

Prayer for Inner Healing

[We recommend that you set aside a good bit of time in a quiet place to pray for inner healing. This process can't be rushed. It is usually helpful if you have someone to pray along with you—a trained counselor or minister, someone who knows a bit about healing prayer, or simply a friend who knows Jesus and wants to help you. It is not mandatory, but it can be helpful. Read through this entire process before you begin.]

When we are in the presence of God, removed from distractions, we are able to hear him more clearly, and a secure environment has been established for the young and broken places in our hearts to surface. We ask God to surround us with his presence. We give ourselves back over to him and come under his authority, for as Paul warns, it is possible to lose connection with our Head, who is Christ (Col. 2:19). We declare the authority of Jesus over our hearts, for he made our hearts (Ps. 33:15) and he has redeemed our hearts (Rom. 2:29).

Jesus, I come into your presence now, and I ask you to surround me. I come under your authority and your claim upon my life. I give myself to you—body, soul, and spirit. I give my heart to you, in every way—including the broken places in me. I declare your authority over my heart, for you made my heart and you have redeemed my heart.

Then we invite Christ in. We ask Jesus to come into the emotion, the memory, this broken place within us. We give him permission; we give him access. We open the door to this particular place in our hearts. “If you hear me calling and open the door, I will come in” (Rev. 3:20 NLT). Truth be told, there are probably many broken places within us. Stay with one at a time, the one connected with the event or the emotion or the habit you can't seem to escape. Ask Jesus to bring his light there. “For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ made his light shine in our hearts” (2 Cor. 4:6). Ask him to make it clear to you. What's going on here, Jesus? What is this all about? Shine your light in my heart.

Jesus, I invite you into this broken place within me (this wound, this memory). I give you total access to my heart. Come, Lord, shine your light here. Reveal to me all that is going on here. What is this about, Jesus? Come and show me, meet me here, in this place.

Sometimes he will take us back to a memory, a time and place where a shattering blow was given. Other times he will make us aware of a young place in our hearts. Just the other evening, Stasi and I were in the living room together, reading. She told me she had been sad for several days, but she wasn't sure why. There wasn't anything sad going on in her life—quite the contrary. It had been a good several weeks with many blessings. But as she prayed about it, tuned in to her heart, she became aware of a place in her heart that felt as if it was weeping. Anytime someone says, “I feel like there's this part of me...,” my radar lights up. We asked Jesus about it, and sure enough, there was a part of Stasi's heart, about seventeen years old, that was grieving. We asked Jesus to come in and lead us in prayer for this brokenness.

We ask Jesus what he is saying to this wounded part of us, listening, as Payne puts it, “for the healing word that God is always sending to the wounded.” He will often bring words of love and kindness or comfort specifically to this place in our hearts: “You have the words of real life” (John 6:68, *The Message*). Sometimes he will ask a question: “Why are you frightened?” or “Will you let me heal you?” He is drawing this place in our hearts out from the shadows, out from hiding; he is bringing our brokenness into the place of assurance.

Jesus, come and lead me in healing this brokenness in my heart. Speak to me here, Lord. What are you saying to me? Give me ears to hear and eyes to see what you are revealing. Let no other voice speak but you, my Lord Jesus, and you alone.

Now, I think it is safe to say that we all have mishandled these places in our hearts. We push them down, as I did. Or we turn to something or someone we hope will bring comfort, like food or sex. If we have done that, Jesus will often make that clear to us as we pray. As he does, we confess our sins, renounce them (often a great act of the will), and ask him to cleanse our hearts (1 John 1:9).

Jesus, forgive me for the ways I’ve mishandled my brokenness. You alone make me dwell in safety. Forgive me for all my self-protection and self-redemption, and for all my false comforters. (You’ll want to renounce specific sins you are aware of here.) Cleanse my heart of every sin by your shed blood.

Oftentimes these young and broken places have become sites of spiritual strongholds. All of the streams flow together for our healing; we must use the stream of Warfare as well. Our sins give the Enemy a certain claim to our lives (Rom. 6:16). As we renounce any sin, we also renounce any claim we’ve given to Satan in our lives. This often comes in the form of “agreements”—Satan has suggested something to us, and we have said, “Yes.” He might have said, “Don’t ever trust anyone,” or “Your heart is bad—never show it to anyone,” or “You are dirty . . . lustful . . . addicted and never will get free.” Whatever we have agreed with, we renounce those agreements. We ask God to cleanse us by the blood of Christ; we command our Enemy to flee (James 4:7).

I now break every agreement I have made with Satan and his lies. (Get specific here. What have you believed, bought into?) I renounce any claim I have given to my Enemy, and in the name of Jesus I command him to flee.

And then we ask Jesus to do for us the very thing he said he came to do: we ask him to heal this brokenness, to bind up our hearts. Sometimes he will ask us to take his hand in this shattered place, follow him into his heart and his presence within us. These places are often isolated from the life and the love of God in us; he draws them back into his presence and heals them through union with himself, in our hearts. Our part is to listen and follow where he is leading, and to welcome that part of our heart home. This is so important because many of us sent that part away. We welcome back the despised, forsaken part, just as Jesus embraces us.

*Jesus, come now and do as you promised to do—heal my broken heart and set me free.
(Listen here for what Jesus is saying.) Bring this place into your love and healing, bring
this place home. I welcome your healing, and I welcome this part of my heart home.
Come, bind me up and make me whole.*