

HEALING THE DAMAGE DONE

1 Peter 4:7-8

**Restoring Our Relationships with Our
Children**

By

**Ric Webb
Pastor-Teacher**

**Heart's Journey Community
9621 Tall Timber Blvd.
Little Rock, AR 72204**

**Website www.hjcommunity.org
Phone 501.455.0296**

Opening.

The paraphrase of 1 Peter 4:7-8 in *The Message* sounds like this: “**Stay wide awake in prayer. Most of all, love each other as if your life depended on it. Love makes up for practically anything.**” How true this is, how very true. I want you to remember well these words; do not forget them. It is *never* too late to impact your children, to touch their lives with goodness and grace, to speak strength into your son’s heart, or draw out the beauty and the glory of your daughter’s soul. It is never too late.

What I’m proposing cannot be done with young children— 6, 7, 8, 9. You move in much quicker at this age and you simply apologize; you set aright what has been wronged. “Daddy’s sorry, honey, daddy was wrong, will you forgive me?” A six year old doesn’t have the capacity to comprehend the enormity of this opportunity I’m outlining; they don’t have the vocabulary or ability to verbalize their wounds or the arrows that caused them. All they know is that their hearts hurt, their souls are filled with sorrow. This is for adult children, more mature teenagers and beyond. Because they *have* the ability to process this; they have some vocabulary and terminology to work with. And they *have* thought about some of these things. Even if you haven’t. **The wounds have been at work.** You can bank on it. Let’s take this in steps, one stage at a time.

Essay— Healing the Damage Done.

First things first, you go back with your older children and you ask them, “What was it like to have me as a father or mother? What kind of a father, or mother, was I? What was it like to grow up as my son, my daughter?” Then you give them an opportunity to respond {which means you stop speaking, and you *listen*}.

Learning to Listen.

Moving on, be honest. “I know I’ve wounded you, I know I’ve hurt you. Tell me how? ‘Well, I never really felt like you loved me; or that you loved me for who I was without wanting to change me into someone else. I never felt good enough, worthy enough, smart enough, strong enough. I never felt beautiful, delighted in, pursued... like you wanted to know and to care for my *heart* more than anything on this Earth. I never felt like anything I did was enough to please you.’” Any of this ringing a bell of remembrance, somewhere in your soul? Remember, perception is reality to the one doing the perceiving. **Perception is reality in the eye of the perceiver.** If that’s the Message they received, whether you realized you were sending it or not, it has left its mark. That I can promise you.

The danger is in what comes out of this. The danger is in our tendency to overlook the obvious, to minimize both our wounds and theirs. “It’s no big deal.... It wasn’t really that bad.... A lot of people had it worse...,” etc. I’ll *guarantee* you the Father does not minimize the wounds of His Children. Here’s what happens. The enemy will take the Message of the Arrows and he will distort their image of God and their image of self

even further, he will amplify it in a thousand different ways throughout their lives until it's all they hear. And the still, quiet voice of the Spirit is drowned out by the roar of their own rage {violence comes out in a lot of socially acceptable ways: driven-ness, perfectionism, workaholism}. Their own shame, sorrow, and self-hatred will overwhelm the Spirit's whisper, and their deep, deep hunger for affirmation and affection not predicated on clauses or conditions will shout down the sentences of healing and hope.

Knowing Their Hearts.

Once they begin to share with you their soul and to open up {which will only happen when grace has done its job and your tenderness has taken hold} you ask, "What was that like for you? How did that make you feel at the time?" I.e., I want to know the *deepest places* of your heart.

A Matter of When.

There are no perfect fathers {or mothers}. Not on this planet at least. It's something you need to understand and accept. Even Adam had a sin-nature by the time his sons were born. He and Eve both had fallen from their place of perfection {Gen. 3}. So it's not a matter of *if* or of *maybe* when it comes to wounding our children, it's simply a matter of *when* and how badly. For many good parents it is entirely unintentional; but the unintentional nature of a wound does not make it any less damaging to the heart or devastating to the life.

Remember something here: you are not alone {just you and God} in this Conflict, and you are not the enemy of your child. But there is one out here. And oh how he loves to pass you off as 'the Enemy' in his place. Satan is at work constantly, through the demonic realm, to take the arrows administered by you {however unintentional they may have been, and however unknowing you were as a parent} and to twist them, turn them, drive them in deeper, to hammer that Message into their hearts with phenomenal force! If he can keep those old wounds reopened he can debilitate your son or daughter; he can crush the joy right out of their lives, the same way he crushed so many of ours. **He can lead them out of the freedom which is their birthright in Christ {Gal. 5:1}, and back into bondage... which is exactly where he wants them.**

Owning It All.

If you're fortunate enough to have a child who will open up and be brutally honest without fear of your anger or reaction, you must *own it*. Own it, accept it, *all of it*. Let them tell you everything they have to say, let them express it all, and you take it. You don't defend or deflect; you don't make excuses; you don't explain your actions, you simply take it. You are a man or woman created in the image of the greatest Warrior this world will ever know {Gen. 1:26-27; Ex. 15:3}. You can handle it! **You have what it takes to see this through.** You have the wisdom of the Word and the strength of the Spirit; you can do this.

Asking For Forgiveness.

After this, you ask them to forgive you. It's not enough just to say, "I'm sorry," or the ridiculously infantile, "I'm not sure what I may have ever done, but if I did do something and that something wasn't right, I'm sorry." That is *not* what is needed. You ask for their forgiveness— *after* you've accepted responsibility like the man or woman you were created to be. This is critical.

Pursue Them with Passion.

Demonstrate the depth of your repentance, the redirection of your life, by pursuing them *now*. They want to know that they're important to you as their father. Still: at 24, 32, 45, 58. They need to know that their hearts are a treasure in your eyes. And that you love them deeply, with the gentleness and compassion of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Love Makes All the Difference.

1 Peter 4:8 says, "**Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins,**" {NIV}. *Kalupto* means- *cover* or *conceal* so that no trace of sin can be seen, *throw a veil* of oblivion *over* the past. You must trust this as the almighty Word of the almighty Lord of Love and Life. If they know you love them— if they *know* it— then any failure can be overcome. If they know you love them, it makes all the difference in the world. It means everything.

Finale.

Don't let fear hold you back from this Battle. Don't let fear rob you of this mighty work God has in store, because you are going to be the instrument the Spirit of God uses to bring Light back into the darkness of their lives. And in this process the Father is going to lift that burden of guilt from your back, that suitcase of shame you've been carrying for far too long, and toss it into the Pit where it rightfully belongs, into the sea of divine forgetfulness to sink out of sight forevermore. It's time we had our relationships healed by the passionate love of the Lord Jesus Christ. And it starts right here and right now. May we not waste another moment.

A Prayer: *Our Lord and our God, our King and Companion, **heal** our broken relationships with the tender love that healed our broken hearts. In Jesus' mighty name ...Amen.*