

Damaged Goods Can Still

Receive God's Love

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

Many Christians are deeply injured in their souls. They are men and women with “damaged goods,” characterized by the circumstances that have occurred throughout their lives to harm their emotions and injure their souls. They are partakers of lost emotions. Their emotions have been in total disharmony for years. Their conscience is infected with guilt and negativity. They are not consistent in receiving life from God.

This condition paralyzes a person’s capacity by producing a damaged capacity that generates the same problems month after month and year after year. They will either live in self-inflicted misery or subliminate into the world’s system to try to fill the gap. They may become neurotic and enter into serious illness, which might even lead to psychosis. Their capacity has been so damaged that even when they enjoy the Word of God, it is only a brief encounter that produces

a temporary hope.

These people have heard the same messages that other people have heard, but they are not delivered because they have damaged goods. Life has affected them in such a way that they have an impairment that nullifies the proper use of their design and their faculties. They often struggle with their self-image. Even when spiritual life is an option through the availability of the Word of God, they resist it because of fear of change. Why do they fear change? They are risking rejection and failure, and they fear becoming paralyzed forever.

God does not condemn them. God would not consider cursing them. But the events in their lives have brought in rejection that is almost unbearable. This rejection produces unimaginable misunderstanding and error experienced by people throughout Christian churches regarding the grace of God and His unconditional love. Many times the misunderstanding is because of ignorance, but the ignorance is not so much a lack of knowledge. More often, the ignorance is due to a lack of receiving life from God freely and all that is included in that life by God's grace.

People simply cannot receive life from God

in their damaged capacity. What every Christian needs to understand is that God has given them permission to change, and He provides divine protection for the process. This booklet reveals God's heart toward us, His children, and that He is ready, willing, and able to heal, restore, and renew our souls from moment to moment.

Chapter One
SELF-REJECTION

“Forbearing one another and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

“And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

“And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Colossians 3:13-16).

I heard a story of a man who was brought to one of the greatest houses in the world, a mansion. He was given a Rolls Royce and his wardrobe was filled with the best possible clothing. He was lavished with every sort of luxury. But he said, “I cannot accept any of it because I

haven't earned it."

We do not know all that transpired in his life before, but whatever it was, it left him with damaged goods. He felt he deserved punishment because of a self-image struggle that emerged in his soul and translated into fear—a fear of rejection, a fear of change, and a fear of failure. I suppose we would be shocked if we realized how many people exist with such "damaged goods"—people made in the image of God but battered and left with scars.

One of the Rockefellers, at the age of 50, had a serious problem digesting food. The diagnosis by his medical doctors indicated that he was a victim of damaged emotions. Success in his life had been disappointing. After dealing with his self-seeking, selfish attitude, he built the University of Chicago and the Rockefeller Center, and he began secretly giving away money to help people; but, more than that, in his own way, he submitted to a principle of God's life. He traded in self-absorption to be filled with God's portion and its abundant overflow.

The tragic deaths of movie stars like Marilyn Monroe and Elvis Presley revealed that even though they were highly successful in the world, their success frustrated them and produced

great disappointment. Every time they performed, they performed with damaged goods.

When teenagers rebel against parents, refusing to honor that which would protect them and bless them, they begin a process of developing a damaged soul and damaged emotions. Even if a parent is harsh or inattentive, rebellion is a result of a young person's wrong decisions. People are responsible for their own actions. Without a healing, there can be no change of heart. Therefore, as these young people grow up, even secret rebellion will continue to impair their capacity for God.

When a person does not have a proper capacity, change is impossible. For change to transform the heart, the capacity must be healed.

I met a young woman who heard me speak about "islands" in the soul—places that are detached from God's life—and His provision for grace, mercy, and victory.* She was overwhelmed with new hope. She understood for the first time how five consecutive years of suffering had damaged her emotions. She goes to a church that preaches the Gospel and loves God. She attends three services every single week, but she is just getting worse and worse. It is not the fault of the church, and I am not blaming her.

She is a person with damaged goods.

We discovered in communicating with her that her loved ones have expected too much from her. They have not evaluated how serious her condition is. They do not understand the pain she has gone through. She was molested by an older brother, and when she tried to tell her father, he wouldn't listen. She has damaged emotions, an injured soul, and an infected conscience.

