

*Healing Loneliness
Through
Sanctification and Transformation
in the Image of Yeshua/Christ*

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Abstract:

Extensive psychological and sociological research data has identified loneliness as a variable of concern for most major mental disorders. Without discrimination of age and gender, and social status, loneliness is reaching pandemic proportions in USA and worldwide. In the current time of crisis and scarcity, the number of clients turning for strength to the spiritual roots of Christianity is rapidly growing. Majority of counselors find themselves unprepared to respond to this unmet need. This workshop is designed to bridge the gap between the need and the availability of spiritual services by providing training in healing loneliness as a wounded state of heart through sanctification and transformation in the image of Christ.

This is a holistic approach of healing that provides step-by-step prayer guidance for transition from loneliness as a broken and miserable state of mind and heart into solitude as a peaceful existence. The transition is accomplished by demolishing cognitive and mental barriers in person's life and reaching freedom through "living in the Spirit" (Romans 8:12,13). The goal of this intervention is to attain permanent cognitive, emotional and mental transformation. The tools used are the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus, the redemptive work of His cross, and the power of His resurrection that brings newness of life.

Biography:

Shaynah Neshama is an assistant professor in the MSW Program at Azusa Pacific University. She has doctoral degree in Exercise Physiology from the National Sport Academy, Sofia, Bulgaria and M.S.W. from the Carver School of Church Social Work, SBTS, Louisville, KY. Dr. Neshama has extensive social work experience in the areas of crisis intervention, medical social work, Christian counseling, program management, and foster care. Since 1996, Dr. Neshama has worked as a social work supervisor and foster care social worker at Ninos Latinos Unidos/FFA, serving Spanish-speaking families in Southern California. She has also held faculty positions at National Sports Academy (Bulgaria); International Baptist Theological Seminary (Czech Republic); and Simbirsky Missionary College (Russia). Dr. Neshama is also actively involved in prison and prayer ministries.

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LONELINESS! Don't we know this dry place well? A place where sheer silence attends to our wounds and absolute emptiness binds our bleeding hearts. A frightening place where Pain meets Sorrow and together they bring forth Despair. A place where we are forced to retreat for healing only to find that our wounds have festered. A place where the Loneliness has nested itself deep in our souls, creating a chronically ill state of heart. How so many of us know this place well!

SOLITUDE! How few of us know this place! A place where sheer silence reigns in quiet contentment and absolute is the serenity, not the emptiness. A blissful place where Joy meets Delight and together they bring forth Peace. A wonderful place where the wilderness inside blooms and the dry land flourishes; where the floods of joy spring into fountains of gladness and the gladdened soul soars on wings like the eagles. How so very few of us know this blessed place well!

Etiology of the Problem

The spirit is sick when alienated from God, and the healing of the spirit takes place when it is united to the Spirit of God.

Leanne Payne, *Restoring the Christian Soul*
(Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1991), 70.

Loneliness stems from mankind's alienation from God, so no remedy that does not take this factor into account will afford more than superficial and temporary relief.

J. Osvald Sanders, *Facing Loneliness: The Starting Point of a New Journey* (Grand Rapids, MI: Discovery House Publishers, 1998), 11.

Loneliness proceeds from alienation from God for those who are outside the kingdom of God and from immaturity in growing in the image of Yeshua/Christ for those who already belong to the kingdom of God.

Diagnostic Criteria

Redemptive vs. Unredemptive Pain and Suffering

Redemptive pain is a **godly sorrow** that leads to salvation and produces earnestness, eagerness to clear oneself, indignation, alarm, longing, concern, and readiness to see justice done (2 Cor. 7:10,11).

Unredemptive pain is a **worldly sorrow** that brings death (2 Cor 7:10). Such suffering constitutes the essence of emotional pain from loneliness.

Diagnostic Criteria

Unredemptive Pain: worldly sorrow is an emotional wounding

The heartaches, similar to any practice of sin, open a door to the devil to gain a foothold (Eph. 4:27) in our hearts. Emotional wounding triggers resentment, resentment leads to bitterness, and bitterness leads to anger and contempt. The Scripture tells us that one who hates his brother is a murderer (1 John 3:15). Murder is sin and the retribution for sin, according to the Law of God, is death (Matt. 5:22).

