



Does Physical Therapy Teach Us Spiritual Wellbeing?

Hebrews 12:11: (NASB) *All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.*

Special Guest: Leah Ruggirello, DPT



What a pain in the neck, or my back, or my arm or my leg. None of us like physical pain and when we have it we usually try and do all kinds of things to get rid of it. One great way to do this is to go to a physical therapist and let them understand the problem and its source, evaluate and act on that understanding and then help us work through the process to regain our strength and health. What they help us do will probably bring us more pain for a short time so we can have less or no pain for a long time. If you ask us, that is a winning formula. Can the process and treatment we receive from a physical therapist translate into steps we can take to identify, treat and alleviate the pains and malfunctioning of our spiritual lives? The best way to find that answer is to ask a physical therapist, so we did!

(Our guest's comments are shown in purple and may be edited for brevity and clarity.)

I have been a physical therapist for about seven years. I graduated with my Doctorate of Physical Therapy in 2010 and have since specialized primarily in orthopedics, completing Fellowship training in 2014. In a nutshell, I evaluate people with various problems, some recovering from surgeries but mostly people coming to me with pain. My job is essentially to figure out what is causing the pain and how to fix it.

I am a lifelong student of the Bible, having been raised in a Christian household. My dad, Tom, has been a guest on this program several times. He has been an elder in our church for over 30 years and my mom has been faithful in supporting him with those obligations. My brother and I were raised going to Bible class every Sunday, youth camps and seminars, and we continue to be active participants in our respective churches. I am also a big fan and enthusiastic listener of Christian Questions!

People come to Leah looking for relief both in the short term and long term. How did this subject come up?

Several months ago, I was having a conversation with my dad about work, and as I was describing some details to him he started wondering if there was any spiritual application. We started thinking and brainstorming and came up with some interesting concepts. Some time later in a meeting at our church, he made a statement about "spiritual therapy" in passing. Our dedicated CQ Rewinder, Julie, was in the audience and as soon as the service was over she came up to me and asked what exactly he was talking about. We got to talking and she thought this was a nice idea for a CQ program. Rick didn't totally reject the idea, and so here we are!



We have an eight-step process to walk through that brings us from the event or symptoms of pain to the after-treatment process to see what spiritual lessons we can gain.



A person develops pain, sometimes due to an injury like a fall, or playing a sport. Other times pain develops from overuse, such as at a job or repetitive task. Sometimes pain seems to come out of nowhere. If not properly managed in the initial stages of the injury, pain can become a chronic problem and lead to a

decline in overall physical health. The more acute the injury, the better the prognosis if help is sought sooner than later.

AGUTE vs. CHRONIC

Acute pain happens when you have an active injury; it lasts for days or weeks until the injury is healed. Chronic pain persists for three months or longer. A flaring knee joint, for example, can cause acute pain, but the same person may have issues with pain, fatigue and low function for months or years after that joint quiets down.

ABC's Wide World of Sports Opening Theme (1978)

- *(Sports broadcaster) Spanning the globe to bring you the constant variety of sports. The thrill of victory and the agony of defeat! The human drama of athletic competition. This is ABC's Wide World of Sports.*



Step 1: Injury Phase - We develop spiritual pain and our spiritual life is off center; something is not right in our lives or we have done or dwelled upon something that is not godly. The pain can manifest itself as feelings of guilt, isolation, inability or unworthiness and can lead to a decline in spiritual health.

This may represent a sin, shortcoming/weakness or character flaw. Examples might be when someone struggles with greed, anger, bitterness, rejection, disappointment, resentment - anything not godly. If we do not properly handle these seemingly smaller things quickly, it can lead to an overall decline in our spiritual health.

Our pain can be caused by sin in its many forms:

Proverbs 6:16-19: (NASB) ¹⁶There are six things which the LORD hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: ¹⁷Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, ^{18a}a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that run rapidly to evil, ^{19a}a false witness who utters lies, and one who spreads strife among brothers.

Do not do what God hates! Do not let these become part of your life.



Different types of personalities can *spread strife* easily without meaning to. We have to be very careful with our words and feelings as we present them.

In the aftermath of the United States' recent presidential election there has been a massive spreading of strife on both sides of the issue. God looks at that behavior negatively, which causes spiritual pain. This kind of pain needs therapy even though we may not think it does. Such attitudes do not bring anyone up higher.

Our pain can be caused by specific sins with which we might be continuously and personally struggling:

Hebrews 12:1: (NASB) *Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us...*

Lay aside the sin which so easily entangles us - Think of a runner. If their legs are tangled up, they will not be able to run. The picture here is you do not want to be carrying something along with you that will trip you up. Sometimes we inherently have weaknesses or sins that slow us down.