A church atmosphere will help to some degree, but it cannot change her. It will also require a direct understanding of certain truths from God's Word. One message may start a new, wonderful process for change.

**Read Leaving Your Island for a Brand-New Garden, by Pastor Carl H. Stevens, Grace Publications, 1996.*

Chapter Two

ABOVE ALL, ADD LOVE

“And above all these things, put on charity....” Colossians 3:14 translates as “submit to love and let it be added in everything.” We have already put on the qualities of verses 12 and 13: mercy, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering, forbearance, and forgiveness. And now comes charity—something that God produces in the heart that bonds the entire soul together in a quality of life that only someone who can receive from Christ can experience.

“Above all these things, submit to charity.” Charity combines all the other fruits of God’s Spirit. Let love hold everything together and become the brand-new motive of mercy. This will be a bond of perfection, or maturity, connecting them together continually and dogmatically, in the present tense.

God’s love is something to which we submit. God is not saying, “Submit to My will.” He is

not even bringing in the will of God at all. He is saying, "Submit to My love." Just receive the love of God.

When Peter, being questioned by Jesus Christ, heard Him ask, "Do you love Me more than these?" Jesus used a word that indicated the highest form of love, a love that had no feeling to it. That love was not based upon friendship, husband, or wife for fulfillment. It was based upon something that was resident in God through the Holy Spirit. There were no emotional responses to that love, so He said, "Do you love Me with a love that demands no feelings, love that isn't even responding to something that people have done?"

Peter, immediately stirred up, replied, "I love You with a warm, passionate, deeply emotional love, and I want you to know that. I love you with feelings."

Jesus challenged Peter again, "Do you love Me with *agape* love?"

Peter passionately answered, "I love you with a *phileo* love."

Phileo love has a very beautiful meaning, as it is a love that two people have toward each other as close friends. It is the objective love of God in a relationship. It is the kind of love that

is in the mind, but it is also very emotional. The love of God, however, is not necessarily emotional. It may be, but it may not be. The subjective *agape* love of God is something that a believer submits to and believes in. Therefore, the love of God, while it is based upon an outward source, is completely subjective, meaning it is inside of me, and it is being motivated from within, not on the basis of a response.

Phileo love is motivated by support on the outside, and it brings in the passion of feelings and warmth and emotional motivation. There is nothing wrong with it. The Father loved Jesus that way, according to John 15:9. Jesus loved His disciples with *phileo* love in John 20:2. We are told to love God in that way, in 1 Corinthians 16:22, because it reveals a responsive relationship with Him.

For this reason, Jesus challenged Peter every single time until the last time, and then He said, "Okay, you don't understand right now. So, do you love Me with a *phileo* love?" Peter, triumphant, said, "You know that I do." That is all Peter understood right then, and it was a wonderful love.

Divine love is a gift from God, and it works through *phileo* love. Divine love is simply an atti-

tude of the will, based upon an inward condition of the Holy Spirit shedding it abroad in our hearts.

God's love is determined some days by being consistent to bring the injured person to the point where he can receive it. When I love my enemies, in Matthew 5:43 to 48, I am simply loving them to get them to be able to receive a gift from God. So the greatest thing in the world is not submitting to the power of God first, and it is not being concerned about submitting to the will of God; rather, it is submitting to the love of God and receiving that love as a gift.

This is what Jesus meant in 1 John 4:19 when John said, "We love him, because He first loved us." According to 1 John 4:10, He first loved us and gave His Son as a propitiation for our sins.

More than anything in the world, we must learn to receive God's love. Do not worry about submitting to the will of God. Do not worry about failing. Do not worry about rejection. When you are saved, God will not reject you, even if you will not receive His love.

A Christian couple who were alcoholics and drug abusers heard us on radio. They were both people with damaged goods. He was a deacon of a Bible-believing church. After being saved

and totally delivered, the effects of the chemical abuse lingered in their bodies for several years, causing rebellion and reaction toward each other. He was told he was schizophrenic. She was told that she would never really be well.

We sent them a series of tapes and booklets. Everything we sent them was grace, mercy, love, forgiveness, joy, and peace. They promised me that they would listen to one tape a day and read one booklet together every day. Within one month, they were totally delivered from the effects of the drugs and alcohol. She is no longer walking around with damaged goods. In fact, she now speaks to women's groups throughout the state where she lives. Her husband is no longer reactionary or angry, secretly wanting to "let her have it." He is now the responsible father of five children, and he is a magnificent husband.

