



Profile for
March 20, 2016

Salvation Status: I became a Christian in 1974

Felt Need: Wounded Warrior

People who identify with the Wounded Warrior profile tend to have a need to recover from emotional and spiritual pain. Such pain commonly inhibits their ability to develop relational intimacy, trust with God, and trust with others. The pain they experienced may have been caused by people close to them...maybe a friend, family member, or trusted individual within a religious organization. Their pain may also be the result of physical and emotional exhaustion. Wounded Warriors may have worked so hard and long in their own strength that they have now become "burned out." Physical and emotional exhaustion can seriously impact their spiritual vitality.

Heart
Mind
Soul
Strength

Regardless of how the hurt occurred, people who identify with the Wounded Warrior profile are likely experiencing feelings of loneliness, anger, exhaustion, impatience, and distrust of others. They may feel distant from God even though they may be very active in church or ministry-related activities. Their devotional life may also be negatively impacted. They may find it difficult to pray, and when they do pray, their prayers may be focused on themselves and their perceived needs. They may find it difficult to worship God or study the Bible. When asked to participate in ministry service, they likely feel as though they simply do not have the energy or desire to add more stress into their lives.

Unfortunately, they may distance themselves from the very relationships that might aid in their restoration process, mistakenly believing that "time heals all wounds." In reality, over time, unaddressed pain generally sows seeds of bitterness. Alternatively, they may over-compensate by trying to "please and appease" those they identify as having authority over them. In such cases, this "servant attitude" may be motivated by a deep desire to win acceptance and avoid emotional or spiritual rejection.

While these descriptions may appear negative, there are positive attributes associated with this profile. First, the heart of a Wounded Warrior is emotionally and spiritually sensitive. Once people who resonate with this profile realize that Satan has sought to re-direct that sensitivity away from God, they will be better positioned to redirect their hearts to God. King David was described as a "man after God's own heart." With healing, this same description could soon characterize the Wounded Warrior. Second, while they may currently feel spiritually distant from God, they have recognized that this is not how their relationship with him should be and have expressed a desire to address the issues which are presently impeding their love-relationship with their Heavenly Father.

The Wounded Warrior's spiritual formation challenges will include repentance from attitudes of bitterness and self-justification, and true forgiveness of those individuals whom they believe have hurt them. They should not wait for these individuals to seek their forgiveness, for the "offenders" may not even be aware of the damage they have caused. The Wounded Warrior's healing process may be helped by following the directives of Matthew 18:15 – 17...15 "If your brother or sister sins (against you), go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. 16 But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' 17 If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector". Regardless of the actions or inactions taken by those who hurt them, their responsibility is to simply forgive, even as our gracious God has forgiven them.

Formation Phase: Discover / Exploration

The Discover/Explore phase of spiritual development moves past the mere acknowledgement that God exists, and now begins to explore how, if he exists, we are to relate to him. This may be a period in one's life where we may dabble with various religions in an effort to determine which one is the true religion.

A common value in our culture today is the belief that there are many paths to the same God, so we are to simply select the religious path that works best for ourselves. However, this politically correct mantra is in deep conflict with the Bible.

In the Gospel of John, chapter 14 verse 6, Jesus makes an audacious claim: "Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Jesus leaves no room for other paths to God. He clearly asserts that we gain access to God the Father only "through [him]". This claim makes Christianity an exclusive faith that forces us to deal with the personhood and nature of Jesus Christ.

The author C.S. Lewis, in response to this exclusive claim suggests that we are then forced to come to terms with Jesus, for he is either a liar, a lunatic, or he is truly Lord.

Consider:

- If Jesus was a liar, then he knew what he taught was untrue and was an utter fool...as were his immediate disciples...for being willing to die for a lie.
- If Jesus was a lunatic, then we should expect that his teachings would be incoherent and inconsistent...but a simple reading of the various Gospel accounts belie just the opposite.
- If Jesus is indeed Lord, then we must consider his teachings and claims seriously.

The Gospel accounts make it clear that Jesus' mission was to address the problem of sin. Sin is rebellion against God. The Bible makes it clear that every person exists in a state of rebellion against God. We all want to be a god unto ourselves. Romans 3:23 conveys the common human problem: "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God".

But it is Romans 3:24 that conveys the solution to humanity's common problem: "and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus."

Let's examine the meaning of three key words in verse 24.

- Justified – Means, "to be made in right standing", how then are we to gain such standing before God?
- Freely – The Bible teaches over and over that we can never be good enough on our own to merit God's favor, so God himself intervened on our behalf and he himself has made our justification possible without any effort on our part...it is free, it is a gift. This is the meaning of the word, "grace"...It is all the good that God intends for us, given to us freely. So how do we appropriate this free justification?
- Redemption – The meaning of this word is to "buy back". A good example of this term was the practice of some pre-civil war anti-slavery advocates who would raise money to pay a slave's price so that he or she could be set free. The price in the case of sin is our death. This is not merely physical death, but the as the Bible defines death, it is eternal separation from God. Romans 6:23 explains: "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord". The Bible teaches that Jesus was God who took on flesh, was born of a woman, yet as the only God-man, was perfect and entirely without sin. God demanded that the penalty of sin was death, and so Jesus took upon himself that penalty for every person, when he died upon the cross. Redemption comes when we acknowledge that Jesus is God, and that he paid the price (i.e., death) on our behalf. This then is how we have been set in right standing before God, free from any effort on our part.

Once we come to that place in our life of acknowledging the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and accepting his payment for our sin, the Bible promises that Christ's Spirit will empower our lives from that point on, to convict of sin and to enable us, over time, to overcome the sin that once enslaved us.

In this life, Christians will never be perfect. But true Christians will be transformed over time, by the work of Christ's Spirit, to reflect more and more the nature and character of our savior Jesus. Romans 14:17 summarizes for us: "For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking (e.g., religious practices), but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit".

Strategies

The following are suggested strategies and resources to help you mature at your present NextSTEPS level.



Man's Radical Falleness

Lecture four from Dr. R.C. Sproul's teaching series Chosen by God. How far did man fall in the Garden? How

has sin penetrated into our souls? What did Jesus ...

