

Book Review: Healing for Damaged Emotions

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Book Review: Healing for Damaged Emotions

INTRODUCTION

- I. **Thesis** - This concise, biblical, and focused work speaks clearly to the emotional hang-ups that plague most leaders.

II. **Body**

- A. Chapter one
- B. Chapter two
- C. Chapter three
- D. Chapter four
- E. Chapter five
- F. Chapter six
- G. Chapter seven
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- I. Chapter nine
- J. Chapter ten
- K. Chapter eleven
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III. **Summary and Evaluation**

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An author, pastor, and pioneer in the field of Christian counseling as recognized by the 1992 Congress of Christian Counseling are some of the titles bestowed upon Dr. David Seamands [CITATION Due17 \l 1033]. Dr. Seamands, first desire was to help missionaries overseas by circulating his sermons to hundreds of them for free. His heart for missionaries is due in part to him being the product of Methodist missionary parents. After serving 16 years as a missionary in India along with his wife, Dr. Seamands went on to pastor Wilmore United Methodist Church for 22 years. In 1991, Seamands wrote, *Healing for Damaged Emotions* through SP Publishing out of Wheaton, Illinois.

Healing for Damaged Emotions is a 144-page collection of stories about individuals in ministry with everyday issues that Dr. Seamands has encountered through his ministry journey. This concise, biblical, and focused work speaks clearing to the emotional hang-ups that plague most leaders. Each of the 12 chapters of *Healing for Damaged Emotions* targets a different emotion as well as stories of individuals in ministry and scripture who have dealt with those emotions.

In chapter one, Seamands deals with the common misconceptions of damaged emotions. Seamands begins by tackling the issue of casting all blame for our negative experiences on the devil. Also, we can't use simply prayer and increased Bible reading as a resolution for getting rid of these negative experiences. Statements like this often hurt those who are dealing with the pain of damaged emotions.

He continues the chapter by highlighting some examples of damaged emotions. One of those examples is a deep sense of unworthiness, that is rooted in personal inadequacy. Seamands cure for this and all damaged emotions is: face your problem squarely, accept your responsibility in the matter, ask yourself if you want to be healed, forgive everyone involved in the problem,

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forgive yourself, and ask the Holy Spirit to show you what your real problem is and how you need to pray for it [CITATION Sea91 \l 1033].

In Chapter two, Seamands discusses the causes of emotional issues. He draws attention to the two main issues: failure to receive forgiveness and failure to give forgiveness to others. He states, "we understand grace in our heads but often that doesn't translate to our hearts." When we understand grace in our hearts, it aids us in understanding that grace is unmerited, and can never be earned. Likewise, true forgiveness is a result of grace. Seamands states "when we fail to accept and receive God's grace and forgiveness, we also fail to give unconditional love, forgiveness, and grace to other people"[CITATION Sea91 \l 1033].

Having a clear understanding of our infirmities is the only way we can be healed from damaged emotions. Through reading the New Testament text, the word infirmity can be defined as an absence of strength. This is not just an absence of physical strength but mental, moral or emotional. Seamands reminds us that in the book of Hebrews we have a High Priest that is acquainted with all our infirmities. Seamands reminds us that not only is he this Supernatural High Priest that is distant from the effects of suffering, but He is aware. It is through His life, suffering, and victory where we find our hope.

In Chapter four we are introduced to Satan's deadliest weapon; low self-esteem. When this weapon is activated, it is deadly because it paralyzes our potential, destroys our dreams, ruins relationships and sabotages our Christian service. This is the powerful picture painted by Seamands. He calls our attention the fact that if Satan can make us critical of the design, we begin to resent the designer.

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Chapters five and six undercover the steps to healing our low self-esteem. As with any damaging emotion, it takes facing it head-on to heal. Seamands first looks at the where do we find our self-image. Four sources of self-image are the outer world, inner world, forces of evil and God. The outer world is everything we experience from birth to adulthood. The way a child has been treated forms the person they become and how they see themselves.

The inner world comes from how we are within. These are the physical, emotional, and spiritual equipment that we bring into the world. The third source is Satan. It is through the lies and tricks of Satan that uses our feelings of self-loathing to keep us in a state of low self-esteem. The final source is God. It is through His eyes that we should honestly see ourselves.

Chapters 7 and 8 discuss perfectionism and healing, forgiveness, and ways in which to transform hurt into something that can heal one's self. These are all things that people encounter in their daily lives. Perfectionism is problematic because it demands more from a person. The sheer task of trying to be perfect means you are striving to be accepted by people. Seeking perfection also means the person doesn't feel complete, adequate, or whole in some ways. Wrestling with the unhealthiness of imperfections and the personal desire to be accepted by others often leads to depression, self-deprecation, legalism, anger, and denial.

