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LEARNING TO CRY "HELP!"

Part One of "AFTERIMAGE, From Gory to Glory to Glory"

I was listening to a teaching by a minister in the Christian media one day and this particular minister was discussing the topic of healing. This particular minister shocked me when that person said the following phrase "There is no such thing as a victim". This minister went on to say "Everyone whether they are a child or an adult makes choices that put them in the predicaments they are in, no exceptions!" It was the "...no exceptions!" portion that bothered me. I will take it for granted that there are some married people who are in the shape they are in today because they made a poor choice by sleeping with someone besides their spouse. I will take it for granted that there are some broke people who are in the shape they are in today because they bought a Cadillac on a Chevrolet budget. I can go on and on. If you are a person that was sexually molested as a child, would you like someone to tell you that you chose to be sexually molested? I wouldn't want to hear that sick and heinous response. How would a minister's wife feel if she was told that because she did not "spend enough time with her husband" (and that statement in quotes may not even be true), that she was the cause and to be held fully responsible for the adultery that her husband committed? How would you like to be told that because you were a bad boy (and by being a bad boy, you deserved a proper and just disciplinary action such as detention, no recess, or a trip to the principals office, etc) that you chose to become black and blue all over your legs, buttocks, and arms through the repetitive beating and stinging of a yardstick? (yes the yardstick incident happened to me in fourth grade). I can go on forever with more scenarios but let us move on.

LEARNING TO ADMIT THE NEED FOR HELP

Denial does not solve anything. Denial only makes matters worse. Denial by others is a cop-out way of simply saying and failing to admit that "I do not know the answer to your problem". Denial is simply "lying".

Jesus said in Matthew 17:20-21 "...I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you." Jim Bakker once said in his book I Was Wrong "Addiction is bigger than the individual, so it takes something bigger than the individual to cure it". Your faults, sins, and addictions look like a mountain to you. Guess what, it is a mountain to God. Unfortunately, there are some in Christianity today (especially the word-faith teachers) who try to twist reality by saying that the mountain in your life is really not a mountain at all, but it is actually a molehill. Physically, it is quite easy for one to walk over a molehill and stomp it out. Physically, it is impossible to move a mountain. By calling that mountain a molehill, one actually denies that the mountain exists. How can a person deal with a mountain (sin, addiction, obstacle, fault) when their perception of reality has been so warped to the fact that one cannot see the mountain as a

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mountain? If Jesus wanted us to deny our surroundings, obstacles, etc, then why would he even speak words in Matthew 17:20-21? Therefore, one can actually with the faith as small as a mustard seed, say such phrases as "MOUNTAIN, BE MOVED!", "ALCOHOLISM, BE GONE!", "ABUSED INNER CHILD, BE HEALED!", etc. But sometimes in this walk, one person alone just cannot say to that sin, addiction, obstacle, etc to move out of the way. Sometimes you need to admit that you need someone to assist you through this time in your life.

It is bad enough already that some people turn the other cheek and attempt to deny a problem by wishing that it would go away, but the other side of the fence is also bad. It becomes harder in this free-spirited, independent, and self-sufficient society to cry out for help. To cry out for help as a man is considered weak, and to a woman it is considered as being ill prepared for life. One has already won phase one of a long, hard fought battle for freedom when they broke down a wall of pride, confess their faults/sins, and admit that "I need help. I cannot handle this situation anymore". To most people, that is enough to lay back to rest and recover for a small period of time. One may think that they have lost by admitting defeat, but in reality, they have just started to win.

LEARNING TO CRY "HELP!"

After one admits that there is a problem, breakdown, sin, etc, the next major battle occurs. This battle involves the process of actually crying out for help. It is one thing to admit that you have a problem, but it is a step to the next level to admit the problem and learn how, decide, and go through with crying out for help. It is very wise to not go to everyone for help. For example, if a woman is dealing with issues related to sexual lust or sexual molestation, surely you don't tell every man about it while dealing with it. One in that instance would either see a pastor, a licensed counselor (preferably a Christian one), and/or another woman who has been through the same ordeal. One who is trying to defeat the vice of gambling does not consult another gambler on how to beat the vice of gambling. That would be quite preposterous. One would seek the pastor, a trusted friend and prayer warrior, a licensed counselor, or one who is free or has been set free from that vice. I went with a friend one time to an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting because he was in the midst of dealing with his alcoholism and needed some moral support to give him the drive and encouragement to go through with alcohol withdrawals. I noticed that most everyone else there was suffering through the same ordeal as my friend. Everyone was there to receive help for their problem, support from their fellow group members to the fact of they were not the only one who suffers from alcoholism, and freedom from the sickness of alcoholism that bound them. None of these people in the room were free from alcohol **EXCEPT!** one person. That one person was the advisor and was outright responsible for the activities, progress, and functions of that group. In this instance, the advisor was a retired investment broker who was forced into his retirement by his alcoholism and got treatment for alcoholism and had not

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had a drink in eleven years. I want to emphasize a reality here. **It takes a person who is free or who has been set free from a vice to help set a captive to that vice free.** I have never met a prisoner who could free another prisoner. The only way I have seen a prisoner set free is through the help of a "outside" and "free" person. Jesus is the perfect example, He never sinned, and he shed his blood for us at Calvary to purchase us and make atonement for our sins. It is because of Jesus that there is such a thing as "freedom". Therefore, when one is set free from a sin, addiction, or obstacle, it is because of Jesus, the one who is "free", had the keys to sin, death, hell, and the grave to unlock the chains and shackles that bound the enslaved, bound, sinner, tormented, etc.