Diagnostic Criteria

Symptoms from client's perspective

- everyone looks down on me
- no one respects my word
- no one hears what I have to say
- no one sees me
- I am unjustly trampled
- I feel ensnared by friends
- I am stabbed by colleagues
- I am betrayed by family member
- I am being shoved away, spat upon, lied to, mocked, manipulated ignored, betrayed, mistreated, depressed, abandoned, neglected, forgotten, unseen, insignificant, and desperately lonely

The Root Problem

Death of the Human Spirit – consequence of the Fall

The Creation: God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (Gen 1:27)

The Commandment: You must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die. (Gen 2:18)

The Fall: From “very good” (Gen 1:31) man’s wickedness on earth became great and every inclination of his heart was only evil all the time. (Gen 6:5) He became “restless wonderer on the earth” (Gen 4:12).

The Treatment

Spirit-Soul-Body

The Breath of Life—The Restoration of Life

Through the initial breathing, Adam became a living being; through the second breathing, the last Adam, Yeshua - Jesus Christ, became a life-giving Spirit for us. The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are from heaven. And just as we have borne the likeness (his physical nature) of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness (the spiritual nature) of the man from heaven. (1 Cor. 15:46-49)

The Treatment

Sanctification—Healing of the Human Soul

Salvation vs. Sanctification

The work of Yeshua on the cross not only brought salvation to the human soul but also set the course for the soul's healing. With our coming home to God, the soul is redeemed but continues to be in a corrupt condition; we continue to be very broken people. Everything life brings, from birth to the point of redemption, is engraved onto the soul. The good things cause exponential spiritual growth, but the bad things cause deep spiritual decline. There is no "neutralizing" equation between the good and the bad in life that can wipe out the damages from evil done to the soul; only divine healing is sufficient to bring relief.

He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed. (Isa. 53:5)

The Treatment

Defilement - Illness of the Human Soul

Once saved – forever saved?

- Everyone, being a part of this world, is caught up in a vicious cycle of sin and death: When sin is committed, the divine retribution for punishment is death. A trespass committed in the physical realm triggers deadly consequences originating in the spiritual realm. Spiritual death leads to more sin. More sin gives evil the right to further expand its territory in the heart. Because evil acquires more access to reign in the heart, more laws are broken; more broken laws lead to more evil deeds, thoughts, and desires. This vicious cycle has been in effect in our world ever since sin first entered it. This vicious cycle is in power in each one of us unless through God's grace we attain His strength to break free from the cycle of sin and death.
- The Scripture tells us that there is a way to break the vicious cycle of evil in our lives through Yeshua crucified.

The Treatment

Defilement - Illness of the Human Soul

**Emotional wounding – equals immaturity in faith
and may lead to falling away**

- The illness and the brokenness of the world are the causes and the consequences of our wounding. We are broken by the wickedness of a broken world. We cause others pain because of our own brokenness. An innocent soul becomes ill when subjected to the excessive wickedness roaming impetuously through the world. No one is insured against emotional pain; no one escapes the sources of pain; everyone is subjected to pain. When experienced in excess, emotional pain shrivels the soul, causing it to withdraw from the light of life and huddle in darkness. If the wounds are not healed, it results in such deep sinking of the soul that this painful condition itself becomes a hindrance in the new way of life the believer has in Yeshua.

The Treatment

Defilement - Illness of the Human Soul

Old Nature – obstacle for growth

- Defilement proceeds from the continuous presence of sin in the heart of the believer: The old patterns of behavior, attitudes of heart, and thoughts of mind that have not yet come into conformity with the kingdom of God. The apostle Paul spoke of this condition of sin as being “at work in the members of my body” (Rom. 7:23)
- The illness of the soul is defiled when being governed by the old sinful nature of flesh (Rom. 7:18). These are the deepest corners of the heart that have not been yet crucified with Yeshua. These are the practices of the flesh that have not been renounced and hauled to the cross. These are the sinful thoughts and desires that function as an open door for demonic power to gain foothold in the hearts of believers and defile them. These are the strongholds of evil devouring us within our own flesh.

The Treatment

Defilement from Unredemptive Emotional Wounding

- Unredemptive emotional pain is an illness of the soul (heart) that prevents the believer from experiencing the fullness of life in Christ. It may proceed from wounds suffered before or after salvation. Both conditions are hallmarked by captivity foreign to the kingdom of God.
- Emotional wounding is like a thick shroud enveloping the heart or an iron cage that holds it captive. It is a condition of indefinite imprisonment to pain and suffering. If the condition is not treated, the soul sinks further into the miry depths of despair. At some indeterminate point, suffering becomes so excruciating that death seems a desired escape. Depression and suicidal thoughts are common manifestations at this stage, which are indicative of the severity of the affliction.
- How could victims of offences heap death on their souls? How could victims of injustice share in the same punishment as that of the offenders? Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. (Gal. 6:7-8)

