

## **What to Do with the Hurt?**

*Presented by Mary Lowman*

Air Dates: Oct. 21 - 25, 2024

### **Day One**

My topic this week is: what do you do with the hurt? None of us escape some kind of emotional pain—some hurt—and whether it's a slight offense or some deep, ingrained trauma you've experienced, you have to decide what you're going to do with that hurt. That's the most important issue because it determines whether you're going to let it harm you endlessly or you're going to put it behind you somehow and move on.

What is the most common way people deal with hurt? Don't you think the most common way is to harbor it, to blame others, to relive it time and again. It can become so all-consuming your hurt begins to define who you are. I remember a person I knew many years ago who chose to see herself as the person who had been wronged by everyone in her life. Her hurt became her identity, and in her mind, she always saw herself as a victim. That was who she was—and you didn't have to be around her long before she communicated that in some way or another. She made herself a victim of everyone in her life, even those who were genuinely trying to help her.

Now, who lost in that situation? She did, of course. She continued to heap all kinds of hurt on herself, to exaggerate the hurt she had experienced, and to live in sadness and pain because she chose to harbor the hurt. Could it be that you have done something similar?

Why do we hang on to hurt feelings so long, thereby heaping unhappiness on our own heads? We certainly don't get any revenge on our offenders by hanging on to hurt feelings. If you think a pity party will relieve some of your hurt, think again! Pity parties are addictive, as well as pitiful! The more you feel sorry for yourself, the more you will try to find comfort in your self-pity. It can be a vicious cycle, and, of course, it only makes matters worse.

I want to encourage you today to think about what you do with your hurt. Psalm 22:24 is a verse to hang on to.

*For he has not despised or scorned the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help (Psalm 22:24).*

Our Lord sympathizes with your hurt, and he has not and will not walk away.

### **Day Two**

What do you do with the hurt? I don't have to tell you life is full of hurt. But it's what you do with the hurt that will determine if it overcomes you or you have victory over the hurt.

Years ago, God began to reveal to me how hooked I was on pity parties. That was my way of dealing with hurt—I just indulged in lots of self-pity. And what came as a major revelation to me was realizing God sees it as a sin. Whether or not I have a legitimate complaint, wallowing in self-pity, nurturing my hurt feelings was not what a mature Christian should do. I wanted to grow up in Christ, to become more like Jesus, and I began to see how wrong and silly it was for me to insist on my pity parties.

I well remember the night I came home from work with my feelings hurt—again—by my insensitive boss. I was nurturing those hurt feelings by going over in my mind his hurtful words, what I wished I had said to him, what I would say to him someday, how unfair he was, ad infinitum. Instead of doing something productive, I plopped down to waste an evening by throwing another pity party. Pity parties are indeed pitiful since no one ever comes, and there is nothing to celebrate.

As I began to indulge myself by feeling sorry for myself, I stopped and thought, I don't want to feel sorry for myself. I don't want to be miserable. I will not throw a pity party tonight. And with that I got busy, put those hurt feelings behind me, and got over it! It was a major turning point for me, as I began to learn I didn't have to hold onto those hurt feelings. I could, by a set of my will with the power of God's Spirit, get over it.

*See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many (Hebrews 12:15).*

Hurt feelings turn into bitter roots, and those bitter roots grow up to cause trouble.

If you don't determine to let go of the hurt, it will quickly turn into bitterness, and that is one of the most destructive forces in the world. It causes trouble and defiles many, as the writer to the Hebrews tells us. Then the hurt starts to poison everyone around you, as it spills over to others in your life. The good news is you can let go of the hurt by God's grace. It is possible to live free from the hurts you are harboring.

### Day Three

Have you been hurt lately? Most of us can recall some fairly recent hurt feelings, can't we? So, what do we do with the hurt? That's what I've been talking about this week. All-too-often we wallow in the hurt, remembering and retelling it, and that just allows the hurt to grow.

A friend of mine wrote this in an article on hurt feelings:

"When you're hurt, do you listen well to the Holy Spirit? Or are you so busy talking about your hurt he doesn't have a chance to get a word in edgewise. Without a supernatural, God-response to hurt, we often wallow in self-pity and embroider around the injustice, especially to our friends or family who will listen. Repeatedly talking about hurt only confirms, convinces, consumes and sets the offense in concrete. In fact, injustice, like a fishing story, always becomes larger in the retelling."

