever believes in (trusts in, clings to, relies on) Him shall not perish (come to destruction, be lost) but have eternal (everlasting) life. (John 3:16 AMP)

There Is Hope In Our Sufferings

Whether you are a survivor of sexual harassment, sexual assault, or rape/sexual battery, or you may have knowledge of a friend or relative who is an overcomer/survivor, remember that God has your back.

Instead of a life of escapes, denial, and bitterness, the Christian overcomer/survivor is a believer who in Jesus Christ is able to openly present himself/herself to God (Romans 12:1). Their traumatic suffering is turned into a living sacrifice that is holy and pleasing to God (12:1). In so doing, the overcomer/survivor, despite past traumas, becomes transformed by a renewed mind (12:2). They will discover and exhibit the will of God as they go forward in their lives (12:2). Spiritual gifting will be placed upon them according to the grace of God (12:6-8). These will be God-given abilities to build up others who are overcomers/survivors and who need help coming out of their life conflicts. The Christian overcomer/survivor will be able to use the spiritual gifts as part of Christ's body (12:6). Instead of allowing unforgiveness and vengeance to erode their quality of life, the Christian overcomer/survivor honors civil law (13:1) and, therefore, honors God (13:1). The believing overcomer/survivor is better able to love others (13:8), which is a fulfillment of God's law (13:8). Being taken from victim to victor in Jesus Christ, the overcomer/survivor is better equipped to pursue peace (14:19), which leads to being able to edify all (14:19). Instead of living a life of detachment and isolation, the Christian overcomer/survivor becomes like-minded toward others (15:5), which allows them to glorify God together (15:6).[2]

6As you have therefore received Christ, [even] Jesus the Lord, [so] walk (regulate your lives and conduct yourselves) in union with and conformity to Him. 7Have the roots [of your being] firmly and deeply planted [in Him, fixed and founded in Him], being continually built up in Him, becoming increasingly more confirmed and established in the faith, just as you were taught, and abounding and overflowing in it with thanksgiving. (Colossians 2:6-7 AMP)

Encourage Each Other Through Hard Times

In Clinical Pastoral Counseling/Clinical Christian Counseling we believe that no man has all the answers to pain, discouragements, and disillusionments. Those who have serious wounds want to believe that they can leave them buried in the past. When pain from the past is unresolved, you may not realize that you are struggling with it in the present.

The stronghold of the trauma is in the memories, but the impact shows throughout one's life. The pain seeps out of the memories causing negative emotional reactions to normal present day circumstances. So, our present day event is rarely the true cause of our emotional pain. Our present situation stirs up false beliefs (e.g. "I will never be good enough") we learned during past events. When we receive God's truths into our memories, we can finally, walk in peace.

"It is the resolution of the wound that 'puts it in the past,' and that requires enough maturity to embrace the wound and invite God's healing." [3] In church, many claim the victory from the past as they become new creations in Christ Jesus. However, when the pain resurfaces they go into denial pretending it is not there. When that doesn't work, they escape back into bad habits, compulsions, or addictions that will temporarily sedate the pain.

When Scripture teaches to gently restore a brother/sister, God is literally saying, reach out and help that person in their "recovery"-intervention (Galatians 6:1). The same principle would apply to helping innocent victims of sexual violence or any type of crime.

Having problems is not a novelty. It is how we face the problems in our life that makes us different:

11The Lord takes pleasure in those who reverently and worshipfully fear Him, in those who hope in His mercy and loving-kindness. (Psalms 147:11 AMP)

3-5All praise to the God and Father of our Master, Jesus the Messiah! Father of all mercy! God of all healing counsel! He comes alongside us when we go through hard times, and before you know it, he brings us alongside someone else who is going through hard times so that we can be there for that person just as God was there for us. We have plenty of hard times that come from following the Messiah, but no more so than the good times of his healing comfort-we get a full measure of that, too.

6-7When we suffer for Jesus, it works out for your healing and salvation. If we are treated well, given a helping hand and encouraging word, that also works to your benefit, spurring you on, face forward, unflinching. Your hard times are also our hard times. When we see that you're just as willing to endure the hard times as to enjoy the good times, we know you're going to make it, no doubt about it.