David in the Psalms once said "I lift up my eyes to the hills, and where does my help come from. For my help comes from the Lord, maker of heaven and earth." Moses constantly went before the Lord for wisdom on how to deal with Pharaoh and how to deal with God's chosen people. Elijah went constantly before the Lord when it appeared that his world was falling apart. There are many instances in the New Testament where many people needed healing, deliverance, etc. The point is that Jesus cares about you as much as he cared about the great men of the Bible. They had times of need and times of help. Therefore, do not consider yourself as "weak" or an "inferior species" because these men of God are just like you, a frail human being that became supernaturally natural conquerors of their sins, addictions, and obstacles by God's supernatural power. **YOU ARE NOT ALONE IN THIS NEED, MANY OTHERS HAVE FACED THE SAME TRIALS, SINS, ADDICTIONS, AND OBSTACLES THAT YOU FACE TODAY.** The victory is yours and the battle belongs to the Lord.

Therefore, if you need help: **CRY HELP**. This does not show your weakness, it just showed how strong you really are, and how much stronger you will become. For one day, you will face life not with the previous or current attitude of "look at this big mountain (obstacle, sin, addiction) that stands in my way" but with the new attitude of "Look at my BIGGER GOD that will help me move this big mountain out of my life".

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YES, YOU ARE WORTHY OF "HELP!"

Part Two of "AFTERIMAGE, From Gory to Glory to Glory"

In part one of this series entitled: Learning to Cry "HELP!", I discussed two main concepts that will lead one to recovery from their sins, addictions, hurts, generational curses, etc. (1): One must learn to admit the need for Help when they are consumed by the sin, addiction, hurts, etc. The two ways we admit the need for help is to stop denying the problem exists and to stop trying to make a molehill out of the present mountain that is your obstacle to freedom. (2): One must learn to cry out for help to deal with the sin, addiction, hurts, etc. The two major points learned here was that "It takes a person free from a sin, addiction, hurt, etc to set a person captive to a sin, addiction, hurt, etc free." and "You are not alone in this, many others have faced and have conquered the same sins, addictions, and hurts that you face today." If you have not read the "Learning to Cry "HELP!" article, I would recommend to you to read this article prior to continuing. This article sets the direction and foundation of this topic of dealing with sins, habits, addictions, and hurts.

As I started doing the research for these series of writings, began talking with people who went through addiction, and read testimonies of people who faced similar circumstances, I noticed something that comes up in some people when the issue of freedom comes up. This issue is called "Being Unworthy". I did not realize until discussing this topic with people and seeing the same destructive patterns in my life that the majority of battles lost or won are decided at the point of determination of one's self-esteem and one's feeling of worthiness to receive anything given to them. This core issue, believe it or not, keeps many people from desiring to gain freedom and also stymies approximately 95% of the attempts to be free. Eleanor Roosevelt once said "No one on earth can make you feel inferior without your permission". I was touched when I first read this quotation. Then, this revelation came to me" **Even though you are in the process of admitting, crying out for, or accepting help, do you still feel that because you were "defeated" by the sin, addiction, poor choices, hurt, etc. that you deserve the torment of forever staying in the sin, habit, addiction, poor choices, etc?** There are some people today that feel this way. There are some "backwoods" preachers today that convince these hurt and addicted people that they deserve this sin, hurt, addiction, etc. on their life and that sin, addiction, hurt, etc. is God's eternal judgment on that person. I am here to convince you that because you are a blood-bought child of God, you deserve to be free, you are worthy to be free, and the same Jesus you worship can set you free. Dealing with a sin, addiction, hurt, etc is more than just putting down a fifth of whiskey, more than just refusing to buy pornography at the local convenience

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store, more than just crushing that pack of cigarettes. It also consists of recognizing that this battle is beyond flesh and blood, but it is dealing with principalities and strongholds. It is at this time of dealing with principalities and strongholds that one can start working through the past, one can now get to the crux of his/her problems, and one can learn how to develop an entirely new mindset on how to approach life.

It is through this "dealing" that one can both look at what is presently hindering you from living life to the fullest calling of God and deal with it. While at the same time, one can look ahead without over-focusing and see the victory that one can have when these core issues are dealt with. It is here that one can start learning that they are a valuable human being and worthy of all the same blessings that God pours out on his children. It is here that one can finally learn to be nice to themselves and realize that 'You are the best "you" in existence' and 'Only you can do what God wants you to do, no one else can take your place'.