We have to understand ourselves enough to put barriers up against our weaknesses to avoid them. Behaviors or attitudes that came naturally to us or that develop within us might bring spiritual pain that needs therapy.

Our pain can be caused by our stand for Christ:

1 Peter 4:12-14: (NASB) ¹²*Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; ¹³but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of his glory you may rejoice with exultation. ¹⁴If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.*

We can rejoice in pain that comes from standing up for Christ, even though it may not feel good.

Physical therapists sometimes treat people who were not doing something wrong, but perhaps they just overdid it, such as a marathon runner. The best athletes train but take breaks so their bodies can recover.

Sources of pain can be personal, like from family, friends or co-workers. Pain can also come from strangers. Standing up for Christ could hurt more or less depending on the source.

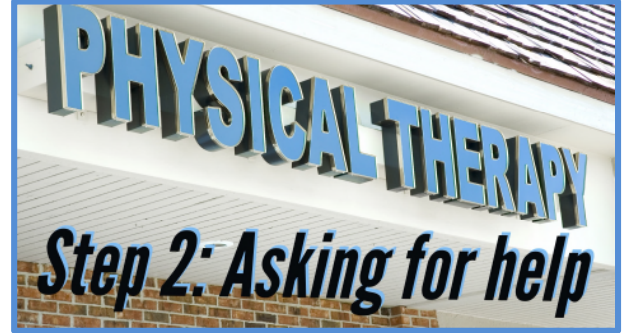
Spiritual pain should be treated.





So, now we have an injury -
should we ice it, take two aspirin and see how we are in the morning?

The pain becomes severe enough for the person to seek help. Often they see their primary doctor first; in some states people can go directly to physical therapists. The doctor may take x-rays or an MRI to make sure nothing major is happening.

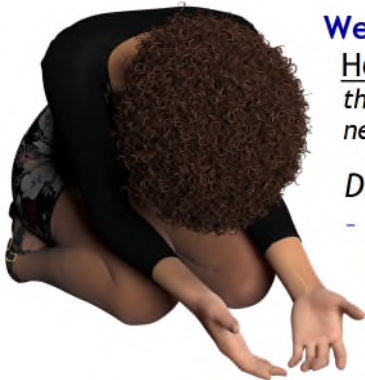


Step 2: Asking for help - Recognition of our pain (our sin/shortcoming) and seeking spiritual guidance. There are many available sources of such guidance.

First, we should be praying directly to God to get help, but ultimately He works through many different avenues for us to receive that help. Perhaps that means getting spiritual guidance from a trusted

Christian friend, maybe a spiritual mentor or leader (like an elder or pastor at your church). This is important because you have to get the right kind of help, the right match. You want to go to someone who can give you the guidance you need. Maybe that means going to more than one person. There is definitely ownership of self on this one, along with humility.

It is hard to admit when we are having a spiritual malfunction in our life.



We can (and ALWAYS SHOULD) go to God through Jesus:

Hebrews 4:16: (NASB) *Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

Draw near with confidence - you are going to get the help you need - maybe not in the time or method you would prefer, but this is a great place to start.

Spiritual failure can be looked at like spiritual pain needing treatment. We need to stop or alter what we are doing.

We can go to those who are spiritually more mature than we are:

James 5:13-15: (NASB) *¹³Is anyone among you suffering? Then he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises. ¹⁴Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; ¹⁵and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.*

The admonishment is to go to the elders of the church who are to have recognized spiritual maturity. There is great power in pulling spiritual maturity together on your behalf.



What kind of problems do people have getting to that point in the physical world?

When dealing with physical injury, some people do not *want* to stop the painful activity causing the problem, like over-exercising. Some can't stop because it is part of their job and if they do not perform that function, they could lose their job causing social implications.

Some do not trust what the therapist is saying. From my standpoint, I try even harder to show them I know what I am doing. Sometimes that means “geeking out” on them and giving them as much information about the problem as I can. If the patient does not buy into the program, you will not get anywhere with them.

You have to gain their trust by letting them know you have answers as a professional and you can work through this together.

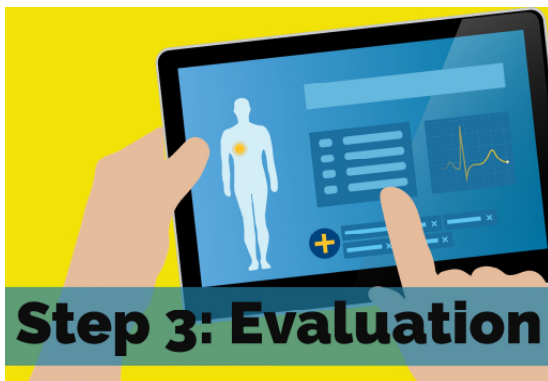
We can go to our trusted Christian friends:

James 5:16: (NASB) *Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.*

Share your pain with those you trust.

