

“An inside look is important, but ... it is tricky. The same Bible that instructs us to guard our heart (Proverbs 4:23) also tells us our heart is impossible to understand as well as deceitfully wicked (Jeremiah 17:9). The command to keep watch over our unknowable heart seems rather like ordering a guard to never let an invisible prisoner out of his sight. Clearly, if our insides are as difficult to know as the Bible indicates, then any hope of an accurate inward look depends entirely on God’s willingness to help. Students of the human personality can uncover mounds of data and organize their findings into intriguing and perhaps insightful theories, but without God’s help, no effort to explore the heart will ever pinpoint the core problems that need changing. The good news, of course, is that the opposite is also true. With God’s help, we can understand what needs to be understood.”

-Larry Crabb

The purpose of this worksheet is to help you process with God how you have been hurt by others who have been affected by the Fall. This worksheet does not contain a complete list of all the possible ways you have been hurt. So allow God to lead you by His Spirit towards what He wants you to know right now.

To make use of this worksheet:

1. Choose to get alone with God away from distractions like your cell phone and computer.
2. Ask God to show you which past experience is affecting you right now. Your hurt may be related to one of the categories, but will probably be connected with a specific person’s actions or attitude or an incident in your life. Ask God what this hurt *means* to you. In what ways has it affected you?
3. Ask God to show you that He was right there and suffered with you through your pain and has never abandoned you or given up on you. If you need to, ask someone you trust to discuss the list with you.
4. Be willing to be quiet in God’s presence until you know you are finished with this process. You may not hear what He is saying to you at first. Maybe you think you know the answer already. But you need to be patient so you can listen to what God’s Spirit is saying to you, because what you think you know may not be enough to bring you healing.

Categories of Hurts

You experienced abandonment (physical or emotional)

You are being or have been abused (sexually, physically, mentally or emotionally)

You are or were being sexually used by a relative

You have or are receiving harsh criticism or ridicule

You experienced trauma (physical, mental or emotional)

You have lost someone because of death or divorce

You have been betrayed

You experienced loss through bad decisions

You are being or have been rejected

Someone dismissed your personal thoughts and beliefs as being important

You are growing up in a substance abuser's (drugs, prescription medicine or alcohol) household

You are growing up with a mentally ill person

You are growing up with violence in your home

You are growing up with a family member in prison

You experienced unjust punishment

You faced constant demands to be perfect

You were made to feel that you don't matter

You own the pain of another person close to you

You do not receive physical affection

You were forced to parent your siblings as a child

You are aging and experience physical loss

You have suffered from neglect, meaning you were deprived of the basic needs for food, shelter, clothing, or security

You are being or have been overindulged; given almost everything you ask for

You are being or have been overprotected; not allowed to do anything or go anywhere by yourself

You feel your family was too busy to spend time on you

You experienced broken promises or being lied to

You are being or have been jerked around emotionally and manipulated

You have been in a war zone

You are experiencing or have experienced hurts by your culture

You are being or have been bullied

You experienced religious abuse

You are being or have been exposed to occult practices

You have physical disabilities that causes you to feel limited and frustrated

You were damaged in the womb before birth

You were taught harmful values at home (examples: you have learned to hate. You fear the world or the future. You believe life should be fair. You feel certain kinds of people are inferior.)

You have been a victim of a crime

You were required to parent your parent as a child

You have self-inflicted hurts

Self-Talk

During this time of being with God, which *hurt of the heart* from your past that needs to be healed did He draw you to?

Ask God to show you: In what ways are you affected by it? To discover this, you will need to take note of your *self-talk*.

Even though you might not know it, you're already practicing self-talk. 'Self-talk' is basically the conversation that you have inside your mind, your inner voice which says things that you don't necessarily say out loud. Often self-talk happens without you even realizing it and can be a subtle running commentary going on in the background of your mind. But what you say in your mind can determine a lot of how you feel about who you are and how you choose to interact with others.

So how do you talk to yourself about yourself? —In relationship with the people who hurt you? —In relationship with God? **In the following groups of statements, circle the ones that you recognize that you say to yourself or believe others think of you.** Responding truthfully is a gift to yourself, so do not skip over statements that may feel painful. When you are finished, go to the category definition list to identify which style of self-talk you regularly use.

When you talk to yourself, do you say:

Category 1

1. No one loves me. God doesn't love me.
2. No one cares about me. God does not care about me.
3. It would be good if I were dead.
4. Everyone would be so much happier if I were not around.
5. No one really is my friend.
6. Everyone always leaves me. God is far away from me.
7. People are never there for me when I need them. God wasn't around when I needed Him.
8. I am a bad person.

Category 2

1. I'm a nobody in other people's eyes. I'm not worth anything to God
2. People or family members do not see me. God doesn't like me.
3. Nobody wants me around.
4. I have to work so much harder than anyone else to even be noticed.
5. I never get any breaks.
6. No one ever notices me.
7. So many people are better than me.
8. I'm a loser.