The feeling of being unworthy can usually be attributed to a lack of a positive self-image. If a dysfunctional father tells his underachieving son constantly that "you will never amount to anything in life", sooner or later the son is going to believe that lie, accept it as reality, and quit trying to live. Then the son begins to rationalize in a dysfunctional manner that he is incapable of doing anything with his life because of those constant, yet repetitive words that haunts his memory, inner child, and spirit that says to him "you will never amount to anything in life". To sum this point up, **Dysfunction handed down breeds MORE AND INCREASED DYSFUNCTION.** Some of the sins, low self-worth, addictions, etc are caused by generation curses levied onto a generation by God based on the sins of the forefathers. What ends up happening is that instead of you having control of yourself, your low self-image controls you. The things that you do (actions, deeds, feelings, behavior patters, etc) correlate with your self-image. If you see yourself as an underachiever, then you will always be an underachiever until you cry "HELP!". Your life will always move in the direction of your strongest thoughts. In most circumstances of a person facing an addiction, sin, hurt, habit, etc., the strongest thoughts are usually the destructive thoughts that only lead to the fulfillment and gratification of the addiction, sin, hurt, habit, etc. Even though the fulfillment and gratification of the addiction, sin, hurt, habit, etc. has taken place, it is usually at the expense of the person's well being and mental health. To those who wrestle with low self-image, I would suggest that you find a support group of friends that will bless and encourage you that you are a good person with lots of attributes to give to the world. Do not deny that you are wrestling with the feelings of low self-image, but do not let anyone instill any more negative thoughts into you. Low self-image that leads to a sense of unworthiness is like anything else in life, any obstacle, any circumstance. IT CAN CHANGE, AND IT CAN CHANGE FOR THE BETTER!. Prayer changes things and Jesus changes hearts, one heart at a time.

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When the "rationalization" of "I will always live in the ways directed by my sins, habits, hurts, etc" take full control of one's own being, then everyone around you is cheated out of your full potential, your families, employers, God, the church, and yourself. I realize that many questions come out of these statements such as "Do you know who molested me?" "Do you know who introduced me to my first joint that led to cocaine?" In most of these cases, it was some family member or a best friend. It was someone you truly loved and trusted with all of your heart, mind, soul, and will. You need not deny it happened. But one must learn to do five things here (note: this does not apply to someone who was raped against their will or sexually molested in any way):

- Confess their faults, sins, habits, and addictions to God.
- Ask God for forgiveness of committing the sins.
- Ask God to lead you to repentance and healing.
- Accept responsibility for your actions.
- Accept the consequences of you actions at all costs.

The next thing to do (and this applies to all in a destructive lifestyle, whether chosen, or a victim of a horrible rape or molestation) is to forgive those who harmed you and to forgive yourself for the grief you placed on yourself.

Do not let your enemies, any negative influences, and doubters hold you back. These types of people can stop you temporarily, but only you can stop yourself permanently. The past is the past, you cannot change the past. The future is also the future, your future is yours to change and redirect. If you give God your future, WITH GOD, ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE! For God came not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved (John 3:17).

In summary, there is a way out of the feelings of unworthiness and feelings of low self-image. It can only be found through the love, mercy, forgiveness, repentance, mercy, and grace that is offered by Jesus Christ.

Lord, right now, I ask in the name of Jesus that any one who suffers with the feelings of unworthiness and feelings of low self-image can come to you to experience your love, mercy, forgiveness, repentance, mercy, and grace. I ask that you would heal these people who desire deliverance from those issues. I ask that you would transform their thought patterns by the renewing of their minds to see that you love them and that you desire these people to live out their fullest callings and anointing that you desire your children to have. All things I ask in Jesus name, AMEN!!

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LEARNING TO ACCEPT "HELP!"

Part Three of "AFTERIMAGE, From Gory to Glory to Glory"

In part one of this series entitled Learning to Cry "HELP!", I discussed two main concepts that will lead one to recovery from their sins, addictions, hurts, etc. (1): One must learn to admit the need for Help when they are consumed by the sin, addiction, hurts, etc. The two ways we admit the need for help is to stop denying the problem exists and to stop trying to make a molehill out of the present mountain that is your obstacle to freedom. (2): One must learn to cry out for help to deal with the sin, addiction, hurts, etc. The two major points learned here was that "It takes a person free from a sin, addiction, hurt, etc to set a person captive to a sin, addiction, hurt, etc free." and "You are not alone in this, many others have faced and have conquered the same sins, addictions, and hurts that you face today." If you have not read the "Learning to Cry "HELP!" article, I would recommend to you to read this article prior to continuing. This article sets the direction and foundation of this topic of dealing with sins, habits, addictions, and hurts.

In part two of this series entitled Yes! You Are Worthy of "HELP!", I discussed how that most victories over addictions, sins, etc are lost due to the fact that the people who are bound by their sins, hurts, addictions, etc do not feel worthy of being free of their sins, hurts, addictions, etc. I also discussed how a true Christian who struggles with this issue is worthy of the same blessings as other Christians. The issue of understanding your value to God, other people, and yourself was discussed. If you have not read the "Yes, You Are Worthy of "HELP!" article, I would recommend to you to read this article prior to continuing. This article deals with an issue that has to be dealt with prior to learning to accept help.