When someone shares their story with me, it begins the relief process. I have had people come in who, as they are telling me their problem, they figure it out on their own and I do not do anything other than say, “Good! I’m glad that’s figured out!” They do not need to come back because they have identified what it is themselves and then they make the necessary changes.

The only way they get to that point, though, is by talking to someone they trust. By trusting in someone, we can begin the process of healing our spiritual pain.



A typical physical evaluation consists of interviewing the patient to gather information on what the pain/problem is, what the history of it is and how it is affecting their life. This is followed by physical testing to determine where the problem is and potential contributing factors. Then the physical therapist and patient develop the plan of care together.

The evaluation is important to recovery because everyone is unique. There are patterns you can recognize, but ultimately the treatment you come up with is individual to the person sitting in front of you. You spend time talking with them, figuring out when the problem started, is it getting better or worse, what kind of things make it feel better or worse. It is like a puzzle, and you are trying to put the pieces together.



After you have some subjective information, based on that you will run tests to determine where the pain is coming from - what structure is it coming from - tendon, joint or ligament.

Often there are contributing factors. For instance, if someone has pain in their shoulder like a rotator cuff tear, they might have things around it like a stiff thoracic spine and weakness of some of the surrounding muscles that contribute to why the pain and injury developed in the first place. The main problem needs to be treated most directly (the tear), but all the other contributing factors need to be treated also to get rid of all the pain and prevent the problem from coming back.

You need to isolate the cause but also what is around it that affects the pain and physical inflammation.



Step 3: Evaluation - We can spiritually inflame our lives by ignoring things that are going wrong. But depending on who is involved, this can be tricky. Just because someone is our close friend and a Christian does not mean they are qualified to get to the bottom of an issue.

Psalm 19:12: (KJV) *Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults.*

Be humble in your choosing:

Galatians 6:2-5: (NASB) ²Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ. ³For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. ⁴But each one must examine his own work, and then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another. ⁵For each one will bear his own load.

If your Christian friend comes to you with an issue, if we are not equipped to give that advice, we need to be humble enough to realize this and redirect them accordingly.

Galatians 6:1: (NASB) *Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.*

The evaluation process is only successful if we go to the right individuals to get the right input, not necessarily input that is most comfortable to us.

Although not discussed, Leah also suggests: Whoever is helping the person with the spiritual problem should start by speaking with the individual seeking help. Find out what they are struggling with, the history of the problem and how it is affecting their life. In doing so, they may identify the main problem is anger (for example), and so that needs to be treated the most directly. But maybe they have identified that part of the reason they are angry is because they are also discouraged, jealous or bitter, have a lack of faith, etc. All of these “contributing factors” need to be addressed! If the person seeking help is praying directly to the Lord about this, then God will begin to reveal their deficits to them.



Okay, so now we know why we hurt.
What do we do next, act like a lobster?



During this step, we want to prevent a worsening of the condition for acute injuries. This step may sometimes be omitted if the problem is more chronic. The therapist may try to calm down the pain and inflammation using gentle hands-on techniques, or perhaps they brace or tape an injured limb.

Then they educate the patient on self-management via the acronym “RICE” (Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation).



The therapist will also give advice on stopping any activity or behavior that may be causing the pain to continue. For example, if the shoulder pain comes on after they play two hours of tennis, they may need to hold off on playing tennis for a few weeks. Sometimes people listen and sometimes they do not. Gentle hands-on techniques means gentle movements to desensitize the pain. Sometimes the area can be so sensitive to touch because the nervous system is going haywire. Giving a non-threatening, calm input can calm the nervous system down. The area may need to be immobilized with tape or a brace.



Jonathan's wife, Jewel, is going through physical therapy now because of hand surgery. (Yes, that is her hand in the photo for Step 4...) At times the pain is so bad the therapist cannot have her do any exercises until she undergoes a hot paraffin wax treatment to take some of the pain away. After that process, she can start doing the exercises. They related it to how sometimes God allows us to be in the “heat” or “fire” of a trial so that we can be exercised properly and learn the lessons He has for us.

Recovery is a slow, sometimes tedious process. Humility to start, then gentleness and trust are important.

It also takes a lot of patience, too. People want a quick fix, but those who are patient and slow themselves down and follow all of these directions usually get better. Those who either do not understand it takes a long time to get better or do not comply with taking a break from the harmful activities are usually the ones who do not get better with physical therapy and have to get extra procedures like injections or surgery. Patience is very important throughout the whole rehab process.



Step 4: Control Inflammation and Pain - This is likely the more “instant assistance” to the problem to help keep it from getting worse and decrease the overall severity.