Think about this: The hurt exists in your mind, in your thoughts. It's all about what you're thinking about. The hurt continues to be painful because you continue to think about it. If you can learn to bring those hurtful thoughts into captivity and make them obedient to Christ, as we are admonished to do in 2 Corinthians 10:5, then you will begin to find freedom from the hurt.

Philippians 4:8 tells us to think of things that are a good report. Usually when our feelings have been hurt, we are thinking about some bad report. It has helped me greatly to tell myself over and over again, when I'm tempted to dwell on some hurt, "Mary, stop thinking about the bad reports. Think about some good reports." Think of something good that happened recently. Think of someone who loves you. Think of the wonderful truth that as a Christ-follower, you are loved by Jesus Christ, and nothing can separate you from his love.

If you want to get rid of the hurt, the first thing you have to do is to make the decision to let it go. And that means, you must carefully guard your thought life and refuse to let your thoughts go to that hurtful place. When you begin to dwell on the hurt, talk out loud to yourself and say, "Stop it. I'm not going

there today. I choose to dwell on some good reports.” Let me assure you that you can change your thought patterns, by God’s grace and with his help, if you truly determine to do it.

## Day Four

I am examining what you can do when you’ve been hurt—how to deal with the pain that remains. Yesterday I pointed out the hurt we feel resides in our minds, in our thought patterns. Therefore, to be free from hurt, you must change your thoughts. The Bible says we must bring our thoughts into captivity and make them obedient to Christ, and that’s exactly what you have to do with the hurt—you drive it from your thoughts by replacing it with good thoughts, positive thoughts, thoughts filled with the love God has for you.

Then you need to confess whatever responsibility you may have in the hurt. While you may not have had the same amount of responsibility, there may have been a part you played which contributed to the hurt. If so, get it out, confess it, and acknowledge it to yourself and to God. Covering it up or denying it will just allow it to stay alive within you and continue to cause you great harm.

It’s important to get beyond seeing yourself as a victim. Have you become addicted to your pity parties? Believe me, that can happen. It’s that feeling of “it’s me against the world,” and I have a right to be hurt! Of course, your hurt feelings matter, and I don’t mean to make light of the hurt you’ve experienced. But when you allow your feelings to override all else and control you, you put yourself in the victim seat and that is a terrible place to be.

You have choices every day to choose how you’re going to feel. Paul wrote to the Philippians they should *rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice*. It’s a choice you can make, and the good news is, as a believer in Jesus Christ, you have power far above your own to give you the victory in this battle. With prayer and trusting in the Lord, you can get out of that miserable victim’s seat.

I’ve discovered another very important thing to do to put hurt behind me is simply to get busy doing something constructive. This is one time you need to get involved in constructive activity that will take your mind off your hurt feelings and shut down that pity party. A friend of mine tells me her great-grandmother would frequently say to her, “If you have time to feel sorry for yourself, then you don’t have enough chores to do.” As she puts it, “It is more difficult to ‘wear your feelings on your shirt sleeve’ when you’re ‘rolling up your shirt sleeves’ and serving others.”

## Day Five

What do you do with the hurt? It truly is important to be intentional about getting past the hurts of our lives, because when we harbor them, they become destructive forces in our lives, they rob us of joy, and they allow bitterness to take root in our hearts.

Let me close with one of my favorite passages from Isaiah 58:6-9.

*Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I (Isaiah 58:6-9).*

Here Isaiah tells us what to do with hurt feelings. He redefines how to respond when you’ve been hurt, when you need healing from the past. You may have some very deep hurt that just doesn’t go away quickly at all; I understand that. But look at what Isaiah tells us.

If we pursue this kind of fasting:

- To help those who are wrongly treated
- To reach those who are in the bondage of some addiction
- To share food with hungry people and shelter with the homeless
- To pay particular attention to those of your own flesh and blood who need help

Then, Isaiah says, your light will break forth and your healing will quickly appear. Letting go of your own hurt and choosing to help others who are hurting is the quickest and best way to find the healing you need, whether it's a brief hurt you've gone through or one that has caused great trauma for a long time. This is God's cure for hurt feelings, for the emotional pain you may have endured or still are enduring. Claim it for yourself, so your light will break forth and your healing will quickly appear.