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Applying Truth to Truth: Practical Help for Post-Traumatic Stress



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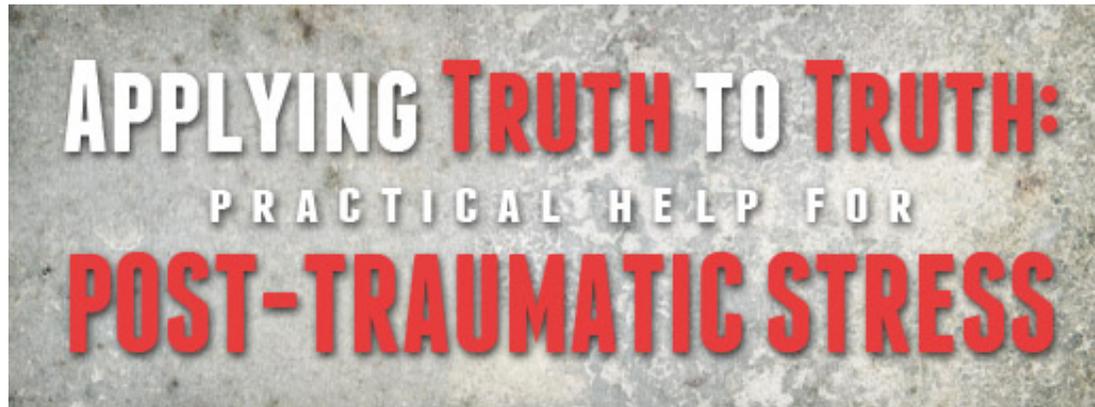
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Almost everyone has had things happen in their life that they wish never did. Sometimes they are simple regrets while others are life changing situations. Some are things we actively participated in; others were caused by someone else's actions or circumstances outside of our control. Pain or even a feeling of desperation is often the result. The hurt of the situation or the sting of regret remains. Sometimes the reminders of these events can send a person into an upsetting spiral of discouragement, doubt, and fear.

What is Post-Traumatic Stress?

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is the name often given when a person struggles greatly after a difficult situation. PTSD has been described as a "normal reaction to an abnormal situation."

That is a valuable description. It helps give a better perspective to what is going on. The reaction the person is having is really more normal than they think. It is the situation that has been so abnormal. While the definition of what is going on may

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help the person, it doesn't remove the pain or the struggle.

The situation has changed them. It has stayed with them in a significant way. It has marked them. So now what? What can they do with the memories, regret, or the continual pain that these circumstances can bring with them? Wishing it away doesn't work. Ignoring only lasts until that unsuspecting moment happens when something triggers a memory.

Why Help Can Be So Difficult

Offering hope to a person struggling with PTSD can be like putting a Band-Aid on wet skin. It just doesn't stick. The pain is not only real, it is also scary. People can wonder if they will forever feel the way they do about the situation. When talking with someone who is struggling through PTSD I often hear the question, "Will I ever be normal again?" Going back to the description of PTSD may help them see that they are normal and their reaction is actually normal as well. What they are often really saying is, "Will I ever be able to be free from the pain of the experience?"

The situation that brought the pain is now a part of their story. It cannot be expected to go away like a skinned knee or an unwanted blemish. The facts remain; the truth is—it happened.

But that is not the only truth. Stopping there would certainly be hopeless. At times it can be difficult to know what to say to a person struggling in this way. Something I have found helpful is to begin to help them to learn to apply truth to truth.

Helping Sarah

Sarah (not her real name) was sexually molested by several family members, male and female, when she was between the ages of 5-13. The things done to her have stayed with her over the years, invading her mind and creating stumbling blocks in her relationships. She became a Christian in college and while that has helped her to have new hope she is still suspicious of relationships. Now in her 40s, fear keeps her a lonely introvert. She struggles with the reminders of pain. While time and



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not a lonely introvert. She struggles with the reminders of pain. While time and counseling have helped her significantly, the memories can still bring fear in a way that paralyzes her relationships. She can begin to feel identified once again as dirty, unworthy, or guilty. In new relationships she wonders if this person in her life has intentions to hurt her. She questions people's motives for wanting to know her and can easily conclude that they are out to trap her.