Remove negative influences that could be contributing to the spiritual problem. Maybe start reading a Bible verse related to your specific struggle. Perhaps you need to no longer be around certain

friends who are not a good influence on your spiritual health. Stop any sinful behavior that might be present and making the problem worse.

Perhaps there is a lesson here regarding the pain being related to a specific event or events rather than the pain being a chronic issue in life. The event-related pain is out of the ordinary and its severity is perhaps more sharply and easily noticed. This could refer to our actions and reactions that cause us spiritual pain and we need help calming those things down and getting back to form.

Watching what we say and therefore what we are thinking starts this process:

James 1:26: (NASB) *If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless.*

To reduce the inflammation of your spiritual malfunction, watch what you do and say. These contribute to stress and helps things to spin out of control.

In a physical sense, patients can get so tensed up over the pain, it seems worse than it actually is.

Sometimes the first few visits might not even involve physical touch. It might just involve talking to them to try to break the cycle of stress-induced pain.



Part one, Rabbi Doctor Abraham Twerski on Responding to Stress

- *There is something I want to tell you about - stress and how we often look at stress. I think it's an important thing because many people have told me from my lectures, it's the one thing they remember. I was sitting in a dentist office and I was looking at an article that said, How do lobsters grow? Well, I don't care how lobsters grow, but I was interested in it and it points out that a lobster is a soft, mushy animal that lives inside of a ridged shell. That ridged shell does not expand. Well, how can a lobster grow? As the lobster grows that shell becomes very confining. The lobster feels itself under pressure and uncomfortable. It goes under a rock formation to protect itself from predatory fish, casts off the shell and produces a new one.*



We are to grow, mature and develop in Christ, not just hang around enjoying the goodness without the growth:

1 Corinthians 3:1-4: (NASB) ¹And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. ²I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, ³for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men? ⁴For when one says, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are you not mere men?

The event-related pain we have in our lives could be related to something that happens to which we have an immature reaction.

The chronic pain could perhaps relate to our deeper character flaws. In some ways, we have learned to live with them and tolerate their presence. This does not diminish the seriousness of the issue; rather, it emphasizes the need for longer and stronger treatment.

Physically, people live with pain for a long time and finally decide to come in for help. Spiritually, sometimes our weaknesses are not necessarily obvious to us. But as we grow and mature spiritually, maybe we are just noticing some of the character flaws we have always had. They have been there all the time.

In other words, we are at a point of maturity where we can say, "Well, THAT does not sound very Christ-like!" Perhaps we have been living with that dull ache but just have gotten so used to it we have not paid attention.

Examples of chronic spiritual pain in Scripture:

Hebrews 12:14-17: (NASB) ¹⁴Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. ¹⁵See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled; ¹⁶that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal. ¹⁷For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.

Root of bitterness - as a chronic problem. A root is buried underneath that no one sees; you have no idea how big it is. Then you see a little sprout that springs up that likely has a much bigger root system beneath the surface. Spiritually that is the kind of pain we need to deal with.



In relation to chronic spiritual pain we have learned to deal with or not pay much attention to:

Acts 8:20-24: (NASB) ²⁰But Peter said to him, *May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money!* ²¹You have no part or portion in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. ²²Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray the Lord that, if possible, the intention of your heart may be forgiven you. ²³For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bondage of iniquity. ²⁴But Simon answered and said, *Pray to the Lord for me yourselves, so that nothing of what you have said may come upon me.*

This is the story of Simon the Magician, who would thrill everyone with his illusions and deceptions. He saw the miracles of Philip and the Holy Spirit being passed through the Apostles. He wanted that power! He was a believer but was so tied up *in the gall of bitterness* that he could not recognize how far off he was. When he offered to BUY the ability to do those miracles, Peter's response was that he had no part in this because he was so spiritually broken there was nothing that could be done to help him. His only recourse was to pray for God's mercy.

Now we get to the main problem:



When the initial pain is under control, the next step is to start fixing the underlying problem(s). The main problem needs to be directly addressed and so do the contributing factors.

Is it easier to fix the underlying cause for chronic pain vs. event-related pain?

It depends on the individual. It is probably easier with the acute, one-time injuries. Once everything has calmed down, you go in and find the problem and fix that problem. If it is a stiff

joint, you mobilize the joint, get it moving and often the patient is ready to go after just a few sessions of therapy.

Chronic problems tend to be more complicated, because there is not just one problem to fix. You first have to identify all the different problems, and sometimes you have to be creative on how to fix them. For example, if stress is a contributor to their chronic pain, they might find stress relief one way, but someone else may find stress relief another way.

With chronic pain, there can be a direct link to the stress in our lives.

Please see the CQ episode from December 5, 2016, “Why Are We SO STRESSED?!?”