What happened? They simply received the love of God, and love never fails. God's gift of love, if we will continually submit to it, will never fail. It cannot fail (1 Corinthians 13:8). It will do more than medication (and I am not against medication given by doctors. I am not an extremist. If the doctor told me to do something, I would do it.) It will do more than speaking

many words; it will do more than blaming one another. Simply submit to charity, and that charity will bind everything together through the Spirit, and it will give you a life within that controls your life without.

Chapter Three

LOVE IN ACTION

One of the most exciting testimonies I ever witnessed occurred while a visitor was speaking at our church. I didn't appreciate his long testimony of telling how bad he was as a criminal member of the Mafia. I heard every sin he ever committed! I traveled with him for four nights in a row to four churches. I heard that story, and I began to feel sorry for him telling that story every night! (By the way, I don't agree with that kind of Christian testimony. Christ and all that He has done should be the central theme. Anyway, it was quite a story!)

This man, a member of the Mafia and a drug addict, was placed in prison. After he was finally released, he continued to commit worse crimes and was sentenced to prison for thirty more years. Through a guard, he obtained some drugs, and through connections, he escaped from prison.

His wife became a beautiful Bible-believing Christian. Every single night at six o'clock, her five-year-old son prayed for his daddy. He prayed, "Jesus, save Daddy. Save Daddy."

After the father escaped, he took a .45 pistol, and he was on a mission. His one desire was to kill his wife and kill his son and then kill himself. Drugs had severely affected his mind.

The taxi drove him to his home. He went into the house, found his wife in the kitchen, and beat her with the pistol in a tremendous rage, intending to kill her.

Then, when he went to his son's bedroom, he heard, "Lord, please save Daddy tonight. Please save Daddy tonight, dear Jesus."

The Holy Spirit came upon that man. He dropped his pistol, grabbed his son, called the hospital for his wife, turned himself in to the police, and his son led him to Jesus.

That man was such a model prisoner that in three years he was released on probation. He toured America, and he stayed in my home for three nights, preaching the Gospel of grace.

What changed him? He simply submitted to a gift of God's love. That gift changed his life inside and outside. In that horrible condition, he made a decision to take his wife to the hospital.

In that condition, he accepted Christ with his son telling him, "Just believe, Daddy." Even in that condition, the Spirit of God moved upon him rapidly.

In 2 Corinthians 12:15, Paul said, "The more I love, the less I am loved." He was saying, "I don't expect anything in return. That is not the kind of love that I have. I do not love you folks at Corinth because you are treating me well, because you are not." Then he said, "You do not have to do something to motivate my love, but I want to tell you that I wish you the very best that God could ever give you."

An Attitude of Love

The Bible scholar William Barclay teaches on the attitude of *agape* love in his word study. This is the great principle of how God's love comes into our lives through the Holy Spirit so that we can receive the Word of God. His Word will dwell richly in our hearts because of God's love, which establishes a new capacity in place of damaged goods.

First, the Holy Spirit must fill us. Many Christians try to memorize Scriptures, yet they never get filled with the Holy Spirit. Many Christians receive counseling repeatedly

throughout their entire lives. I understand the need in certain situations, and I am not against it. Many, however, have placed their confidence in the arm of the flesh (2 Chronicles 32:8a), and instead of getting filled with the Holy Spirit; they just go for more counseling.

If you are filled with the Holy Spirit and He sheds the love of God abroad in your heart, then the love that died for you when you were yet a sinner will not fail your soul. Love will heal the injured soul, the infected conscience, the wounded emotions. It will heal, because that is the love that saved us while we were sinners, and that is the love that heals us when we are Christians with damaged goods.

We do not have to submit to God's will—not at first. Rather, we submit to His love. God first loved us, according to 1 John 4:19. So when we are filled with God's love through the Holy Spirit, we do not have a need for people to submit to something about us. We love them because of who we are in Christ. They do not have to give us support, encouragement, or motivation. Sometimes our expression of that love may not be intensely obvious, but love would do anything it had to do to bless others.