The Treatment

Healing of the Soul – Crucifying the old nature

- How are we to deal with defilement of sin?
- “Those who belong to Yeshua have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires” (Gal. 5:24) and have risen to new life in Yeshua (Rom. 6:4). As we died with Yeshua to the pains of the old nature, we were also raised with Him to the joy of becoming new creations. When we crucify ourselves with Yeshua, it is no longer we who live but Yeshua who lives in us (Gal. 2:20); and if Yeshua lives in us, it is not our righteousness but His righteousness that we have, not our joy but His joy, not our peace but His peace. How then can one continue to feel lonely if one no longer lives but Yeshua does? In Him, we are “a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come” (2 Cor. 5:17), along with loneliness and pain. The more one attains Yeshua’s nature, the stronger one becomes at resisting and overcoming sin and unredemptive emotional pain.

The process of changing the heart is the process of healing the soul. The presence of the Holy Spirit penetrates deep inside the thoughts of our minds and hearts for the purpose of purifying and sanctifying them until they are acceptable to Him in whom “there is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5).

The apostle Paul urges us to “put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness” (Eph. 4:24).

The Treatment

The Torah - The Law - The Foundation of Life in Fullness The Blessing and the Curse

Why do we turn to the Torah – the Law for emotional healing? Very simple: The process of healing the human soul is the process of making one right with God. How do we know if we are right with God? It is when we know God’s requirements for righteousness. The Torah – the Law - is God’s standard manual for living life in fullness with Him. God clearly states His requirements for a righteous living.

The spiritual laws are the power God placed in man’s hands to counteract the evil influence of the devil. The Mosaic Law is a God-given guide for man to practice God’s presence under his fallen condition. Obedience to these laws assured that man would not only retain his human nature but would restore his position of close fellowship with God through receiving “fullness in Yeshua” (Col. 2:10). Sin is a transgression (violation) of God’s Law (1 John 3:4). Holiness then is conformity to the Law.

The Treatment

The Torah – the Law-The Blessing and the Curse

- The blessings and the curses are embedded in the Law. It is a life or death offer and there is no middle ground. Acceptance or disobedience set into motion forces that were preordained by the Word of the Almighty God and thus are irrevocable. When we disobey one of these laws, we immediately die spiritually. Spiritual death stirs all the curses for physical and spiritual desolation into action. It brings illness to the soul. Redemption and restoration from disobedience are also a feasible provision of the same Law.
- See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. (Deut. 30:11-15)
- This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live. (Deut. 30:19)



Divine Tools for Healing

The Power of Prayer

- Prayer is also the “official” language of the kingdom of God. Just as learning a new language requires time and effort, so does the development of one’s talking and listening abilities to God in prayer.
- The Power of the Spoken Word - The executing order in the spiritual realm is regulated by the power of the Word. Once spoken, it sets in motion forces within the spiritual realm that unroll and unfold until the spoken word comes into existence in the physical realm and becomes a reality on earth as it is in heaven. God’s Word is not chained! (2 Tim. 2:9)

Divine Tools for Healing

Examine Oneself

- Why do we have to examine ourselves? Because “if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment.” (1 Cor. 11:31) What are we to examine or, as the apostle Paul said, to judge? We are to examine every area of life—from our relationships to our attitudes—and every trait of our character—from thoughts and feelings to flaws and habits. The apostle Paul warns that failure to examine ourselves properly when partaking in communion leads to weakness, sickness, and even death (1 Cor. 11:30).
- Thorough examination is essential to the healing of the human heart. In addition to examine our attitudes and behavior, there is still another test, an ultimate test the apostle Paul urges each one of us to take. Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Yeshua is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test? (2 Cor. 13:5)
- The apostle Paul warns bluntly, “If anyone does not have the Spirit of Yeshua, he does not belong to Christ” (Rom, 8:9). Those to whom Paul writes are all believers in Christ; they have been saved and have experienced the redeeming power of the cross.

Divine Tools for Healing

Identifying Problem Areas in One's Life

Resentment	Shame	Jealousy	Sexual misconduct
Bitterness	Pride	Greed	Debauchery Immorality
Anger	Control	Gluttony	Lust
Hatred	Laziness	Alcohol	Adultery
Contempt	Gossip	Idleness	Fornication
Envy	Coveting	Pornography	Falsehood/Hypocrisy
Deception	Stealing	Fame	Money
Mistreating	Arrogance	Unbelief	Lying Tongue
Lack of Trust in God	Drug Addiction	Judgmental Attitude	Disrespect to Parents