Sometimes with chronic problems you eventually identify problems that cannot be fixed by therapy. If the problem is the person's work, they can't quit their job because they will lose their income and not be able to support their families. I can tell you the job is causing the problem but can't fix it. Those



cases tend to be harder because you have to let the person go and they still have the problems.

This can happen on a spiritual level as well. We might be in an environment where there are certain kinds of input which we are not capable of getting away from - maybe it is family members, raising rebellious teenagers - sometimes we cannot get rid of our pain. At that point, we have to look at pain management.

Yes, pain management and focusing on functional tasks. A lot of times people come to therapy not just because something hurts, but because they cannot use that part of their body. Their shoulder hurts, so now they cannot wash their hair. Their shoulder hurts, so now they cannot lift something. A lot of times with acute injuries, if you fix the pain the function returns.

With chronic problems, sometimes if you cannot fix the pain, you have to go after it in a functional way by practicing the difficult activities. We look for different ways to do them in order to be functional again with that body part.

Step 5: Fix the underlying cause - Start fixing the main problem. The specifics will depend on the primary problem and contributing factors, but we can learn to manage if the pain cannot go away.

Although not discussed, Leah suggests: If the primary problem is anger, maybe the individual needs to take an anger management class (or something along those lines). But if they also have jealousy, bitterness, resentment, etc., contributing

to that anger, all of these need to be addressed too! By working on these seemingly “smaller” things, the goal is that it will help the main problem and ultimately the overall spiritual health of the individual.

To reiterate, everything is specific to the individual and our spiritual healing should be individualized. Maybe not everyone with an anger problem is struggling with bitterness and jealousy, but instead are really struggling with depression, so this must be treated instead.

Improvements will come when God is faithful to help us in time of need (which He ALWAYS is), with overruling providences, guidance and direction from Scriptures, fellow Christians and so forth. But really the best results come when the person obeys what God is telling them to do. God is unchangeable and His promises never fail. It depends on the individual’s ability and desire to trust in His promises and obey, thus allowing God to mold them into the character of His son. Examples of changes that could be made: Watching less television every night and studying our Bibles/devotionals at least once a day, getting away from social media and replacing it with calling a Christian friend, complaining less and looking on the positive side of things. We are essentially counteracting the problems with specific spiritually-healthy tasks and a godly mindset.





 **Sing a song, *I Feel Pretty*, *Anger Management* (2003 movie), Adam Sandler and Jack Nicholson**

- (Jack Nicholson's character driving with his patient, calmly talking in a car) (tires squealing) Now what exactly was that all about, Dave?
- (Adam Sandler) What?
- (Jack Nicholson) You just ran through a red light. Are you trying to get us both killed?
- (Adam Sandler) Well, I am a little flustered right now. I have to be at work in eight minutes.
- (Jack Nicholson) Flustered? (Car tires squealing, people screaming and cars honking)
- (Adam Sandler) Whoa! What are you doing?
- (Jack Nicholson) I need you to un-fluster.
- (Adam Sandler) My boss is going to go nuts on me if we're late so, please?
- (Jack Nicholson) We will proceed when you are centered.
- (Adam Sandler) I am centered. I am centered. I am centered. Come let's go, crazy man! (honking) What is that? Is that good?
- (Jack Nicholson) We're going to sing a song.
- (Adam Sandler) No. I don't want to sing a song. I've got to go.
- (Jack Nicholson) The magic of Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim's, "West Side Story."

Complete trust in God is an important starting point:

Isaiah 64:8: (NASB) *But now, O LORD, You are our Father, we are the clay and You our potter; and all of us are the work of Your hand.*

Am I trusting God enough to put the underlying causes of my pain into His hands as though He is the potter and I am the clay, able to be reshaped? Spiritually, if we want to get to the underlying cause of our malfunction, we need to be pliable in the hands of God.

Physically, those who are willing to make changes and take my recommendations get better a lot faster. Those who are more stubborn, more resistant to change or unwilling to follow through with their exercises at home take a lot longer to get better or do not get better at all.

Claiming the sacrifice of Jesus as we humbly admit our shortcomings is vital:

1 John 1:7-9: (NASB) *7but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. 8If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

We need to focus on the right things. We should have the sacrifice of Jesus in front of us while we are now getting ready to fix the underlying cause of our pain, sin, shortcoming or flaw. Keeping him first and foremost is important.



Get back to basics! Keeping the main thing the main thing:

Romans 12:1-2: (NASB) *¹Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. ²And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*

Having confidence in the overruling and providence of God through Jesus on your behalf:

Philippians 1:3-6: (NASB) *³I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, ⁴always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all, ⁵in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.*

With physical therapy, you can start working with someone but unless they follow along, it will not work. What do you do to keep patients on track?