Category 3

1. No matter what I do, I always fail.
2. I'm never going to make it.
3. People walk all over me.
4. Why can't I think of the right thing to say to defend myself?
5. I'm not able to do this. God expects me to help myself but I can't.
6. I've tried but I can't control my eating/exercise more/be more disciplined.
7. My life is going nowhere.
8. Why do I always agree to do stuff I hate?

Category 4

1. I'm trapped.
2. Nothing ever goes my way.
3. Everyone else has it better than me.
4. I should quit.
5. I should run away from everything.
6. I should be better than I am. God expects me to be better than this.
7. I can't do anything right.
8. I blew it again.

Category 5

1. I'm never included by anyone.
2. People make me feel unwelcome.
3. People always complain about what I do or say.
4. I really do not have any real friends.
5. I wish people would like me.
6. No one ever tells me anything.
7. I wish I knew how to fit in.
8. I know I will be rejected if I try to join them.

Category 6

1. I'm really messed up.
2. No one cares what happened to me.
3. I'm a horrible person.
4. Sex is dirty.
5. You just cannot trust people of the opposite sex.
6. I hate it when people touch me.
7. I hate myself.
8. I wish I could go back and change things.

Category 7

1. I'm always being made to pay for my past mistakes.
2. People never forget what I did.
3. People always think I'm wrong.
4. God is always punishing me.
5. My family hates me. My family will never forgive me.
6. It would be better to move someplace where no one knows me.
7. I'm such a mess. I'm a horrible person.
8. Someone is always throwing my past in my face.

Category 8

1. This scares me a lot.
2. God/people are out to get me.
3. Everything is so stressful.
4. I'll never be able to do it.
5. It's no use to try because I always mess up.
6. I know I am going to fail.
7. I'm afraid that I am going to die.
8. I don't want anyone to know that I don't want to do this because I am afraid.

Category 9

1. Things never go right for me.
2. There is no one who can fix me.
3. I'm useless. God has given up on me.
4. I'm an idiot. People think I'm an idiot.
5. People don't like me because I'm stupid/ugly/fat.
6. People are always telling me to grow up.
7. People are always talking about me.
8. I cannot cope with this_____ (negative thing/event/situation).

Category 10

1. If only I could go back and undo the harm.
2. God will never forgive me for what I did. He is punishing me for what I did.
3. I don't deserve to be happy/to be successful.
4. It's all my fault.
5. People are always looking at me.
6. I feel uncomfortable around people.
7. I deserve whatever people do to me.
8. I need to do this (whatever this is) to make it up to people.

Category 11

1. I cannot live without them/him/her.
2. They won't let me go.
3. I'm responsible for everyone else's happiness.
4. I cannot do what I want because others would be unhappy/mad at me/deprived.
5. Everyone is treating me like I am a child.
6. I never get permission.
7. I'm not allowed.

Category 12

1. I deserve whatever I want.
2. These people who got in my way—they're stupid.
3. It's not my fault.
4. I can do and say whatever I want, so just shut up.
5. This isn't fair.
6. That person owes me.
7. People are such jerks.
8. People are always messing up my plans.

Category 13

1. People don't think much of me.
2. I will never measure up.
3. Nobody trusts me with responsibility.
4. I'm such a failure.
5. I'm so lazy.
6. I'm a selfish person.
7. I'm the family outcast.
8. God is disgusted with me.

Category 14

1. Why do people look down on me?
2. Why is life so hard?
3. What do I have to do to get people to understand me?
4. Why can't people just leave me alone?
5. What am I going to do with my life?
6. How am I going to get out of this mess?
7. Why don't I just kill myself?
8. There is no God.

Category 15

1. I can't stop. I have to do it.
2. I wish someone would stop me.
3. I just can't help myself.
4. I'll quit after I finish this.
5. I can't believe I did it again.
6. I am going to be in trouble.
7. I am going to get caught this time.
8. I want some more_____ (whatever you desire).

The Fifteen Self-Talk Categories and Their Meanings

- 1: UNLOVED**, especially by those whose love you crave. You feel you have to pursue love wherever you can find it.
- 2: INSIGNIFICANT**, lacking value in the eyes of others. You either let others define you or you feel the inner drivenness to succeed and prove them wrong.
- 3: POWERLESS** to help or defend yourself. You always feel put down and defeated.
- 4: HOPELESS**, seeing yourself stuck in life. You see no point in having dreams or striving for a better life.
- 5: NEVER BE ACCEPTED** by the people who you think matter. You always find yourself on the outside.
- 6: VIOLATED/DIRTY** because of what happened to you. You sense your soul will never feel clean again.
- 7: SHAME.** You inwardly believe that you are a problem. You feel unworthy of love or any good thing.
- 8: FEARFUL**, so you feel paralyzed to act. You find that you cannot make life decisions.
- 9: RUINED/DAMAGED/BROKEN** by what happened to you. You feel you will never be made whole again.
- 10: UNREMITTING GUILT/AT FAULT** for what happened. You find it hard or even impossible to forgive others or yourself.
- 11: EMOTIONALLY ENMESHED** with the people who hurt you. You sense you cannot mature without their permission, which you never seem to get.
- 12: ENTITLED** to have whatever you think you want. You are easily offended when you do not get your way.
- 13: A DISAPPOINTMENT** to the people in your life. You have spent your life trying to please people.
- 14: CONFUSED AND DESPAIRING** about life. You wonder all the time if your life has meaning.
- 15.: LOSS OF CONTROL** over your actions. You sense you are spiraling out of control.