How can she apply truth to truth in a way that is helpful?

It can look something like this. Yes, people who should have loved her instead hurt and abused her terribly. That is true. This new person in her life, who appears to want to be her friend, is not that person. That is also true. She may need to move cautiously, but she can move toward friendship because this is not the same person. Apply truth to truth.

Going Deeper: Applying Gospel Truth

A deeper way she can do this is in regards to the way she sees herself.

Memories can haunt her and invade her thinking with condemning accusations. They tell her, "What happened to you was dirty and ugly." While that is true it does not mean that *she* is dirty or ugly.

She can apply truth to truth. Yes, that was awful, but she is not dirty or ugly. Because of her faith in Christ she can apply the truth that she is clothed in the righteousness of Christ and she is precious and loved. She can apply the truth of who she is in Christ to the truth of her past experiences.

People suffering from PTSD are not really that different from anyone else. We all need this kind of reminder as we face each day, do we not? Applying truth to truth is something that is needed no matter what your circumstance. We need to apply the truth over and over and over again. Often the remedy we offer to others is the very thing you and I need most.

What's your choice?



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Samuel Austin

What if my wife is always saving things like mmm look at

Having a painful past that still hurts is an opportunity to build a deeper confidence in the truth of God's Word and what it says about you. This is not an exercise in positive thinking; it is telling gospel truth to yourself.

Allow Scripture to move in and speak truth to the horrible realities that you have faced. As you have gone through a desperate situation allow it to make you desperate for Him and the truth that He holds out to you.

Join the Conversation

How can applying gospel truth to the truth of your past suffering make a difference in your life?

This entry was posted in [Anxiety](#), [Gospel-Centered Ministry](#), [People in Need of Care](#), [People Who Offer Care](#), [People Who Train Caregivers](#), [Stress](#) and tagged [gospel](#), [Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder](#), [PTSD](#), [Truth](#). Bookmark the [permalink](#).

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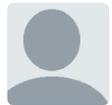
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baabaa · 2 years ago

I am curious as to what biblical counselors make of the fact that many times, vi draw exploitive and abusive persons into their lives. They seem to have repeat e

saying things like "I'm not at that? An I responsible for her actions? I am a blood bought child of God but she is not and it seems as if she wants to be. I have witnessed...

[10 Ways that Satan Loves to Watch Marriages Fall Apart](#) · 17 hours ago



Meg

Hm... There are a lot of reasons to stop or continue having children. Yes, God told Adam and Eve to be fruitful and fill the Earth. Dude... The Earth is full! LOL What if two people love each other...

[15 Wisdom Principles on Deciding When to Stop Having Children](#) · 3 days ago



Brenda

More than a decade ago, the church I attended sent all their ministry leaders to a NANC 2-day workshop to better prepare us to serve those under us in ministry. I attended, and was shocked by some...

[Have You Been Burned By A NANC Counselor?](#) · 4 days ago



Yulon Huddleston

I have been married to a man for two and a half years to some one I have known for about 20 years. He always feels as if any thing I say or do I'm disrespecting him. Rather

predatory types who reabuse them and thus reinforce in their minds that it is the defective and defiled. Its as if there is a red light over their head in the spiritual re motives to the "downed fences" in their personal intactness. There does seem t violation. A blanket insistence that the bad people are in the past and the good p bad people from the past doesn't seem very realisitc. One couple I know was m experienced abuse and she seemed to be powerfully magnetized to anyone wh essence to the person who had first harmed her. It was totally unwanted. Pleas

6 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Todd Hardin · 2 years ago

Eliza, this is an excellent example of showing how a caring counselor can meet reflect the light of Christ into the dark places of the person's life. Great work and

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it's giving a suggestion...

[10 Ways that Satan Loves to Watch Marriages Fall Apart](#) · 5 days ago



fee

This is nonsensical, I appreciate aspects of it and each point is a proactive step any addict needs to incorporate into his life. But you do any points you have a disservice by discounting the...

[5 Mindsets of "Addictive" Thinking](#) · 6 days ago

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The BCC exists to strengthen churches, para-church organizations, and educational institutions by promoting excellence and unity in biblical counseling as a means to accomplish compassionate outreach and effective discipleship.

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