

## Chapter 5

### *Questions to Ponder*

1. Looking at your life, how have you avoided feeling your emotional pain? Have you been tempted to take shortcuts with the hope of somehow “getting over it” or that “time heals all wounds”?
2. What are some of the Band-Aids you’ve used in an attempt to numb your pain or avoid it altogether? How effective have they truly been?
3. What do you think would or could happen if you permitted yourself to feel the emotions that are tied to your wounds?
4. Are you at a place in your life where you are willing to listen to your pain? If so, what is it telling you?

(It is important that you discern between what your pain is trying to communicate to you and the faulty messages or outright lies your abuser said to you or about you. If you are struggling to differentiate between the two, discuss this with your counselor or a trusted friend.)

5. Have thoughts of suicide ever crossed your mind? Do you recognize the fact that suicide permanently terminates your access to a free life?

(When I was at my lowest points, this option seemed viable. At that time, I never pictured I would be where I am today. I understand that it seems as if your life may never change for the better. But that’s not true. It can and it will if you stay the course. Tell someone you trust that you need help, support, and resources to combat these self-harming thoughts. Or reach out for help by calling the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255 or dialing 911 for an immediate response.)

6. What are some specific ways in which you can positively respond to your emotional pain that will provide genuine and authentic healing rather than a momentary reprieve?

Below is a list of positive ways to respond to your pain. Mark the ones you are currently doing. If there are certain ones you are avoiding, discuss them with your counselor or a trusted friend. What do you believe may be inhibiting you? (This is another opportunity to look at faulty thinking.)

- ☐ I have started writing my story.
- ☐ I have broken the silence by sharing my story with a trusted friend or counselor.
- ☐ I am learning to call what I've experienced abuse.
- ☐ I am no longer minimizing, justifying, or rationalizing what has been done to me.
- ☐ I am no longer making excuses or taking responsibility for my abuser's abusive choices and actions.
- ☐ I have allowed myself to begin the grieving process.
- ☐ I recognize the cycle of abuse and accept that my trying harder will not stop it.
- ☐ I am beginning to recognize the effects of abuse and the symptoms of PTSD.
- ☐ I am willing to pursue professional help for a proper diagnosis in the event that I may be suffering from PTSD.
- ☐ I am beginning to identify the Band-Aids I have attempted to use to numb or avoid my pain.

### *Prayer of Reflection*

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*Jesus, I want to heal well. So often it feels like too much to bear, and I just want to give up. I am tired. So very, very tired. I am tired of trying to make this relationship work. I am tired of waiting for him to change. My heart is heavy, and my body is exhausted. The idea of letting time heal all*

*wounds is enticing. But I know it doesn't work. I have tried a variety of ways to numb and ignore my pain. Yet the pain is still there. Band-Aids don't heal broken arms, and they certainly can't heal broken hearts. Help me not to give in to the temptation of giving up on myself or giving up on the opportunity to heal well. Through You, true healing is possible. When my faulty thinking clouds truth, gently draw me back to the good path You have designed for me. Amen.*

### ***God's Enduring Promises***

He heals the brokenhearted, binding up their wounds. (Psalm 147:3 TLB)

Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you. (Deuteronomy 31:6 NKJV)

The LORD is my rock, my fortress, and my savior;  
my God is my rock, in whom I find protection.

He is my shield, the power that saves me,  
and my place of safety.

I called on the LORD, who is worthy of praise,  
and he saved me from my enemies. (Psalm 18:2-3 NLT)

The LORD is my rock, my fortress, and the One who  
rescues me;

My God, my rock and strength in whom I trust and take  
refuge;

My shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower—  
my stronghold.

I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised;  
And I am saved from my enemies. (Psalm 18:2-3 AMP)