8-11We don't want you in the dark, friends, about how hard it was when all this came down on us in Asia province. It was so bad we didn't think we were going to make it. We felt like we'd been sent to death row; that it was all over for us. As it turned out, it was the best thing that could have happened. Instead of trusting in our own strength or wits to get out of it, we were forced to trust God totally-not a bad idea since he's the God who raises the dead! And he did it, rescued us from certain doom. And he'll do it again, rescuing us as many times as we need rescuing. You and your prayers are part of the rescue operation-I don't want you in the dark about that either. I can see your faces even now, lifted in praise for God's deliverance of us, a rescue in which your prayers played such a crucial part. (2 Corinthians 1:3-11 MSG)

Opening yourself to recalling traumatic memories takes courage and genuineness. I use the word courage because no one really wants to face the intensity of a past trauma. The truth is, the memory of the trauma will not

surface if there is even a small part of you that is not ready to face it. Genuinely trying to reclaim suppressed or repressed memories of traumatic events will eventually cause them to surface.

"To cut off the past is to erase part of our story, our journey, our self. The reclamation of the past involves the courage to be all that we are so that we can be all that we will be in our relationships to others . . . facing the past enables us to see the present more clearly. The past clings to the present like an intractable barnacle, an unseen drag that slows the progress of the vessel. Facing the past memories gives the victim a sense of legitimate control. Nothing has been hidden that might spring out at some unexpected moment. Nothing lurks to expose her as the ugly duckling, the soiled woman she fears she might be." [4]

"It is in the crucible of your personal, private sufferings that your noblest dreams are born and God's greatest gifts are given in compensation for what you have been through." (Wintley Phipps) [5]

God designed us to compliment each other. My strengths offset my wife's weaknesses. And, likewise, my weaknesses are offset by her strengths. As part of the church body, each of us has talents and experiences that can be used to encourage and strengthen the other. I have never personally experienced sexual violence. But, I can't tell you how rewarding it feels when God uses me to help a survivor of sexual violence through the spiritual healing process offered in Clinical Pastoral Counseling.

If you are a survivor of sexual violence, you can feel as blessed as I do by giving back your survival skills in your local church community to those who are confused and angry over their victimization. God wants all of His children to be restored and better able to enjoy the fullness of the life He intends for us.

17O Lord, You have heard the desire and the longing of the humble and oppressed; You will prepare and strengthen and direct their hearts, You will cause Your ear to hear,

18To do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed, so that man, who

is of the earth, may not terrify them any more. (Psalm 10:17-18 AMP)

Pierre J. Samaan, Ph.D.

WE NEED PRAYER PARTNERS & FINANCIAL SUPPORTERS

Each year this ministry counsels hundreds of hurting souls. Some may only need a little advice while others require intensive Clinical Christian Counseling.

We need daily prayer partners who will dedicate a moment of each day to pray for the Clinical Christian Counselors and clients.

The need is greater than ever for financial assistance to continue seeing those who are desperate for help. You may not know this, but we do not turn away those who cannot give a donation for their counseling; we do not believe Jesus would either.

But, the fact remains, we have to pay our expenses.

God blessed us with a \$5000 donation last year from Mt. Pleasant United Brethren Church in Chambersberg, PA; Senior Pastor Larry Little. Their mission's donation to this faith based counseling ministry helped us to end the year with expenses paid.

Would you please consider adding us to your budget for giving to this tax exempt counseling ministry?

[1] Larson, C., (2004) *750 Engaging Illustrations*, Baker Books, Grand Rapids, MI.

[2] Parts of this paragraph came from commentary (1997) *The Nelson Study Bible NKJV*, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN.

[3] Friesen, et.al., (2000), *Living From The Heart Jesus Gave You*, p 9, Shepherds House Inc., Van Nuys, CA

[4] Allender, D., (1992), *The Wounded Heart*, p 186, NavPress, Colorado Springs, CO.

[5] Cordeiro, Wayne, (2009), (as quoted in) *Leading On Empty*, p 18, Bethany House Pub., Bloomington, Minnesota.