

PRINCIPLE ONE—The primary source of our present emotional pain is rarely caused by our present situation.

More often than not, the pain we feel in the present tense has been “triggered” by lie-based thinking, which is rooted in memory. Lie-based thinking is the false belief one holds in memory learned during the specific life event. (For example, an incest survivor might believe the lie that she is shameful because she thinks the sexual abuse was her fault.) If we blame the present situation for the emotional pain coming from the earlier memory event, we will be trapped in an irresolvable cycle of emotional pain and defeat. To believe that other persons or circumstances are the cause of our emotional upheaval is to empower them to control us emotionally until they change. When we find freedom from the lie-based thinking we will no longer be triggered by it and can walk in peace, content in whatever circumstance we find ourselves (Philippians 4:11).

PRINCIPLE TWO—Everything we presently know, feel, or are mentally aware of has its roots in a first-time experience.

When we react negatively to a present situation, what is happening is that our mind is automatically transferring the negative feelings stored in the memory of the original experience to a later situation that is similar to the original experience. This automatic superimposing of past emotional responses onto later similar situations will have great bearing on what behaviors we choose to act out. We tend to act out the way we feel. If we act out our present pain, we will likely manifest sinful behavior. This is not to say that people do not deny the pain and choose to act rightly as opposed to acting out their pain. It is merely suggested that most people, most of the time tend to act out (at some level) the pain that has surfaced.

PRINCIPLE THREE—If we try to resolve our present conflicts without resolving our historical lie-based woundedness, we will at best find only temporary relief. However, if we find healing for our past we can redeem our present.

Today’s counseling and ministry methods typically try to change the present behavior of a person. This is only a stopgap measure and will not result in true victory if the underlying lies are not addressed. Many have been lead to believe that controlled behavior is equated with spiritual maturity when in fact many nonbelievers are doing a good job of performing in this same arena. True victory is a work of Christ “in me.” It is not based on my effort, determination or willpower but is a natural overflow of His work in me.

PRINCIPLE FOUR—The negative emotions we currently feel are “echoes” of the past; they provide opportunities for the wounds of our lives to be exposed.

If we choose to follow the “smoke trail” of our stirred-up emotions back to their original memory, we can discover the lie-based belief that is causing the emotional pain. It is here we can find complete freedom as we receive truth from the Spirit of Christ.

PRINCIPLE FIVE—To facilitate emotional healing, we need to identify the three basic elements in the healing process: 1) the present emotional pain, 2) the original memory container, and 3) the original lies(s).

The present emotional pain is the feeling that surfaces in our current situation when a memory-based lie is triggered. The original memory container is the original event in which the lie-based pain was implanted and stored. The original lie is the belief that was implanted in the original painful memory that is causing the present pain.

PRINCIPLE SIX—If we believe a lie, it may as well be the truth because the consequences will be much the same.

The power of a lie is such that if we believe it to be the truth, it will play itself out in our lives as though it were true. Yet, when the Spirit of Christ brings truth into our memory, He replaces the lie with truth, and we find genuine release and peace. It is common for a person to contain opposing beliefs at the same time. I can believe that I am forgiven for a sin in my life and yet still feel shameful when I think about what I had done. It is the belief that is producing the shame that has the real power in my life and also that which will produce the most consequence.

PRINCIPLE SEVEN—To be free of the lies we believe, we must identify and own the lies rather than suppress or deny they are what we believe, before we can be free of them.

Our natural inclination is to deny we believe lies and bury the apparent pain they are producing. If we do this, however, we will maintain a cycle of perpetual defeat in our life. As long as lies remain embedded in our memories, they will continue to surface their pain every time they are triggered by similar life situations. Freedom requires I acknowledge what I believe and feel its corresponding emotional pain. In this context God is released to free me.

PRINCIPLE EIGHT: In the midst of our “darkness,” we must come to realize how utterly bound we are to the lie and how helpless we are to overcome its debilitating grip on our lives apart from God’s divine intervention.

As we experience the emotional pain in the memories, we realize that we are helpless, trapped in our emotional bondage, and we cannot make the pain go away. This is the same place people were in the New Testament when Jesus healed them. It is the same place Paul was when he declared, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me” (2 Cor. 12:9).

When we try to get free through self-effort and working hard we will eventually fail. We have no more ability to overcome the sin and lies in our life today than we did before the cross. Freedom is not a “you and me God” process but an “I am weak but you are strong” realization.

PRINCIPLE NINE: No person (including ourselves) is capable of talking us out of the lies we believe. We will be free only when we receive the truth from the One who is Truth (John 16:12).

God is not limited in the ways he chooses to deliver His truth to us (Theophostic Ministry is but one method He uses to do this). However, much of the counseling going on today and many of the training seminars and self-help books being written are based on the idea that, "If a person can be helped to see what is wrong in his thinking and be provided with truth, he can then choose to replace his false thinking with the truth and change his life." Cognitively receiving truth has its value but is limited in dispelling the experiential lie-based beliefs that are producing the pain in my life. It is incorrect to assume that people can walk in genuine victory by making right choices and trying hard. Such thinking lies at the heart of works-sanctification/salvation and is the same philosophy that is foundational for all other world religions. The truth is, most people already logically know why they are in pain and logically hold the truth they need, yet they are still in emotional misery and still cannot find their way to freedom. One of the clearest passages of this process is found in 2 Timothy 2:24b-26.

"A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will."

