

EMPOWER



TABLE OF CONTENTS

SESSION 1

Ground Zero

SESSION 2

Dealing with Disaster

SESSION 3

Brace for Impact

SESSION 4

Healthy Foundations

SESSION 5

Emotional Alarm Bells

SESSION 6

Snakes and Ladders

SESSION 7

Thought Court

SESSION 8

Cross Examined

SESSION 9

Meaning Making

SESSION 10

Purpose from Pain

SESSION 11

Reconciliation to the
Rescue

SESSION 12

Certainty Amid
Uncertainty

Purpose from Pain

ACTIVITY SHEET



As you navigate your way through adversity, be sure to consider what you will do with your pain? You have a choice! Are you going to use this pain and the lessons you have learnt from it, to help you or hinder you? Finding purpose to your pain is one of the greatest ways you can claim victory over suffering.



SESSION OBJECTIVES

This session is designed to help you understand:

- (a)** how 'mourning' can be turned into 'dancing'
- (b)** the importance of transitioning from victimhood to victory
- (c)** the choice is yours 'to be made well'

A Light in the Darkness

As detailed in scripture, heroes of the faith have undertaken similar journeys to the one you are on. A journey of redemption from tragedy, suffering and loss. Rather than getting His people 'out' of difficult circumstances, God would often lead His people through the various valleys of darkness into the light. Along the way, He would prepare, train, equip and empower them for a purpose filled future.



Connect the following 'afflictions' with their potential 'fruitfulness':

Affliction

After 17 years of loyal service (in senior management), lost position of employment.

Survivor of child trafficking. Had the courage to escape hostility and start a new life.

Spouse was unfaithful. Took years to recover. Marriage now fully restored.

Unsuccessful treatment of leukemia, before receiving new experimental therapy.

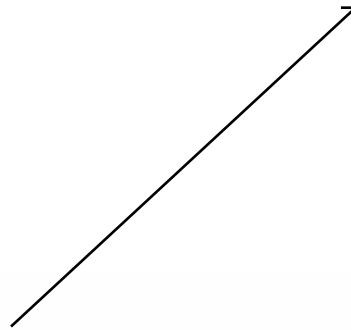
Fruitfulness

Helping other couples successfully navigate the fallout of infidelity in marriage.

Inspired to research pioneering alternative-medicine cancer treatments.

Positioned to step into Executive Ministry role and become an agent of change.

Advocate for the protection of children, and champion of change (to end trafficking).



WHEN YOU HAVE THE REVELATION THAT FRUITFULNESS CAN COME FROM AFFLICTION, YOU TOO CAN FIND PURPOSE IN YOUR PAIN. BY EXAMINING HOW YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES CAN BE USED FOR GOD'S GLORY, YOU'LL BE ABLE TO LET GO OF YOUR HURT AND LOOK UP FOR HEALING.



Victimhood

Just because you may have been a victim of unfortunate or unforeseen circumstances, doesn't mean you need to be defined by victimhood. The adoption of a victim mindset is not a given, rather it's a choice. You may not have chosen to be victimised, but you do have a choice as to whether you want to stay in a place of despair, self-pity and suffering. The choice to remain a victim is not a one-off conscious decision, rather it's a subtle process that can evolve over time and even be influenced by others. Remaining a victim ultimately involves viewing your entire life through the lens of oppression.



Identify whether you hold on to any of the following beliefs: ✓

I walked away from my faith. But God abandoned me before I abandoned him		Everyone else has greater privileges and benefits than me. I demand more	
If I don't get what I want, I will make sure they suffer. I won't rest until they pay		If I have to suffer, so should they. Otherwise, it's 'inequality'	
Nothing ever works out for me. Everyone (and everything) is against me		If only 'X' hadn't happened, then I'd be okay. But now, there's nothing I can do	
Don't look at me. I'm not the one. It's everyone else. They are to blame		It's institutional prejudice that prevents me from making progress in my life	
I'm disadvantaged, but no one helps me. I want special assistance and a head start		There's no point in even trying. There's no way I'll ever recover from this	
How come everyone else gets the breaks in life and I don't? It's not fair		It's not my fault. They are the ones who are responsible for all this	



INCENTIVES

Maintaining a default victim mentality can be highly rewarding. Incentives may be internal or external. As honestly as you can, identify any incentives that may seem enticing: ✓

1. Attention, sympathy and support from others		5. Perceived oppression gives you a cause to fight for (sense of purpose)	
2. Financial compensation, incentives or welfare (lowering motivation for change)		6. If others are to blame, you won't have to take personal responsibility	
3. Absurd as it may sound, it 'feels good' to 'feel bad' (like scratching a rash)		7. Suffering is so familiar; it's become both normal and comfortable	
4. You get to be 'right' in your own mind, thereby justifying intense emotions		8. Victims have powerful voices. Greater suffering leads to greater social status	

THERE COMES A TIME
WHEN YOU HAVE TO
RECOGNISE DWELLING
ON YOUR PAIN NEITHER
FACILITATES HEALING,
NOR HELPS YOU ATTAIN

heavenly plans for a hope filled future.





REFLECTION TIME

If you've identified with any of the above victim mindsets, ask yourself:

Q: Is it *really* working for you to stay focused on the injustice of it all?" If not, why not?

Q: Do you *truly* long to recover and be made well? If yes, why?

Q: What would it look like for you to say 'yes' to the healing that Jesus is offering?

Q: In order to '*pick up your mat and walk*', what changes would you need to make? (as well as thoughts and behaviours that need to be let go of)



RATHER THAN BECOMING ANGRY AT THE WORLD, ACCUSING GOD OF ABANDONMENT AND BECOMING BITTER TOWARDS THOSE WHO BETRAYED HIM, JOSEPH USED EACH SITUATION AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH - ALLOWING GOD TO MOULD, SHAPE AND REPOSITION HIM.