Sometimes it is just putting them on the spot a bit by asking them to demonstrate what they are doing outside of therapy. Sometimes I remind people what their goals are, “You told me you wanted to be able to lift a gallon of milk or lift your child. Keep this in mind because we are both working towards the same goal.”

Make them think about the most important things.

Great! We are on the road to recovery - it is going to get easier, right?



As the pain becomes less and less, the treatment and home exercises can (and should) progress to be more challenging and constructive than just for pain relief.

These are going to be specific to each individual patient - what was their cause and contributing factors, what their needs are, where they are at in their recovery and what their goals for recovery are. On the therapist's part, maybe they are more aggressive with their hands-on treatment focusing more on restoring motion and function as opposed to pain.

On the patient's part, they may have to do more repetitions or use heavier weights with their exercises. They may have to do more exercises. The reason the intervention should get harder or more challenging as the person is improving is because it needs to in order to progress - like the lobster audio clip we played. If the system is not being challenged then it will not continue to get better or stronger and will stay the same. When the exercises are progressed, the individual should feel sore and tired while performing them and maybe for awhile afterwards. But as they continue to do them, they will become easier and again will need to be progressed. It is an ongoing cycle.

We are so focused on dealing with the pain, but once the pain is gone we can “take our foot off the pedal” because we are feeling better. However, progress means we need to restore motion and function. With chronic issues,



some people may not even remember what “normal” is like. This is a growth process.

Proper progression is really important. We do not want to give them too much too soon, such as too heavy of weights or too many exercises. They will either not do them or will end up hurting themselves again.

We need to take step-by-step action to get us functioning, both physically and spiritually.



Step 6: Progress! - We need to update what we work on spiritually.

Let’s say anger is the problem we are working on. Maybe we are no longer angry when a friend forgets to return a phone call, which is a minor thing. We conquered that but need to work in a more challenging context - not getting angry when someone says something negative about us or cheats us. It is still working on anger but in a

more significant application.

There is always another mountain to climb, but we need to conquer the smaller hills in front of us.



As the individual begins to overcome his or her weaknesses, God will progress their experiences in order to grow.

If we cannot overcome the weakness in the smaller, easier context, there is no way we can overcome it in a bigger, much more challenging one.



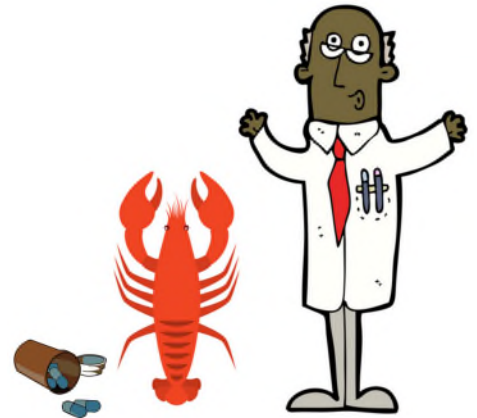
Find a place inside where there's joy, and the joy will burn out the pain. — Joseph Campbell

1 Corinthians 10:13: (NASB) *No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.*



))) If lobsters had doctors, Rabbi Doctor Abraham Twerski on Responding to Stress

- *Well, eventually that shell becomes very uncomfortable as it grows. Back under the rock it goes and the lobster repeats this numerous times. The stimulus for the lobster to be able to grow is that it feels uncomfortable. Now, if lobsters had doctors they would never grow, because as soon as the lobster feels uncomfortable it goes to the doctor, gets a Valium, gets a Percocet, feels fine and never casts off its shell. So, I think that we have to realize that times of stress are also times that are signals for growth, and if we use adversity properly we can grow through adversity.*



Physical therapists like Leah give people adversity - hard challenges for them to do again and again in order to grow through the pain.

Spiritual health - know your direction and fix your mind on it:

Hebrews 12:2-7: (NASB) ²fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³For consider him who has endured such hostility by sinners against himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Fixing our eyes on Jesus - We fix our focus on the one thing that is most important. That does not mean you only do one thing in your life; it means all those other things you do are to help you get to that focused point. Well, where is the praise of God in having to go to my job every day? How do we serve Jesus in that? It is being Christ-like in whatever our endeavors are. We fix our eyes on Jesus.

Spiritual health comes from understanding challenges that may yet come:

⁴You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin;

Sometimes things can get worse before they get better. Physically, pain being managed by a professional can actually be a good thing. The challenges of spiritual growth are the same. Spiritual pain can be a good thing if we let it be managed a higher way.

Spiritual health comes from accepting the corrections and guidance lovingly given to all sons of God:

⁵and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, my son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when you are reprovved by Him; ⁶for those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom he receives. ⁷It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?