Denial is simply "A psychological buffer that protects us from feelings we are not ready to deal with mentally, emotionally, and spiritually." It is usually at this stage that denial manifests thoughts into the minds of those who seek recovery from their addictions, sins, hurts, habits, etc. Even though one learns to admit, to cry out for, and to be worthy of help, the ongoing battle of accepting the "Help!" intensifies. It is here at this stage that one has to defeat that last little bit of pride that rises up within them that states to that person that "I can defeat this all by myself". Pride, as defined in Webster's Dictionary is "An overly high opinion of oneself, an exaggerated self-esteem, and an excessive belief in one's own self-worth, merit, superiority, etc." The pride that is trying to convince you of the lie that you can defeat this habit, sin, etc all by yourself is usually fueled by the sin, habit, strongholds, hurt that really does not want to leave you. Satan knows that you have believed the lie of being permanently bound to the sin, hurt, habit,

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and stronghold so deeply within you that you became the sin, hurt, habit, and stronghold incarnated. Satan desires you to remain bound for life, but Jesus desires you to be set free to do exploits for the kingdom of God. But one must stop believing the lie of "I can defeat this all by myself" and accept the fact that "I am currently bound and I currently cannot see the light at the end of the tunnel".
HELP!

It is very common for a person who breaks his leg to use a crutch to help himself / herself move around for a temporary period of time. After the leg starts to heal, a now healthy person begins to apply weight on that leg and starts to live a normal active life again without the use of the crutch. In the mental and spiritual realms, the injury is not easily seen to the eyes. The scars, addictions, sins, hurts, habits, etc. are usually buried deep within the mind. Usually, one who breaks a leg (physically) uses a "crutch" temporarily until he is healed. Usually, one who has his mind, heart, and spirit broken uses a "crutch called addiction, sin, hurt, habit, etc." permanently for the rest of their lives or until the destructive patterns are broken. Where the wooden crutch becomes a substitute for a leg for a temporary time in the physical realm, The crutch of addiction, sin, hurt, habit, etc. usually ends up being a part of that person's functionality (actually dysfunctional) permanently.

The addiction, sin, hurt, habit, etc. ends up being one's best friend, while at the same time, becoming the enemy within. This is easily seen in one's life when stress, pressure, and constant nagging in one's life goes beyond the normal threshold of that particular person. It is in this stage that the addiction, sin, hurt, habit, etc. irrationally influence you to make irrational decisions that do not benefit others and do not benefit even yourself. The only thing receiving the "so-called" benefit is the addiction, sin, hurt, habit, etc. by you gratifying that fleshly desire within you.

Therefore, you are now at the crossroads of determining the supplier of the "HELP!" that you need. There are numerous ways to get the help and counseling that you need. The key issue here is that you place God first and foremost and give Him the room to do the work within you.

Pastoral Counseling: This is where the addicted person and a minister come together and get to the core issues at hand. Depending on the training that the minister received, this may or may not be an adequate source for help. Please let me explain the previous statement. Believe it or not, the average minister in America is between forty and fifty years of age. When that minister went to seminary approximately twenty years ago, Christian-based recovery was a non-existent concept. Christian oriented recovery is still in it's infancy in the church today even though organizations such as Rapha, Minirth-Meier, and Fred

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Gross Christian Therapy have been in operation for years. Some churches teach that Christian Recovery using a mixture of the Bible and psychology is evil and will send you to hell. (This belief that the mixture of the Bible and psychology is evil is called psycho-heresy). Some churches want their congregations so perfect that they outright refuse to deal with addicted people whether they are Christian or not. The average minister has never received training on the topic of recovery. The relatively few ministers who have received training in this area have either went back to school to minor in psychology, ordered study materials from an Christian psychological organization such as Minirth-Meier, or approach this issue blindly. The good news here is that more and more ministers are getting training in these areas. More and more seminaries are now offering this training as either a pre-requisite or optional courses for obtaining a degree in divinity/theology. Therefore the church is starting to recognize that in order to reach a world for Jesus where the sinners in the world suffer from sins, hurts, strongholds, and addictions; they have to be ready and mobilized to deal with the problems that come into the church.

Twelve-step groups: This is where a group of people with a similar sin, stronghold, addiction, hurt, etc. come together in a neutral setting to learn how to cope, discuss, and break free from the sins, strongholds, addictions, hurts, etc. The most popular groups using this concept is Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous. Twelve-step groups usually have a sponsor who is free from the same addictions or never suffered the addiction to serve as the leader of the group. The purpose of groups like these is to facilitate the recovery process in a series of twelve steps. These twelve steps being:

1. We admitted we were powerless over (sin, habit, stronghold, addiction, etc) that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

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8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to (those bound by sin, habit, stronghold, addiction, etc), and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

These groups also developed the Serenity Prayer. This Prayer reads: "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I can not change..., courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference." These groups have a high success rate of recovery, and some judicial systems as part of a criminal's sentence, order repeat offenders of alcohol/drug related crimes to submit to this type of counseling, attend regularly, and be an active participant in the sessions. Some Christian recovery groups and treatment centers actually use the twelve-step model on a much larger scale for therapy.