Seamands reminds us that the cure for perfectionism is grace. We must remind ourselves that does not extend this grace because of our worthiness. He meets us right at the core of all our imperfections and gives us this His amazing grace. The perfectionist must first abandon the idea that there is a quick cure. When we understand this, we can begin the day by day process of healing from perfectionism. Perfectionism didn't happen overnight, neither will healing from it occur overnight. Seamands states that when we are always looking for a cure, we are looking for magic and we miss the miracle [CITATION Sea91 \l 1033].

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Chapter 9 focuses on the concept of expressing the real you; these are the underlying emotions and thoughts that people find themselves afraid of talking about. According to this chapter, we should never be afraid of being our real self and expressing our real feelings to Jesus Christ [CITATION Sea91 \l 1033]. In this fear of expression, Seamands reveals the concept of the "super self," as a false representation that is created through our ego. When we are our true selves, this allows us to find comfort in our environment rather than having to withhold emotions or display a façade to others.

Chapter 10 reveals that one myth about depression is that Christians don't experience it. However, it is a common experience among Christians. This section teaches that some side effects of depression are suppression of appetite, symptoms of unhappiness, and by shedding tears. We should find comfort in knowing that many figures in the Scriptures overcame the struggles of depression to achieve greatness. We have to understand that there are steps for us to overcome as well. From a psychological standpoint, the temperament of an individual needs to be changed gradually to achieve long-lasting results.

Chapter 11 discusses the way that Christians can cope with depression. Typically, depression is a time when people feel the need to, and they do isolate themselves from social surroundings to be alone, which can lead to feelings of sadness. However, the best way to cope with depression is the opposite, get out talk to others about how you are feeling. Seamands also provides us in this chapter with some other methods for coping with depression such as going to see a professional for therapy or prescribed medication. Seamands also offers a look into the life of Betty, who turned to God to feel positive about her situation. Some other vital remedies for depression are to avoid being alone, seek help from others, sing, praise and give thanks, lean heavily on God's Word, and rest confidently in the presence of God's Spirit. These remedies are

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courtesy of Martin Luther, who dealt with depression and low self-esteem as a child due to a harsh environment.

The final chapter discusses healing for damaged emotions, revealing that past actions and behaviors tend to result in situations where people have developed damaged emotions. Such emotions can come in the form of depression, low self-worth, and hurtful feelings. The focal point of this chapter is to encourage emotionally crippled Christians into becoming healed helpers. According to Seamands, the past experiences and hurtful actions serve as stepping stones and learning experiences that can guide us towards becoming more positive and influential people. Those who hurt others have learned that these responses came from the hurt that they have experienced. Understanding this and dealing with these emotions can place a person on the road to establishing a positive and loving attitude. Such Christians may learn to become healed helpers, who have transitioned to a life of assisting others. Through mentorship, they now can provide love, care, and guidance to others. These healed helpers have the power to aid others who were like their former selves, guiding them to be healed helpers as well.

In the book *Healing for Damaged Emotions*, David Seamands takes the challenge of a topic that is least discussed in religious circles and other circles as well. It is how most of our actions and reactions are tied to emotions that have been damaged, and we are now experiencing the residual effects. This book is not Seamands first attempt at tackling this subject; he has made it his pastoral mission even before the book's conception.

Seamands does a masterful job of identifying those emotions that can be damaging. Although, most of those that are mentioned in this book we are very familiar with, he throws a curve ball with perfectionism. I believe this one will be a shock to most readers as it was to me. Often, we believe perfectionism to be a good quality in an individual. However, as this book

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points out, it is very damaging because of its roots and fruit. The roots of perfectionism stem from unrealistic expectations from parents, family, teachers, preachers, and the church. While the fruit of perfectionism leads to the emotional fight of the "Super You" vs. "The Real You" [CITATION Sea91 \l 1033]. This leads to the consist desire of needing the approval of others, and wanting to please others; which keeps us from living an authentic life.

Although Seamands states in his opening chapters that one of the challenges to damaged emotions is our simplistic answers for a cure are prayer and additional Bible study, this is not an attempt to devalue these practices. I believe Seamands compassionately adds value to these practices, by teaching us how to be more intentional. *Healing for Damaged Emotions* is a great guide for anyone fighting repressed anger, guilt, depression, inferiority feelings, or perfectionism. It provides the right amount hope for any individual seeking to be healed and made whole.

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