It is a good thing if you are being disciplined, going through the pains of spiritual growth. God is allowing it for your best benefit. The discipline of God is not the pain of injury, it is the pain of growth and shows progression.



Spiritual health comes through a continual attitude of humility and faith:

Romans 12:3-8: (NASB) ³*For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.*

This reminds us how Leah talks to her patients when they are going through difficulty, reminding them about what they are trying to accomplish.

Some people get discouraged easily and think, “I should be better by now.” I tell them, “No, for this kind of injury it could take six months for this to get better,” or I will give an example of someone with the same injury who did not progress as fast. Sometimes people need a lot of encouragement.

Spiritual health comes through being a contributor to something bigger than yourself:

⁴*For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, ⁵so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.*

Spiritual health comes through knowing your role and executing it with diligence and passion:

⁶*Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; ⁷if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; ⁸or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.*

With physical therapy, the therapist might use the same type of exercises but would treat an athlete differently from someone who walks one mile every ten months. It is the same thing spiritually - God will give us the dosage of reparation work we need depending on where we are, the kind of spiritual pain, suffering or injury we have and what we need to accomplish.

How do we keep from going down this painful road again?



Once the patient is no longer feeling any pain and returned back to doing their normal daily activities, they are discharged from physical therapy. What happens next?

They are encouraged to continue with their home exercise program and need to figure out a way to stick with it. This will often prevent the problem from coming back and even make further improvements. Those who make it a HABIT and stick with their exercises tend to do best.

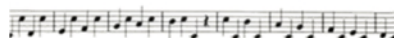


Step 7: Discharged - Spiritually we should make whatever exercises we learned a habit.

Maybe we decide to read a devotional every morning or evening before we go to bed. Maybe we pray first thing in the morning and last thing at night. Maybe we could put our favorite Scripture or spiritual poem on our fridge. I have a few Christian magnets with a nice poem on my fridge, because I am definitely not going to start my day without eating so I know I will see them! These are just little examples to create a habit.

Take what you learned with you in practical everyday life and keep it going. That is a challenge because it is easy to revert to what we did before.

Today's technology can really help with this - we can text and email our Christian friends questions about the Bible. We can listen to something uplifting while in the car. And of course, we can bring the Christian Questions App wherever we go and listen to archived programs!



"I Feel Pretty," (from the movie Anger Management) Adam Sandler
The character sings this song whenever he gets mad.

I feel pretty, oh so pretty
I feel pretty and witty and gay
And I pity any girl who isn't me today
I feel charming, oh so charming...

The point of that song is the character had to do something different to change his state of being. There is something to be said for taking ourselves into a place where we can make progress.

Spiritually, there are MANY things we can do to be strengthened.

Back to Romans 12, we can form habits by our intentional focus and repetitive actions.

Decide to be passionately pure in heart:

Romans 12:9-14: (NASB) ⁹Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor;

Create a new, elevating spiritual habit.

Find your practical passions for serving God (often accomplished by serving others) and ignite them:

¹¹not lagging behind in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; ¹²rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, ¹³contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality. ¹⁴Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

Find what you can do to contribute. In terms of therapy, when someone is overwhelmed with their issue, they tend to forget everything else around



them. How do you help them go from “my pain and my issue is everything in my life” to lose themselves in other things?

It is helping them identify positive things in their life. Rather than, “Let’s just focus on the pain,” it is, “Let’s NOT focus on the pain! Let’s focus on other stuff.” I ask them for happy memories or things they enjoy so we can focus on more constructive exercises. “Since you enjoy being with your grandkids, next time I want you to have babysat them three times by next week.” This gets them to NOT focus on the pain, because their hyper-vigilance to that pain might be one of the driving factors. Focus on something else more positive.

Life is bigger than the pain. Your existence is more valuable than the pain, so start to look at things outside of it.

Enter the experiences of others with deep empathy and humble spirituality.

Romans 12:15-17: (NASB) ¹⁵Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. ¹⁶Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation. ¹⁷Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men.

We want to be able to touch the lives of others in a positive way.



A CQ App comment from Tennessee: Thank you for this. We all need to be reminded and diligent, never giving up and keep moving forward.

People love having a diagnosis, knowing the problem. The fear of uncertainty can sometimes be worse than an actual problem. If you can give them something more constructive to think about, as in, “THIS is your problem...” that can be a relief if it can be fixed.

Being humble enough to see our spiritual weaknesses helps us to better manage what we need to do.



(This step is more often used for chronic conditions.)

When people have chronic pain, they do not always become 100% symptom-free within a course of physical therapy.

It is common for them to have “flare ups” of pain periodically, so we teach them various techniques on how to manage the flare ups of pain independently, without needing to come back to me or their doctor. They can do something to help calm the pain down themselves.