Treatment Centers: These are institutions where the treatment and therapy of the sin, hurt, and addiction is done on either a long-term basis or done in nightly sessions after work. These centers are very expensive in cost and are usually used as a last resort when pastoral counseling, one-on-one counseling, and twelve-step groups have failed. Some treatment centers are also used by the judicial system to assign repeat offenders to treatment as a part of a sentence or probation. The treatment in most of these centers is more psychological than Biblical. There are some Christian based treatment centers in America that implement Biblical principles along with the psychological aspects of therapy. Some of the costs of treatment centers may be covered by your health insurance.

Psychologists/Licensed Professional Counselors: These people have general practices very similar to medical doctors. You set up an appointment to see these individuals like you set up an appointment to see a medical doctor. The difference is that the sessions are done on a weekly basis. The psychologist or licensed professional counselor, depending where you live, has the authority

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to commit you to an advanced mental health treatment center if your behavior leads is excessively irrational. Depending where you live, some states allow individuals who have psychology degrees to either practice, or obtain a state-required license to practice as a Licensed Professional Counselor. These counselors can usually offer the same quality services as a psychologist at a cheaper monetary rate and are sometimes more flexible with their schedules allowing for nightly/weekend appointments. Like treatment centers, the treatment in most of these centers is more psychological than Biblical. There are some psychologists and licensed professional counselors that are Christian and implement a mixture of biblical principles and psychology. Like treatment centers, some of the costs inferred may be covered by your health insurance.

One-On-One Counseling: This is where you find a person who has overcome the same sin, hurt, and addiction and develop a relationship of accountability with that person. This is a non-formalized treatment method that is done when the two persons come together. It is here that these people do extracurricular activities together by themselves (ex. golf, fishing, etc.) while at the same time, discuss the problem, the core issues behind the problem, the victories/defeats over the problem, etc. To some people, this informal setting is a much easier and less costly approach to take than the other methods listed above. Not only can the issues at hand be tackled, but one can learn how to develop healthy relationships, regain the sense of trust and devotion, and use those skills to develop more healthy relationships with different people. Some of the root causes that drive people to make poor choices that feed their sins and habits can be traced to some unhealthy relationships that occurred in the past. When this approach is done between two Christians, the spiritual needs of that person can be further addressed at the same time as the psychological needs of the addicted, hurt, and bound person. This can also be a great tool for evangelizing the one dealing with addiction. This can be used as a method of discipleship/fellowship between two Christians. I have seen this method work at a very high success rate with both people being blessed and set free from the hurts that once bound them into poor choices.

No matter which method of accepting "HELP!" you decide to pursue, remember to keep God first in your life. I do not believe that psychology is wrong in and of itself. When psychology crosses the line of "analyzing the cause and cure of dysfunction" to "I am the God over my life", then psychology has tried to take the place of God.

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Lord, right now in the name of Jesus, I ask that whoever is reading these articles and is currently facing a sin, addiction, hurt, etc. will use these printed words to seek the help they need and deserve. I ask that your light may be shined in areas that darkness seem to dominate. I ask that your inner healings take place and the road to recovery may begin. In Jesus name I pray, AMEN!

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IMPLEMENTING AND MAINTAINING "HELP!"

Part Four of "AFTERIMAGE, From Gory to Glory to Glory"

In part one of this series entitled Learning to Cry "HELP!", I discussed two main concepts that will lead one to recovery from their sins, addictions, hurts, etc. (1): One must learn to admit the need for Help when they are consumed by the sin, addiction, hurts, etc. The two ways we admit the need for help is to stop denying the problem exists and to stop trying to make a molehill out of the present mountain that is your obstacle to freedom. (2): One must learn to cry out for help to deal with the sin, addiction, hurts, etc. The two major points learned here was that "It takes a person free from a sin, addiction, hurt, etc to set a person captive to a sin, addiction, hurt, etc free." and "You are not alone in this, many others have faced and have conquered the same sins, addictions, and hurts that you face today." If you have not read the "Learning to Cry "HELP!" article, I would recommend to you to read this article prior to continuing. This article sets the direction and foundation of this topic of dealing with sins, habits, addictions, and hurts.

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In part three of this series entitled Learning to Accept "HELP!", I discussed the various different forms of counseling available to people today. The topic of denial was discussed along with the concept of how addiction becomes a once-in-a-while binge to a requirement for one's survival.

In order to become non-conformed into any addiction, sin, habit, etc. one must learn to let God transform them by the renewing of the mind. In this, one will learn that who you really are as a person is not determined by what others have done to you. Implementing and maintaining healing and victory means to develop supportive relationships where the correct interpretations of our past are made along with enacting the correct decisions concerning dealing with the future. This is not done by adding more wounds to the wounds already present.

