

Helping Othersⁱ

Praise:

Begin to prepare your heart and mind for the study by listening to and/or singing the worship songs from the services. Choose two or three songs from the following list:

We Give You Glory – Jeremy Camp

Build Your Kingdom Here – Rend Collective

Your Love Never Fails – Jesus Culture

Beautiful Things – Gungor

Burning in My Soul – Matt Maher

Send Me Out – Steve Fee

If We Are the Body – Casting Crowns

Sing Over Me – Bethany Dillon/Nichole Nordeman

Prayer:

Following the praise music, pray for understanding of the scripture, enlightenment that the Holy Spirit may guide your understanding, discernment that you may see how this lesson applies to you, and courage to surrender those things that hinder your spiritual growth.

Preparation:

(5-10 min)

Write on a piece of paper one or two sentences that describe or summarize the message, “Helping Others.” Take turns reading aloud the summaries, and discuss them for the remaining few minutes (of the 10 total).

Breaking it Down

(30 min)

Break into smaller groups of three or four people. Read the key segments of today’s message, and answer together the questions related thereto.

The Healing Power of Christ

As we conclude this series on “The Healing Power of Christ,” we’re going to look at how our hurts, hang-ups, and habits can be used to help others begin their own healing process.

Helping Others

If you’ve ever stopped to consider your own mortality, it’s likely that you’ve thought about what you’ll leave behind. What will be your legacy when you’re gone? While the answers vary for each of us, it’s probably fair to say that most of us hope that we will be remembered after we’re gone. We hope that somehow our lives touched the lives of others...that our life-story (even our hurts, hang-ups, and habits) will have served to help others. “One of the greatest things about God is that He never wastes a hurt. And He doesn’t want to waste yours.” (p. 241) If we want God to use the pain in our lives to help others, we must be willing to become transparent—to be open and honest about our hurts, hang-ups, and habits. As we unpack that concept of becoming transparent, we’ll identify the necessary steps to take so that God can use our pain to help others.

How? (How does God use our pain to help others?)

If there’s anything that defines the key point of this lesson’s message, it would be that we need to *share our story*. Sharing your story or your testimony provides an opportunity to witness to others about how God has worked in your life, and it provides hope for others who are struggling with similar hurts, hang-ups, and habits. We can find encouragement to share our story in scripture from 1 Peter 3:15 (NIV): “...Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone

who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect....” Sharing your story isn’t necessarily an easy charge; but, as we work through this final lesson in our series, we’ll see that God can—and will—use our pain to help others.

1. Describe a time that you shared a story and learned that God used it to help another.
2. If you’ve never shared your story, explain what might be holding you back.

1) Accept your mission.

In the gospel of Matthew, we find what the Bible calls, “The Great Commission,” for all believers and followers of Jesus. More specifically, Matthew 28:19 reads, “...go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.” The main intention of this commission for us (read: our mission) is that we are to disciple others, to *share* the gospel (through our personal testimonies), and to bring people to Christ. John Baker puts it this way, “The moment you...become a believer, you become a missionary. You become a part of God’s great plan of reaching out to hurting, lost people.” (p. 248) Thus, it is the mission of all believers to share their story. Now that we understand the biblical definition, it’s time to accept our mission.

1. How do you feel about “The Great Commission” that we are called to exercise?
2. What—if anything—about your mission do you find intimidating?

2) Tell your story.

“The world has far more people who are ready to receive the Good News than those willing and ready to share it. There are people who need to hear your story.” (p. 249) We understand that our mission is to share our story, but what if we’re not good story-tellers? It’s important that our focus remains on our mission and that we not doubt our ability—or God’s ability—to use our story to help others. As we seek God’s comfort and encouragement in telling our story, let’s look at some guidelines (p. 249) that Baker recommends for telling our story.

Be humble.

Humility was a characteristic we studied in Lesson 1, “Recognizing Our Need.” We learned that we receive God’s help when we go to Him with humble and submissive hearts; likewise, when we tell our story with humble and submissive hearts to others, others receive His help, as well, *through* our stories.

Be real.

Becoming transparent, vulnerable, and completely honest about our story takes courage. But, think about the testimonies you’ve heard other people share. We admire their honesty and appreciate the fact that they can be “real” about their hurts, hang-ups, and habits. If their honesty does anything to encourage us, then we, in turn, need to be real in telling our story in order to help others receive the healing power of Christ, too.

Don’t lecture.

It’s one thing to share your story and tell how God has worked in your life, but it’s quite another to use your story as a soapbox to lecture others on what not to do. Remember not to take “The Great Commission” to such an extreme that people who hear your story lose sight of the very reason for your telling it: to witness to others of the healing power of Christ so that *they* can begin to receive it, too.

1. What makes someone’s testimony sound/feel authentic to you?
2. Are there any that you would add to Baker’s recommendations?

3) Consider your beneficiaries.

When we consider ***who would benefit from hearing our story***, the obvious answer is those who are currently caught in the hurts, hang-ups, and habits that we've experienced. Sometimes we find those people in our small groups; sometimes we find them by accident. When we make ourselves available for God to provide us the opportunity to share our story, we'll find that He will use us in powerful ways. But, we have to ***tell Him that we're available*** in the way that Isaiah did: "Then [Isaiah] heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And [Isaiah] said, '*Here am I. Send me!*'" (Isaiah 6:8 NIV, emphasis added)

We can rest assured that the more we tell our story, the stronger *we* become and the more we help others. In fact, there are ***eternal implications*** to sharing our story. Baker reveals such eternal implications as "getting people from darkness into light, from hell into heaven, from an eternity without God to an eternity with God" (p. 250) When we consider *those* benefits of telling our story, they we're demonstrating "The Great Commission" that we are called to live.

1. Name someone whose testimony impacted your life. In what way did you benefit from hearing it?
2. For whom might God use your story? What would be the implications of sharing your story with that person or group?

In Closing:

As we close the final lesson of this study on the healing power of Christ, it's important to understand that we're not closing the final chapter of our story. People will still cause us hurts, and it's possible that we could develop new habits and hang-ups. However, as we continue to allow God to be the author of our story and as we continue to practice the steps of these lessons, we'll find that we will help others, as we write our stories on their hearts.

Close in Prayer:

God, we thank You for Your help throughout this study...for encouraging us, for guiding us, and for healing us. As we take this next step in learning to tell our story, help us to honor You and glorify You. We pray that our story will help others by giving them hope in a Savior whose story can become theirs as easily and rewardingly as it is ours. And it is in His name that we pray, Amen.

The Blessing (say this as a group):

"Everyone will share [their] story of your wonderful goodness; they will sing with joy about your righteousness." Psalm 145:7 (NLT)

Action Items for the Week Ahead:

Review the key points of today's message and the scriptures related thereto. In the week ahead, reflect upon those scriptures, and consider the following:

1. PRAY about it: Ask God to reveal to you the person(s) with whom you can share your story.
2. WRITE about it: Write your story on paper so that you will be prepared to share it when the timing is right and so that you will already have the words to share.
3. SHARE about it: Now that your story is written, share it with someone you trust.

¹This sermon series, "The Healing Power of Christ," is based on the book, *Life's Healing Choices*, by John Baker. ©2007 by Richard D. Warren and John E. Baker. All quotes used in this discussion guide are taken from this book and annotated accordingly.