The individual is empowered to care for themselves. It is no longer overwhelming because they know what to do.



Step 8: Managing flare ups - If someone has an ongoing spiritual problem they are working to overcome or manage, they can learn techniques to help calm this problem down when they find themselves faced with a particularly difficult situation.

I think that last *Anger Management* movie clip you played was right on, where they sing, “I Feel Pretty” whenever they get mad! Anger might be a reaction some have to deal with their whole lives, so if they find themselves in that situation, instinctively they can pull off on the side of the road and sing, “I feel pretty!” Perhaps a hymn would be more appropriate... 😊

When a person is working through chronic anger and they get cut off in traffic and find they have just shouted at the other driver, they might then do some deep breathing or something along those lines to help calm them down quickly.

If we have been working on good habits, we will be better equipped to keep ourselves in check:

Romans 12:18-21: (NASB) ¹⁸*If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. ¹⁹Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.*

Let God take care of those issues. Getting involved causes more spiritual injury and pain.

Rather than react to those who would do us harm, let us respond with Christ-likeness:

²⁰*but if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head. ²¹Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

Stop thinking about revenge and frustration.

Spiritual therapy can bring us peace:

Psalms 107:28-31: (NASB) ²⁸*Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, And He brought them out of their distresses. ²⁹He caused the storm to be still, so that the waves of the sea were hushed. ³⁰Then they were glad because they were quiet, so He guided them to their desired haven. ³¹Let them give thanks to the LORD for His lovingkindness, and for His wonders to the sons of men!*

In summary, sometimes we have a physical injury or sometimes we spiritually have a problem. We want to calm the injury down (stop whatever direct things are causing us to be spiritually weak). Once we are steady, the Lord can strengthen where we are weak as we seek to build ourselves back up.

Realize the management of the pain in our lives is in our hands. We can do something with it if we follow the right process.



*So, does physical therapy teach us spiritual wellbeing?
For Jonathan and Rick (and Leah!) and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*

*And now even more to think about...
only in the **Full Edition** of CQ Rewind!*

*Prefer a loss to a dishonest gain; the one brings pain at the moment, the other for all time.
— Chilon*

Please see the CQ episode from December 5, 2016, "Why are We SO STRESSED?" for a quick reminder of a process to manage our stress and to manage the areas of our life that may need Spiritual Therapy.

The Apostle has confronted the issue (Step #1 - Be Aware) he has looked for help in addressing it (Step #2 - Accept Assistance) and now he tells us how to cope:

Philippians 4:4-6: (NASB) ⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! ⁵Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. ⁶Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

This can seem silly and even trite. How am I supposed to rejoice, be without anxiety and be thankful when my whole life is collapsing around me?

Think higher, act higher. See from a higher place. Circumstances can and often do easily dictate our state of mind. Our state of mind is an absolute choice and does NOT have to be captive to what is happening around or to you. The Apostle Paul is telling us to choose our thoughts!



This choice of higher thoughts reaps a powerful harvest:

Philippians 4:7: (NASB) *And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

Pursue the peace of God, for it will not arbitrarily grace you with its presence. God's peace can only come to us when we make room for it, when we evict our own will and our own way in favor of His higher plan - whatever that plan may be!



Much has been written on the power of attraction - these are the places where it does work:

Philippians 4:8-9: (NASB) ⁸Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. ⁹The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

The power to cope with stress ultimately comes from our ability to let go of what we cannot control, to be alert to our old habits and thinking and to be prepared to always resist Satan:



1 Peter 5:6-10: (NASB) *⁶Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, ⁷casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. ⁸Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. ¹⁰After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.*

Commit to higher ways (even if you continually fail at them), for the power of choosing our thoughts to be godly takes time to learn. Find examples of those who inspire you and follow them as they follow Christ.



The following is a scriptural example of the church in Galatia. This church needed to reset themselves for they had been led down wrong spiritual paths and the true foundation of the Gospel was now cloudy before them.

Part of the Apostle's Spiritual Therapy in treating this injury was to remind them not only of what was true but WHY it was true:

Galatians 3:1-9: (NASB) *¹You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? ²This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? ³Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? ⁴Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? ⁵So then, does he who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? ⁶Even so Abraham BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS. ⁷Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. ⁸The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ALL THE NATIONS WILL BE BLESSED IN YOU. ⁹So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.*

This final example is the Apostle Paul encouraging Timothy, a young and strong Christian, to be well exercised in those things which truly matter. Timothy's future path would be filled with potential pitfalls and injury.

To strengthen ahead of time is to lessen the potential injury later:

1 Timothy 4:7-12: (NASB) *⁷But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; ⁸for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. ⁹It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance. ¹⁰For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers. ¹¹Prescribe and teach these things. ¹²Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe.*