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In John 11: 38-44, the story of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead is told. When Lazarus was raised from the dead, he came out of the grave with his grave clothes on and his body smelly from the start of decay. When one implements and maintains recovery, one will not look all dressed up for a night on the town. One will come to God and their choice of counsel with the sins and actions of their choices upon their backs. The stench of one's sin will manifest through one's prayers and counseling. Please do not think that one has to have their act cleaned up prior to counseling. You cannot clean fish until you catch fish. Jesus commanded the observers who were near the miracle to "Loose that man and let him go!". This concept reinforces what was said in one of the other series of "It takes a free person to free an bound person". Lazarus could not unravel the grave clothes because the grave clothes in Lazarus' time were similar to being a mummy where bandages were used to completely cover up the human body. Lazarus could not free himself from the bandages that bound him. It took the commands of Jesus to raise Lazarus and it took the help of other people to unravel the bondages and to expose the sin and decay to the light for healing and cleansing to take place. If one thinks about it, it had to be a miracle for Lazarus to rise up after being risen from the dead since dead people are lying down. How was Lazarus able to rise up while he was dead?

In Luke 13:10-13, there is a story of a woman who had a sickness that lasted for a lengthy period of time. When Jesus healed her of the sickness, he commanded "Woman, thou are loosed from your infirmity". The Scriptures even say that she was bent over and could not straighten herself at all until Jesus healed her. Like Lazarus, this woman could not free herself from the sickness that gripped her being. She needed a free person to free her from the sickness. The scriptures say that she had a "spirit of infirmity". This meant that the sickness was demonic in nature. Some addictions, habits, etc. may be demonic in nature and require Godly prayer, fasting, and Godly deliverance to take place instead of or within the times of counsel. I personally know that the topic of demonic influence is difficult to talk about because there are people who are so convinced that demons are behind every tree and under every rock and that demons are the cause of everything that goes against their ways of thought that all they do is add to the hurts already present in a life that is already broken. True Biblical discernment must take place PRIOR to praying for deliverance in order to determine if the habit, sin, etc is demonically influenced or not or there will be more pain inflicted on a person experiencing shame already. Plus, if this issue is mistreated, the person who desperately needs help will more than likely become further reserved and shrink back from any attempt to obtain deliverance.

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I noticed an observation about the psychology of women and men in these two texts. Most women (not all women) who suffer from a sin, habit, etc usually go about their ways searching for the answer to their problems. The text in Luke clearly tells us that Jesus, along with this woman, was in the synagogue observing the Sabbath day of rest when this miracle took place. An alcoholic woman will most likely to attend AA meetings on her own and still attend sessions while trying to find the solutions to her dysfunctions. A woman who was sexually molested will more than likely go to the same church for years and years, while at the same time, search for the deliverance to the hurt, shame, and betrayal of trust inflicted upon her. The good news here is that as this woman was healed by a supernatural touch from God, you can be healed by a supernatural touch from God yourself.

Most men (not all men), on the other hand, are like Lazarus. Most men will usually lose something dear and precious to them due to their sins, hurts, habits, and actions. For example, a man who has committed adultery usually will not acknowledge and confess the sin as sin until he has already let die the marriage, the respect of his family, and the obedience of the children, etc. A man who is addicted to gambling will usually never confess that he has a problem until he loses his marriage, loses the family home, has his car repossessed, blown his life savings, and hits rock bottom. In those situations and in the life of Lazarus, something important to those men at one time died. Lazarus was physically sick and lost his health. Most alcoholics do not admit that they are alcoholics until they have lost a relationship, their jobs and drivers license, or worse yet, when they have lost the use of their liver due to cirrhosis. We can clearly see in the parable of the Lost Son in Luke 15:11-32 that the prodigal son experienced a death in his relationship with his father and did not realize that he had a problem until he had lost and squandered his inheritance on prostitutes and ended up coming to his senses. The interesting thing about this is that the men usually think that they have everyone convinced that they are OK while at the same time, the people who they try to convince know deep down that things are not ok. Hallelujah!, I am so glad that the people who notice the problems pray to God that these people can either come to their senses or if the sin, hurt, addiction, etc has caused a dream, marriage, and/or vision to die, arise the man up from whatever has created the death in his life. The prodigal son was able to come to his senses and come back to his father and be restored into the family. Lazarus ended up dying and Mary and Martha had to call for Jesus to perform a miracle to raise Lazarus from the dead. The good news here is that whether you come to your senses before it's too late, or if you have to die in some area of your life and be risen from the dead, Jesus can rise you from the dead and he can restore you as a heir to the kingdom of God, or restore what the sin, habit, etc stole from you.

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In times of counseling, one will feel like that the healing is too hard to obtain and will want to quit and give up. This is a natural feeling that needs to be discussed with God and the counselor. One will also experience some brief periods of relapse, this is also natural. When relapse happens, one does need to deal with the sins committed and deal with them. In true counseling there will be times of progress, times of stagnation, and times of relapse. If one was to plot the recovery with the references of time and recovery, the graph would look a little bit like the teeth of a saw blade. The teeth go upwards at an angle until a relapse occurs, but the relapse does not go as far down as the starting point of recovery. Then the upward progress starts again until another relapse occurs. This repetitive process occurs until complete recovery has been obtained with the relapses decreasing and the progression increasing. In these times, go completely through the counseling and deliverance from the addictions, sins, etc. no matter what it costs, no matter what is already lost, and no matter what everyone else thinks. Let God and your counselor know that you are experiencing feelings of wanting to give up, feelings of failure, and feelings of relapse. Open and truthful communication is the most important thing that has to be established between you and God, and you and a counselor. Most failures in any type of scenario can be traced to one concept, a lack of true and complete communication somewhere.