Broken Relationships

As you start to understand your inner view of yourself, ask God to help you connect your personal interpretation of yourself to the broken or strained relationships you have. As you consider the beginning point of your *hurt of the heart*, who is the person(s) that played a role in the hurt? If that person is still living and you know where he or she is, use the following scale with #10 being the worst, mark how deeply fractured your relationship is. (If there is more than one person, mark it for each.)

- Uncomfortable to share personal thoughts and feelings with this person
- Secretly angry, but the person is not aware he or she is the object of your anger
- Openly angry and in conflict but the person does not know the source of your anger
- Openly angry and the person is aware of why you are angry
- Secretly hate the person
- Indirectly seeking to bring harm to the person by sharing personal information/story with others
- Avoid being with the person except when necessary
- Publicly state your hatred of the person
- Actively cut off and not in communication with the person
- Actively seeking to bring the person harm by acts of abuse or lies against the person

1. What do you believe are your next steps with God in healing?

2. What do you think you need to share with your spiritual mentor or community?

Hurt of the Heart Inventory Explained

Now that you have spent time with God and your Hurt of the Heart Inventory, here is some information that will help you process what you discovered.

1. God's goal for all who belong to Him is to become like Jesus (Romans 8:29). To accomplish this, He uses every event—good, bad and ugly—to lead you towards intimacy with Him and, through a deepening relationship, transform your life (Romans 8:28). The hurts you are discovering do not define either who you are or who you will become. Your true identity is 'God's child'. *That will not change no matter what you do or how many hurts you have experienced in this world.*
2. Everyone you will ever meet—including you—has been hurt by living in a world affected by the Fall. The people who hurt you have also been hurt. These hurts may have been caused by people that love us, but their love failed at a critical moment. This does not mean they *meant* to hurt us or that they are even aware that they hurt us. And the hurts people receive do not all come from other people. The whole creation has been affected by the Fall. Some hurts come from trauma, sickness, death and the unfairness of life.
3. In the Bible, the heart is the place where we weigh what we feel and what we think in order to make a decision—"What will I do in this life situation?" *Hurt of the heart* issues damage our emotions. When our emotions are damaged, they outweigh our thoughts, so we may decide something that is not healthy or may not even make sense. But for us, our unhealthy decisions seem perfectly normal.
4. Your damaged emotions become one of the main ways Satan lies to you about what is true and how much you can't trust God. When you are struggling with damaged emotions, the lies of the enemy feel much more real than truth from God does.
5. During this time of being with God, He probably drew you to a specific hurt that is connected to the transformation He is going to do in your life right now. It is probably not the only *hurt of the heart* you have, and may not even be the one you were expecting Him to point out at this moment. But don't reject what God has shown you. Instead, listen to the Spirit and accept that this is the place where God is going to heal you today.

6. What is important is that not only are you hurt, but the *hurt of the heart* you are becoming aware of has meaning in your life. Most people have similar hurts, but it may be important to know how this particular hurt affects you personally. For example, you may have been unjustly punished, but how does the injustice of that event define you? Much of this can be discovered through what you say to yourself inside. Self-talk re-enforces the stories you believe, even the ones that come from your damaged emotions. These repeated statements always signal that something is wrong inside. When fully developed, harmful self-talk traps you in a false identity (believing you are someone other than who you really are in
7. The type of self-talk you use shows you how you have been damaged. You may have more than one way of talking to yourself. When you can accept that this self-talk is caused by the hurts you carry, you may be ready to allow God to heal you deeply. If you do, you will find that your self-talk will change.
8. Broken relationships are always the outcome of *hurt of the heart*. This part of the interaction with God calls for ruthless honesty. However broken the relationship is, knowing what needs to be healed and allowing God to do that is the first step to wholeness, forgiveness and reconciliation.
9. It's important to know that instead of asking God to heal you, you have chosen to comfort yourself with deadly *sin in me*. This sin has caused you to be trapped by behavior and attitudes that are slowly moving you towards more loss and grief. You may have made these choices unconsciously, maybe made them when you were young, or long before you began to follow Jesus. That doesn't stop the ongoing impact of those choices on you.
10. When you know you can't live with the pain anymore, the good news is that God can heal you. Going to God and allowing Him to deal with your *hurt of the heart* issues starts your journey to freedom. You also need God as your King to deliver you from the *sin in me* choices you have made. God is more than able and willing to deliver you. The next step in your faith journey will be to draw close to God and learn from Him how He will do this. You can take the *Restart Deadly Sin Inventory* to help you in that process.
11. God put us in a faith community so we would not be on this journey alone. You are encouraged to find people you can trust and allow them in on the process God is taking you through—remembering they are in a process with God, too.