Notice that we as ministers or "servants of the Lord" are called to teach and correct those who are in opposition (discipleship) but it is God who accomplishes the task of setting them free. For until "God grants them repentance" they cannot come to "know the truth." It is important to note that the word translated "repentance" here means the changing of one's thinking. The Dictionary of Biblical Languages, Theological dictionary of the New Testament and the Enhanced Strong's Lexicon each define this word repentance as "change of mind which results in change of life style." [1] [2] [3] We as ministers have an important role in leading a person to the place where they are willing to submit themselves unto God and receive from Him. Unless He "grants them repentance/change of thinking" they will never be free. When God grants new thought the person comes to "know the truth" and "come to their senses" and thereby "escape the snare of the devil" (which is the lie-based thinking). This verse is the essence of Theophostic Ministry.

PRINCIPLE TEN—When we know the truth experientially, having received truth from God in our memory experience, we can walk in genuine maintenance-free victory in these areas of our lives.

The areas of our minds that are renewed with truth can no longer be stirred up with lie-based pain. Since our emotional pain is a primary motivator for our inappropriate behavior, we are able to walk in permanent and maintenance-free-victory when our lies and painful emotions are no longer present. Knowing the truth experientially, frees me to walk in my present righteousness so that I might experientially agree with the Apostle Paul who declared, "do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; [which I tend to do when I am emotionally stirred and in pain] but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as

instruments of righteousness to God [which is effortless when I am walking in peace]" Romans 6:12-13 [brackets are mine]. However, I will continue to struggle in every area where I do not know (experientially) truth. Conversely, I will have abiding peace in every place where God has granted me "repentance/change of thinking." In these places I can live out my inner righteousness easily. Jesus said, "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." Matt. 11:28

PRINCIPLE ELEVEN: In times of crisis or in emotionally charged life situations, our experiential knowledge (the beliefs we hold that we learned through experience) tends to override our logical truth (cognitive truth such as memorized Scripture).

The power that the experiential knowledge holds (both truth and falsehood) over the logical truth we know consciously is in the strong painful emotion that is attached to that which is experience based. I can know logically that God loves me and has forgiven me of my sins and yet not be able to shake the bad feelings of worthlessness, rejection, self-hate, or shame that is attached to the lie-based thinking in my experiential knowledge held in memory. When these lies are triggered I have no choice but feel their pain.

It is difficult to appropriate logical biblical truth if what we have learned experientially is contrary to our logically held truth. But as we go to the lie-based sources, discern the lie, and receive the experiential truth God has for us, we can readily appropriate the logical truth of Scripture we comprehended only cognitively before. It is easy to logically believe that we are loved and fully accepted by God when we experientially hear Him tell us "I love you" in our painful memory experiences. This is not to say that we should not choose to obey the truth and do what is right even while in the midst of our emotional pain. However, while obedience in the midst of lie-based pain has merit and is praiseworthy, better yet to be able to obey from the heart without having all the lie-based pain in our face. This is effortless victory that comes when the knowledge of our experience lines up with what we already know logically.

PRINCIPLE TWELVE: Lie-based pain can only be removed as the lies, which are causing the pain are replaced with truth, whereas, sin-based pain can only be dealt with through the cross of Jesus.

The only cure for sin is the cross. This pain is different from the pain one carries as a consequence of lie-based thinking. Theophostic ministry does not minimize the role that sin plays in the life of a person. If we sin we will and should feel pain. However, it is not an either or but a both situation. The writer of Hebrews said that we must "lay aside every encumbrance [weighty things/lie-based pain] and [both] the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us," (Hebrews 12:1) [brackets are mine].

–Ed Smith, Founder of TPM

[1] Swanson, J. (1997). Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

[2] Theological dictionary of the New Testament. 1964-c1976. Vols. 5-9 edited by Gerhard Friedrich. Vol. 10 compiled by Ronald Pitkin. (G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley & G. Friedrich, Ed.) (Vol. 4, Page 975). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

[3] Strong, J. (1996). Enhanced Strong's Lexicon. Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship.

Basic Assumptions of Theophostic Ministry

- Theophostic Ministry assumes a person's emotional pain is rooted in what he believes. If he believes he is worthless, unloved, stupid, rejected, etc., his emotional state will match his belief.
- Theophostic Ministry assumes the lies producing these painful feelings were, for the most part, originally implanted during early childhood experiences and later reinforced by similar experiences throughout life.
- Theophostic Ministry assumes when these lies are "triggered" in the present by people, current life events, circumstances or one's own personal thinking, the same original emotions will surface and be re-experienced.
- Theophostic Ministry assumes when this original pain is triggered and stirred, the person is prone to make poor choices that will result in more painful experiences.
- Theophostic Ministry assumes when a person is willing to return to the original places of pain (memory) and identify the false thinking, he is in the right position to receive a freeing truth from God.
- Theophostic Ministry assumes when a person receives truth from the Spirit of God in his memory experience, the lie will immediately be dispelled, and the truth he receives will produce God's perfect peace.
- Theophostic Ministry assumes everything that is needed for a memory to be healed is already present and known by the person at some level. Therefore, there is no need for the counselor/minister to insinuate, suggest or lead the person to believe anything the person does not surface on his own.
- Theophostic Ministry assumes all people are in dire need of mind renewal both ministry recipient and ministry facilitator. In the area of mind renewal the ground is level. It is not about the more "spiritual" ministering down to the wounded but rather the acknowledgement that we are all on a lifelong continual journey of being exposed in our deception and being transformed by His truth.

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