

## Lesson 4—“How can my wounded heart heal?”

**For leaders**—The important concept in this lesson is for members to realize that physical wounds and heart wounds have many of the same symptoms and both require special care to heal. *Learning and practicing the four questions* can be most helpful in helping people in the healing process.

**Opening**—Prayer and song

### **Leading the lesson**

- Choose different members to read through the lesson.
- As you discuss the list of physical symptoms, ask members to compare these to heart wounds. How are they similar or different?
- Talk about how important it is to tell your story. Have members discuss things that would make a good listener.
- Discuss the section about the four questions. Ask different members to share answers to these four questions concerning the epidemic experience.

### **The four questions**

- What happened?
- How did you feel?
- What was the hardest part for you?
- Who or what helped you to start feeling safe? (If someone does not feel safe yet, ask, What small thing could you to begin to feel safer?)

### **Individual assignment**

**Say**—Let’s all practice using the four questions this week. If we practice, we will remember it better.

- Choose a story to share about something that happened in your life (not a really serious event, and not too long). Have the other person ask the four questions. Set the timer for 10–12 minutes. Then switch—they tell a story and you ask the four questions.
- Remember that when you are the listener, your most important job is to listen, not to try to fix the person or give solutions.

**Closing**—Prayer and song

## 4. How can my wounded heart heal?

### Dealing with pain

Think of the pain in your heart like a heart wound. As the Psalmist says, the pain hurts to the depths of our hearts.

*But my Sovereign LORD,  
help me as you have promised,  
and rescue me because of the goodness of your love.  
I am poor and needy;  
I am hurt to the depths of my heart.  
Like an evening shadow  
I am about to vanish;  
I am blown away like an insect.  
My knees are weak from lack of food;  
I am nothing but skin and bones.  
When people see me, they laugh at me;  
they shake their heads in scorn.  
Help me, O LORD my God;  
because of your constant love, save me!*

**PSALM 109:21–26**

Compare this pain in your heart with a physical wound, like a deep gash. How is a heart wound similar or different?

- A physical wound is visible.
- A physical wound is painful, and sensitive.
- It needs to be treated.
- Any dirt or bacteria needs to come out.
- If it's ignored, it may get infected.
- God heals but he uses people like mothers, nurses, doctors.
- It takes time to heal.
- It may leave a scar.

After a disaster, you need to take care of the wounds of your heart so you can recover.

To treat a heart wound, you need to express your pain. **Find someone you can tell your story to**, someone who is able to listen without making you feel worse. That person needs to keep what you share confidential, and listen to you without trying to fix you, or give you quick solutions, or compare your story to theirs. Choose this person carefully. Often people who have good intentions try to tell you how to fix a problem. You may need to remind others

when you need them to just listen and understand rather than trying to advise you.

*A person's thoughts are like water in a deep well, but someone with insight can draw them out.*

**PROVERBS 20:5**

*No one who gossips can be trusted with a secret, but you can put confidence in someone who is trustworthy.*

**PROVERBS 11:13**

Don't let anyone pressure you to tell your story if you don't feel comfortable or ready to do so. You may need to tell your story bit by bit over time. Like a bottle of soda that has been shaken, you may need to let out the fizz little by little to keep from overflowing. You may also need to *retell* your story many times in order to accept what has happened and work through different parts of it. As you share, tell what happened, then when you're ready, move on to how you felt while it was happening, and finally focus on the part that was the hardest for you. Even Jesus shared his pain with his friends.

*Jesus took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee. Grief and anguish came over him, and he said to them, "The sorrow in my heart is so great that it almost crushes me. Stay here and keep watch with me."*

**MATTHEW 26:37–38**

You can also **express your pain by drawing**. And you don't have to be an artist! Just get paper and pen or markers, get quiet inside, and let the pain come through your fingers onto the paper. Don't worry about whether it is a good picture or not. Then think about what you see in the drawing.

Telling your story and being listened to sounds so simple, but it will help you heal. Hearing others tell their stories can help too, by reminding you that you were not the only one experiencing the disaster. At the same time, it will help them heal, and you will be able to offer comfort to each other.

Here are **four questions** that you can use as you listen:

1. What happened?
2. How did you feel?
3. What was the hardest part for you?
4. Who or what helped you to start feeling safe?

Often as people talk about an experience, they begin to understand their own thoughts and feelings better. They may come to realize that how they have been thinking about the situation is not helpful. The Bible tells us: “Be careful how you think; your life is shaped by your thoughts” (Proverbs 4:23).

Sometimes when we reflect on a difficult time, we become aware that God has helped us through it in some way. God also comforts our hearts and is the source of healing.

The Bible tells us that as we are comforted, we can become a source of healing to others:

*Let us give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the merciful Father, the God from whom all help comes! He helps us in all our troubles, so that we are able to help others who have all kinds of troubles, using the same help that we ourselves have received from God.*

**2 CORINTHIANS 1:3–4**

## For Reflection

Did the listening questions help you clarify your feelings? Did they help you think differently about your experience? Explain your responses.

How did it feel to tell part of your story to someone else?