

God's Man Restores the Hurting: Reaching the Abused, Porn-addicted, and Same-Sex Attracted with the Gospel of Grace

Assumption as a gathering of men..

1. You have a “past”
2. You are surrounded by people who are hurting because of sin [sin done *to* them and sin committed *by* them]
3. As Christians we are called to not let the past define us
4. As Christians we are called to love those hurting as followers of Jesus and point them to grace

Who are the *hurting*? *Those on the margins...*

1. Physically or sexually Abused/Victimized (1/3 women 1/6 men) ¹
2. Struggling believers [“weak” from temptations]
3. Straying believers
3. Trapped unbelievers

“Restoring” starts with a missional mandate to courage

How do we do this courageously? [Losing, Looking, Listening, Leading]

1. Losing our logs

“Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye. (Matthew 7:1-5 ESV)

¹Dube, S.R., Anda, R.F., Whitfield, C.L., et al. (2005). Long-term consequences of childhood sexual abuse by gender of victim. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 28, 430–438. George Mason University, Worldwide Sexual Assault Statistics, 2005

God's Man Restores the Hurting: Reaching the Abused, Porn-addicted, and Same-Sex Attracted with the Gospel of Grace

“Sexual brokenness is not a characteristic of those degenerates over there, but of the entire human family...we together share the brokenness of sexuality that can and is being redeemed by God.”²

“No temptation has seized you that is not common to man....”

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

(1 Corinthians 6:9-11 ESV)

2. Look with compassion

And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

(Matthew 9:35-36 ESV)

Paul Miller “Often we don’t know how to begin. But we can look. We might not feel compassion, but we can concentrate on the other person. By keeping the other person in front of us, we are opening the door to compassion.”

3. Listen with patience

“Love is patient and kind” 1 Cor 13:4

“Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep” Romans 12:15

²Stanley Jones, Chapel Message: “Lessons from the Sexuality Ministry Front” Sept 7, 2012, DTS

God's Man Restores the Hurting: Reaching the Abused, Porn-addicted, and Same-Sex Attracted with the Gospel of Grace

We can't know what someone's struggle is without asking questions, and truly listening to what someone is struggling with.

Can you tell me your perspective?

How are you feeling?

How is that struggle you shared with me?

How can I pray for you?

4. Lead them to Jesus

How?

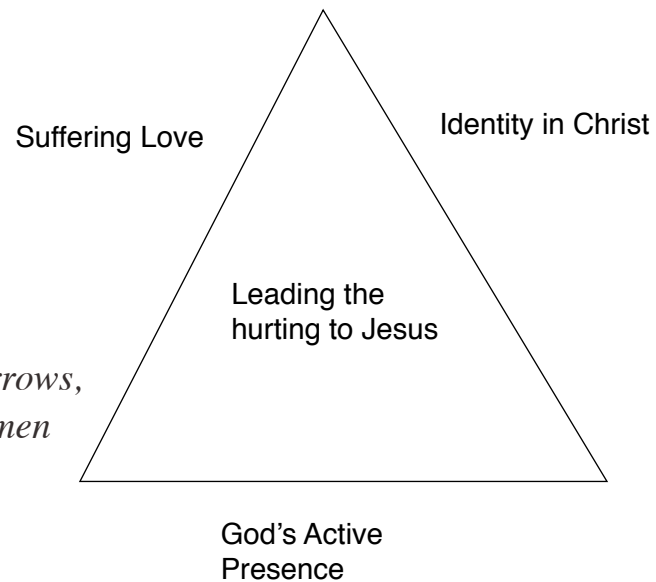
A. Christ's suffering love for them

TO THE VICTIM — *Jesus suffered to reverse abuse and suffering*

He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. (Isaiah 53:3)

TO THE WEAK — *Jesus is able to help you change*

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:15-16 ESV)



God's Man Restores the Hurting: Reaching the Abused, Porn-addicted, and Same-Sex Attracted with the Gospel of Grace

TO THE STRAYING — *Jesus loves you in the midst of you're running*

But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. (Luke 15:20)

TO THE LOST — *Jesus died to give you life*

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit (1 Peter 3:18)

B. Their New Identity in Christ

TO THE VICTIM— You are not defined by the abuse done to you but by God's love for you

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:37-39 ESV)

TO THE WEAK— *When you are weak, He is strong*

For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardship persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong (2 Cor 12:10)

“Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. (1 John 4:4)

TO THE STRAYING— *Be who you are in Christ, not what you were*

God's Man Restores the Hurting: Reaching the Abused, Porn-addicted, and Same-Sex Attracted with the Gospel of Grace

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

(1 Corinthians 6:9-11 ESV)

C. God's active presence in their lives through incremental steps of grace

We must lead people to Jesus directly through prayer and by pointing out His active presence in their lives in both big and small steps forward.

“Making progress...does not mean you will suddenly get teleported from the mire in which you now live to the mountaintop of freedom from all temptation. Change in these areas means taking many small, incremental steps in the right direction.

For example:

- *A decrease in the frequency of a sin is a true good. It's not good that you are still indulging in pornography, but if you are doing it less, you are going in the right direction.*
- *A change in the actual nature of the sin is progress. If you are no longer having an affair or premarital sex, and now you are battling pornographic fantasy, it's good that your struggle has changed from your actions to your imagination.*
- *A change in the battleground is progress. When your battle has moved from purchasing materials or going onto explicit internet sites to battling the old fantasy tapes that are still in your mind, that's movement in the right direction.*
- *An increase in honesty and accountability is progress. You are moving forward when you are willing to be truly candid and accountable to a trusted friend, spouse, or pastor and say, “Here's where I'm struggling.” An appropriate openness to others is a very significant step towards change.*
- *Not always responding to difficult circumstances by indulging in sin is progress. If your life gets hard and instead of going straight to your fantasy life, you pray for help and ask others to pray for you, then God is at work.*

God's Man Restores the Hurting: Reaching the Abused, Porn-addicted, and Same-Sex Attracted with the Gospel of Grace

- *Repenting more quickly is progress. Learning to go more quickly to the Lord of life, instead of wallowing for days, weeks, and months in the gloom of "I failed again," is a sign that God is at work in your life.*
- *Learning to love and consider the interest of real people is progress. Your immoral fantasies use other people in an imaginary world. Caring for others, even in small ways, means that Jesus is changing you.³*

whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins. James 5:20

³ David Powlison, "Breaking Pornography Addiction pt.1" CCEF <http://www.ccef.org/breaking-pornography-addiction-part-1>