

- God speaks specifically to the depths of our suffering. The book of Lamentations gives words to the feelings and pain of abuse. The Psalms are places of refuge where the hurting can find comfort from a God that understands the pain. In scripture, the victim no longer feels alone or without hope. God gives us words to describe our hurt, pain and reality.
- God gives us permission to feel and express our questions, our confusion and our doubts about His love.
- God gives us Himself to walk us through the daily effects of the trauma we have endured. "You, O Lord, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light." (Psalm 18:28)
- No experience is bigger than God.

#### *Let the Healing Begin!*

*To all the souls that are hurting, God will bring you grace.  
To all the souls that are searching, God will show His face.  
To all the souls feeling trapped, freedom will soon come.  
To all the souls who've lost their map, the Spirit will bring a new one. His face, His hands, His feet, His heart we are all designed to know. His lap, His hug, His laugh, His caress we can all begin to show. Join the movement; join the song of freedom from our pain. It's Christ who's come, it's He who was slain to break EVERY Stinking Chain!<sup>5</sup>*

Here at America's Keswick we strive to walk with the wounded, showing them His grace, as we seek to minister to the hurting, lonely, and addicted through ministries such as the **Colony of Mercy, Barbara's Place, and ENRICH.**

*If you find yourself in need of healing,  
please contact us today!*

**A more comprehensive look at trauma  
and other resources are  
available on our website at:  
[www.americaskeswick.org/trauma](http://www.americaskeswick.org/trauma)**



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**Since 1897 the ministries of America's Keswick  
have been helping set men, women and  
children free from the chains of addiction.**



*Where God speaks to hearts  
and transforms lives!*

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## TRANSFORMATION RESOURCE SERIES



# WHAT IS TRAUMA?

*Abuse. Neglect. Accidents. Tragedies.  
Abandonment. Disease. Loss. War.*

A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE



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## WHAT IS TRAUMA?

What we call “trauma” today has Greek origins meaning “wound” <sup>1</sup> and is defined as a powerful emotional response to a distressing event, such as: abuse, neglect, accidents, tragedies, abandonment, disease, loss, and war. It is the experience of some event that overwhelms one’s ability to cope. Trauma may have happened in the past, either once or repeatedly, but the lingering effects continue into the present and future.

## FACTORS THAT ENHANCE THE EFFECTS OF TRAUMA

- Unexpected trauma
- Multiple types of trauma
- Ongoing trauma
- Childhood trauma
- Feelings of helplessness or powerlessness experienced during the trauma
- Additional stressful circumstances surrounding the traumas

“

***“When you experience trauma, you’re thrown about like a rodeo steer. Your world turns wild, out of control, crazy.”<sup>2</sup>***

”

## EFFECTS OF TRAUMA

Aggressive anger	Erratic and intense
Bitterness	expressions of feelings
Depression	Self-Blame
Bi-Polar diagnosis	Shame
Panic Disorders	Emotionally immature
Isolation/Withdrawing	Lack of problem solving skills
Self-medicating	Loss of voice
Nightmares	Memory loss
Sleep disturbances	Disassociation
Need for control	Lack of joy
Intrusive thoughts/images	Addiction
Inability to focus or concentrate	Hopelessness

***Trauma can continue to cause emotional and physical symptoms for many years after the event has occurred. Christ may have had this in mind when He issued this warning:***

*“woe to him through whom they [offenses] do come! It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones” (Luke 17:1-2, NKJV).*

“Hurts of rejection, abuse, and abandonment are deep wounds inside people’s souls...If hurts are deeply healed, people do not repeat these hurts in other relationships, nor do they try to medicate their wounds in sinful ways, such as with drugs, alcohol, gambling, illicit sex, or other lusts. If the Body [Church] is there to be medicine...that heals, not just dulls the pain - then the destructive cycle of sin is broken.”<sup>3</sup>

## GETTING HELP

That which is hidden will never find healing, it is important to find a safe place to be heard. Hope lies in a safe, loving relationship built on trust so that healing can begin.

Find a trusted Christian Pastor or Counselor who can help you interpret your experiences through the eyes of a loving God.

Be prepared to walk slowly through this process – do not rush the healing or it will be incomplete.

Get help for any unhealthy behaviors you may be using to deal with the pain such as: drugs, cutting, eating disorders, promiscuity, anger, withdrawing, risky behaviors, etc.

The beginning of Isaiah 61 portrays Christ’s personal ministry as one of healing broken hearts, freeing the bound and captive, and comforting and consoling the mourning, while granting joy, praise, and a solid testimony for God’s glory.

## NAVIGATING THE HEALING PROCESS THROUGH THE LENS OF SCRIPTURE

The goal of the trauma healing process is to bring the experiences to God and allow His Word to help us find ourselves, find our true meaning and bring God’s gracious and merciful love into our wounds. Telling our trauma story is necessary, not just to relive it but to speak truth and God’s perspective into the experience.

## GOD’S GIFTS TO THE TRAUMATIZED<sup>4</sup>

- God promises to deal justly with those who have done evil to us, while redeeming us from false guilt and shame.
- In His Word, God tells stories of trauma that would be more comfortable to omit. The Old Testament is full of narratives of harm and abuse, but God uses these stories in his redemptive plan. For example: Judah and Tamar (Genesis 38), a Levite and his concubine (Judges 19), Amnon and Tamar (2 Samuel 13), Jonah shipwreck and swallowed by a whale (Jonah 1:15-17), and Paul’s beating, imprisonment and three shipwrecks (2 Cor. 11:23-28).