Lord, right now, in the name of Jesus, I ask that the people who have read this series concerning "HELP!" and are in need of that help would be given the courage to seek help with you and with the people that you want to use to help the sick, bound, etc. to obtain freedom. The late folk singer Janis Joplin once said that "Freedom is just another word for nothing left to lose". I know that the people who are seeking the freedom from the things that bind them are almost at that point of not having anything else to lose. Their sins, actions, and their poor choices have already consumed everything that they had. Lord, I ask now in the name of Jesus that you would restore to those children who have lost resources, families, jobs, etc. what their enemy has taken away from them. I also ask that you would replant their foundations on the Rock of Ages and guide their paths for your glory until you are ready to take them home. I also ask that you would give those who desire to be set free complete victory in Jesus. All things I ask in your name, AMEN!

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FREELY RECEIVE "HELP!", FREELY GIVE "HELP" Part Five of "AFTERIMAGE, From Gory to Glory to Glory"

In part one of this series entitled Learning to Cry "HELP!", I discussed two main concepts that will lead one to recovery from their sins, addictions, hurts, etc. (1): One must learn to admit the need for Help when they are consumed by the sin, addiction, hurts, etc. The two ways we admit the need for help is to stop denying the problem exists and to stop trying to make a molehill out of the present mountain that is your obstacle to freedom. (2): One must learn to cry out for help to deal with the sin, addiction, hurts, etc. The two major points learned here was that "It takes a person free from a sin, addiction, hurt, etc to set a person captive to a sin, addiction, hurt, etc free." and "You are not alone in this, many others have faced and have conquered the same sins, addictions, and hurts that you face today." If you have not read the "Learning to Cry "HELP!" article, I would recommend to you to read this article prior to continuing. This article sets the direction and foundation of this topic of dealing with sins, habits, addictions, and hurts.

In part two of this series entitled Yes! You Are Worthy of "HELP!", I discussed how that most victories over addictions, sins, etc are lost due to the fact that the people who are bound by their sins, hurts, addictions, etc do not feel worthy of being free of their sins, hurts, addictions, etc. I also discussed how a true Christian who struggles with this issue is worthy of the same blessings as other Christians. The issue of understanding your value to God, other people, and yourself was discussed. If you have not read the "Yes! You Are Worthy of "HELP!" article, I would recommend to you to read this article prior to continuing. This article deals with an issue that has to be dealt with prior to learning to accept help.

In part three of this series entitled Learning to Accept "HELP!", I discussed the various different forms of counseling available to people today. The topic of denial was discussed along with the concept of how addiction becomes a once-in-a-while binge to a requirement for one's survival.

In part four of this series entitled Implementing And Maintaining "Help!", I discussed the concept of working through the healing process. I also discussed two primary differences in the approaches that most men and most women use in obtaining healing and deliverance from the sin, hurt, addiction, etc. that has kept them bound.

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"Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. **Freely you have received, freely give.** - Matthew 10:8

In this last part of the "HELP!" series, I would like to discuss a concept that is Biblically commanded for us as Christians to obey. This concept is described in bold print in the verse listed above. In Matthew 10:1, Jesus gave his twelve disciples authority to cast out demons and to heal sickness and disease. In order to give away something, one must have already received and took into possession that thing which is to be given away. Unfortunately, this Biblical concept is rarely implemented in the Body of Christ. I am not just talking about an emotional realm, but this concept is also lacking in the spiritual and financial areas as well. There are many reasons why this concept of freely receive, freely give is rarely seen in the church today. I will discuss three major reasons why in the following paragraphs.

(1): Shame: Shame is defined in the dictionary as "A painful feeling of having lost the respect of others because of the improper behavior of oneself or another." Shame occurs in all phases of healing. Hopefully, the counseling you have received or are going to receive will address this issue of the shame you felt before addressing your sin, hurt, addiction, etc. You also need to address the shame you feel while facing these issues also. But do not be afraid of addressing shame. God's word says in Hebrews 2:14-15 says that "Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death, he might destroy him who holds the power of death, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death." You see, others before you suffered the same addictions, sins, etc and were able to overcome by the power of Jesus because Jesus came as a man empowered by His father to have victory over sin, death, hell, and the grave. The same people who were held captive in slavery by the devil using their fear of a death of something in their life actually was heading toward death down a different pathway through their method of escape (sin, addictions, etc). But there is another factor of shame that needs to be addressed. This is the shame one gets when condemnation is received from an unreceptive audience after giving their testimony. Such shame is heard through comments such as "Oh, you cheated on your spouse", "You were a drunken bum", "You looked at girlie magazines". Instead of rejoicing with these brothers and sisters for finding freedom in Christ, these people usually do something else. They usually condemn and stay away from you. That is okay. Just because you did not receive your deliverance in their church does not mean that you were not set free. The Bible says that your sins are scattered as far as the east is to the west. How can anyone go to the east or west to drag back someone's past sin that has been washed in the blood of the Lamb and try to convince God that God did not do the job right the first time. That is telling God that he has to go back to the cross twice for something the only had to die once for. Your victory belongs to you, no one can take that away from you. No one can

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shame you out of your victory. Face their earthly persecutions and receive your heavenly reward as God, like he did Joshua, washes you and cleanses you right in the presence of your doubters and enemies.