Divine Tools for Healing

Confession and Repentance

- The **first step** towards becoming more like Jesus is **repentance**. Identification of sin alone is not enough to cancel death as a retribution for committing it; only repentance from sin has the power to cancel the punishment of death.
- The scriptural way for the onset of this transformation is **repentance from sin** and renouncement of wrong doings. It is not what we do apart from our prayer that changes us, but what God does with us during our prayer when we come with penitent hearts before Him. This is the state of being “poor in spirit” (Matt. 5:3) that lays the foundations for the new life we have in Him. Then, what God has done in the secret depths of one’s heart surfaces in the life of that individual for His glory.
- **The key for entering the kingdom of God is repentance. The key for remaining in the kingdom of God is the practice of daily repentance.**

Divine Tools for Healing

Prayer for Renouncing a Specific Sin

The Traps of Resentment, Bitterness, and Anger

- Bringing to the cross each problem area identified
- Repenting and renouncing the sinful practice
- Nailing the sinful practice on the cross.
- Deal with every problem separately

Divine Tools for Healing

Forgive Others

- Just as we ask Father God for forgiveness of our sins, we must also forgive those who have sinned against us. This is the act of getting rid of all the pain by forgiving those who caused it. Rendering forgiveness to those who hurt us has the power to releases us from the bondage of pain. Without forgiveness for others, we can't be fully forgiven by God.
- If you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. (Matt, 6:14-15)

Divine Tools for Healing

Prayer for Renouncing a Specific Sin

The Traps of Resentment, Bitterness, and Anger

- Bringing to the cross each problem area identified
- Repenting and renouncing the sinful practice
- Nailing the sinful practice on the cross.
- Deal with every problem separately
- **Cleansing through the blood of Yeshua**

Divine Tools for Healing

The Cleansing Power of the Blood of Yeshua

- Everything that has been defiled by sinful emotions, thoughts, or practices must be cleansed. Only the blood of Yeshua, shed for us on the cross, can cleanse us completely of our sin.



Divine Tools for Healing

Purification and Sanctification

- **Old Testament –**
- One must be pure and holy like God in order to enter into His presence. “Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy!” (Lev. 19:2) is God’s requirement for man.
- Only the blood of a perfect sacrificial animal could purify the heart. According to the just retributions of God’s Law, “the soul who sins is the one who will die” (Ezekiel 18:4, 20); but according to God’s love, He redeems that heart through another life, that of an animal.
- For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one’s life. (Lev. 17:11)

Divine Tools for Healing

Purification and Sanctification

- **New Testament**
- The blood of Yeshua shed upon the cross substituted for the blood required of the sacrificial lamb. Jesus' sacrifice satisfied the wrath of God and provided the way for our purification and sanctification. The Giver of Life became the Redeemer of that same life. No one else but God Himself paid the ransom for our sin. He, the holy and the righteous One, took our punishment and we, the sinners, were freed and loaded with great blessings. **Incomprehensible love!** How much higher are His ways than our ways!
- Through faith in Yeshua we have gained access to the Holy of Holies. The redemptive power of His blood washed us pure, but the corrupt condition of the heart continues to bring constant defilement. The Lord God has not waived the requirement for purity to enter His presence.
- The blood and the cross of Yeshua are the believers' means for satisfying God's requirements for purity and holiness. The cross heals the corrupt status of the heart, and the blood washes it pure. This is a **continuous process of death and resurrection through which the old nature of flesh is replaced by the righteousness of Yeshua.**

Divine Tools for Healing

Prayer for Renouncing a Specific Sin

The Traps of Resentment, Bitterness, and Anger

- Bringing to the cross each problem area identified
- Repenting and renouncing the sinful practice
- Nailing the sinful practice on the cross.
- Deal with every problem separately
- Allow time for Holy Spirit to minister and do the work of healing

Divine Tools for Healing

Pronouncing Your Forgiveness and Blessings

Cleansing ourselves from defilement of sin is vital for obtaining spiritual and emotional health. Cleansing is an act of “emptying” ourselves from all that is ours. This, however, is only half of the way towards sanctification. Once cleansed, we must be filled with the Holy Spirit. If we cleanse “our house”, put it in order, but keep it unoccupied, we allow the return of the unclean practices of the world, our old habits, attitudes, thoughts, and behaviors back into our lives. As a result we may even find our condition worst and our struggle prolonged. (Matthew 12:43-45) Ultimate death of confessed and hauled to the cross flesh is achieved through the **work of the Holy Spirit**. The Spirit’s presence heals pain, sanctifies, and restores to righteousness. We are called to offer our bodies, cleansed and holy, as a dwelling of the Holy Spirit.

- If a man cleanses himself ..., he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.” (2 Tim. 2:20)