Sometimes it may indeed be *phileo*, which is

godly, too.

The greatest need in marriage is first to submit to the gift of love. I don't care if you have done some bad things or not. I am not even interested. Submit to God's love. Don't worry about anything. Just submit and keep right on submitting to God's love. The simple promise from the Word of God is that this love will not fail us (1 Corinthians 13:8).

Love will not fail the people who are failing us, either. If we have a love for them through Jesus Christ, love may not be able to help them today, but it will desire their highest good. We do not compromise or become sentimental, but we do everything we can for their highest good—not because they are good and not because they are doing anything good, but because we want them to come to the place where they can submit to God's love which will not fail them.

Chapter Four

A PRACTICAL
MANIFESTATION OF LIFE

“As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Peter 4:10).

“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him” (Colossians 2:6).

“That they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me” (Acts 26:18*b*).

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Colossians 3:16).

Let the Word of God dwell in you richly—not just in the letter of the law, but with the love of God. Let it dwell in your hearts richly, “in all wisdom”—in all application—“teaching and ad-

monishing one another....”

The word “teaching” is *didasko*, a present active participle. It is the practical manifestation of life to show people their highest possibility because of receiving love. “Admonishing” is *noutheteo*, also a present active participle, which continually produces an action when it is needed. This is the divine truth about love. It is not only to influence the intellect, but I receive love so as to have my will changed for a new capacity. That is what “admonish” means. It does not mean to condemn, to exhort, or to run down. It means to minister this gift through the Holy Spirit so that it does more than touch the intellect; it changes the will into the transformation of a new capacity of love.

Finally, we are to teach and admonish one another in “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs”—songs of praise such as those in the Old Testament. Praise Him often, throughout the day.

I did not feel anything when I got in my car this morning. I did not have any feelings because of the long hours lately. I had God. And I said, “I thank God that I am pure and peaceful and happy. I thank You, God, that You are going to quicken my body.” I started to make up

songs. I'm always making up songs.

A hymn is any song that celebrates truth. They do not always come from the old hymn books, though many of those are beautiful. Some folksongs and some southern Gospel songs, as well as others, come under this category, because through these songs, the heart is celebrating truth.

The last category is "spiritual songs," *odais pneumatikais*. It is a general description of anything that isn't done in the flesh. Someone could sing the greatest song in all the world like "The Old Rugged Cross." It is such a precious hymn, but sung in the flesh, it would not be a spiritual song.

The Bible mentions "singing" as a present active participle. The Greek word is *ado*, and it implies having "a lyrical emotion from a devout soul." The emotions are involved on the inside because you are completely occupied with being loved by God. This is when it is right for the emotions to be involved, because love is motivating them to respond. Somebody might judge you, but they are judging what love is doing to help you.

Then it says we are to sing "with grace." Oh, the sphere and the kingdom of the government

of grace! Everything we do is because we have been given something that we do not deserve. It is ours, and it is unconditional. We do what we do with grace in our hearts, in our frame of reference, in our motives, in the motivational center of the heart and the self-essence of the soul.

And who are we singing to? The Lord! We are doing this to the Lord! There may be hundreds of people around, but we are doing this to the Lord. He loves it, because in us He sees that what started out as a gift of love is now able to heal us and affect us, giving us a ministry to Him, out of His source, and it is operating in you and me by grace!

CONCLUSION

We have been called to receive the benefits and blessings of the cup of salvation (Psalm 116:13). And just as we have received the Holy Spirit and the gift of repentance, we have received forgiveness of sins and a godly inheritance. Forgiveness is something we simply receive. Receive it, and believe it, and you have it. Remember, charity never fails (1 Corinthians 13:8*a*).

The Word of God asks us to draw near. That is all! Draw near. God never asks us to perform but to draw near and receive. God gives us permission to change no matter how long we have been wounded, and then He gives us protection in the process through grace.

Paraphrased, Colossians 3:13-15 says that if you have a quarrel against one another, forgive one another with unconditional favor as Jesus Christ also forgave you with unconditional favor. And above all things, put on charity. Then,

let divine peace rule in your heart. Let it be umpire. Let it be the decision-maker of your new life of divine peace. As a result, because you are now available to have a capacity for love, injured souls are receiving an ointment. The damaged goods are being healed.