(2): Competition: In many churches today, a spirit of competition has been implemented. In these churches, one is never able to confess any signs of weakness. If one does confess any signs of weakness, the weakness is always and forever used against that person in an attempt to keep that person from obtaining the blessings God wants for that person to have. In fact, these churches usually try to inflict shame a person who wished to discuss these issues of sin, hurt, and addiction. The only time that these churches allow these weaknesses to be discussed is when that person got saved. The church then uses that testimony to draw in more converts and more money. Then that person is dropped and ignored for the next person with the gorier testimony. A church of this mentality preaches freedom while at the same time, implements a survival of the fittest mentality that keeps people from obtaining the freedom that God wants a child of His to receive. To confess one's past usually costs that person's ministry. But the real ending to the story is that even though you may lose things here on earth, there is rewards in heaven and manna that flows down from heaven to feed you when you need it. Please, I ask you, do not let the fratricide caused by internal competition keep you from sharing your testimony and freedom to others who need it.

(3): Hoarding of Blessings: In most churches today, a shame factor creates a shriveling of one's spirit. There are numerous people who have amazing spiritual gifts, anointing, calling, testimony, and counseling that never become manifested into fruition due to the shame factor. These people know that if they speak out and tell of their testimony, then scorn, ridicule, condemnation, and expulsion is evident. Therefore, their blessing is hoarded and people that need to be touched by these people never get ministered to because of this fear. If you are one who is subjected to this mentality, please begin to rebuke the fear now and begin to reach out to the other people that need you. To these people, you may be the only Jesus they will ever see.

In another realm of thought, there are people who hoard blessings due to the spirit of competition that exists within the church. In their church environment, to mentor someone is to mentor the one who will do exploits and put them to shame. To mentor someone means suicide in the game of spiritual chutes and ladders. To mentor someone in this environment is to mentor the one who may backstab you one day while you spiritually say "ETTU BRUTE". May I remind you that Elijah mentored Elisha and the lord blessed Elisha. Elisha was the prophet who asked for the double portion of Elijah's anointing and received it. Elisha is also noted for doing twice as many miracles as Elijah. Mentoring is to be done for

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the glory of God and the advancement of the Kingdom. What God does with the lives of those you mentor is up to God and not up to you. It is quite evident what failing to properly mentor a person can cause. Today, we see too much style without substance. We also see the "stuff" without style. We observe and notice that some of the Christian leaders manifest out of pride and fleshly works while we see some in the next generation performing worse pride and fleshly exploits. Please, be mentors to someone who needs it, their life depends on your testimony, your wisdom, your experiences, and your spiritual walk with God.

There is a very distinct pattern here. Someone had to be free enough to receive the power to help you become free. It is through the receiving of this power that one was able to share with you, the will, desire, ability, and deliverance to become free. It was also through the giving of the services from someone who cared enough about you that you were able to be (or working towards being) set free from the sin, hurt, addiction, etc. that kept you bound and inhibited. A best friend, pastor, counselor, etc has set an example of giving to you. It is time for you to become the giver to someone who has experienced the same affliction, sin, habit, and hurt that you have been through. Giving to that person can be as simple as directing them to the appropriate resources needed to deal with the issues at hand. It can be as complex as you being the instrument being as used by God to set the captives free through counseling, mentoring, prayer, one-on-one relationships and evangelism. It is through this that you can instill your gift of giving to that one who will receive. It is also through your sessions and friendship chats that you teach the person that you counsel how to give freedom to someone who needs it. A cycle is generated here. A cycle of a counselor giving to you yields you receiving the advice of the counselor. Giving your advice and testimony to one in need creates someone who receives and becomes set free. That person who meets a bound person gives their testimony away to someone in their world that needs the help to be set free. This needs to be taught as well as implemented during the final stages of the counseling.

In complete summary of all of the "HELP!" series, the recovery of the person who needs counseling is the most important objective. Worthiness needs to be established inside of the person in need. Problems need to be addressed as problems and not as anything else. Proper counseling and nurturing is essential to recovery.

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Lord, right now in the name of Jesus, I want to say a very special prayer for those who counsel, and for those who need counsel. I ask that your love, mercy, and grace would pour out in these times of healing. I also ask that the counseling be done correctly, in proper realistic perspective, and in Godly order the first time. I pray for inner peace and strength to face these personal struggles and overcome these personal struggles. Form friendships, trust, and grace within this relationship. I also ask that the testimony of freedom would ring from the delivered after the healing takes place to where others can experience deliverance. In Jesus name I pray, AMEN!