

Capacity - How We Deal with Trauma

Two people can have similar situations. Maybe both in the same war. Maybe both with similar childhoods. Yet one may be traumatized and the other is ok. Why?

Capacity. This is our ability to deal with suffering.

We are told that we will suffer.

- **John 16:33** These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

Not only are we told that we will suffer, we are told that it will make us better:

- **Romans 5:3-4** And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; ⁴ and perseverance, character; and character, hope.

But not all suffering seems to lead us down this path. Why?

Suffering can take 2 paths:

1. The Biblical path – it leads to character, perseverance, character and hope.
2. It leads to trauma.

What makes the difference?

Capacity

Capacity is how much of our needs are met at the time suffering occurs. And we do fluctuate at different times in our lives.

When the level of pain from the suffering is greater than our capacity to endure it, it results in trauma.

This is why some people can be traumatized by small things and others it seems like it would take a huge event to traumatize them.

What exactly is trauma?

- Type A trauma = not having things you need. Lack of love, security, etc...
- Type B trauma = bad things happening to you.

Everyone understands type B. For Type A we intrinsically know that obviously lack of love, etc... is bad, but how do we know what those things are that we need?

Also, the reason type B is trauma is not just because we don't like bad things happening to us, but because those things violate those needs from type A and bring about emotional lack, usually very suddenly.

All people have a mixture of both types of trauma. And all people have a capacity to deal with that trauma.

The Needs

Maslow is considered the father of modern psychology. He identified needs that are universally accepted as accurate.



He says we need, in this order:

1. Physiological needs (air, food, water, shelter)
 2. Security needs (health, safety, financial, etc...)
 3. Love (love, family, connections)
 4. Self-Esteem needs (Acceptance, worth, etc)
 5. Self Actualization (morality, creativity, purpose and meaning)
- Now Maslow was not a believer. But his psychology was pretty spot on.
 - But we will take some liberties with this. Mostly to match the language we typically use. And also because we aren't going to deal with this in depth.

- Let's first look briefly at physiological needs. It's pretty obvious these are important and we can't survive without them. It's why we are commanded to feed the hungry, cloth the naked. Heal the sick. People can't get to a better place mentally, emotionally or spiritually until the physical is dealt with. Physiological is obviously our body needs.
- The next 3 – security, love, and self-esteem we will lump together as these are our soul needs. We typically refer to them as LAWS – Love, Acceptance, Worth and Security. (He combines worth and acceptance).
- The last one, self-actualization, we will change to understanding your identity in Christ, or Identification with Christ.
- Here is a fun fact – Maslow looked at how to move up the needs hierarchy by getting your needs met by yourself and through interactions with people. And this results in Self-Actualization. We teach that you should get your needs met by God, and this results in Identification with Christ.

When you try to mix the 2, it results in frustration, because they are not meant to mix.

- **1 John 2:15-16** Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world.
- **2 Peter 2:20-21** For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. ²¹ For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.

So the needs we are going to look at are **love, acceptance, worth, and security.**

We will spend our lives trying to get these needs met. We can either try to get them met through others, or we can try to get them met through God.

- It is possible for someone to go through life with their needs being met by people most of the time. And if they never experience any major trials, they may not have any trauma in their lives.
- People with a high capacity because of lack of trauma and other external factors, most needs being met by people, have a hard time recognizing their need for God.

We want to live at high capacity, so that we can deal with suffering the Biblical way, and not have it result in trauma.

- Remember - When the level of pain from the suffering is greater than our capacity to endure it, it results in trauma.
- Suffering is not trauma. God said we will experience suffering, but He will never leave us. You can endure suffering when you have love, acceptance, worth, and security.

What if you have already experienced trauma?

Jesus heals trauma.

- **Matthew 4:24** Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them.
- **(LSV)** and His fame went forth to all Syria, and they brought to Him all the ill having manifold oppressing diseases and torments—and demoniacs, and lunatics, and paralytics—and He healed them.

All diseases and torments

1. Demon-possessed – Healing of the spiritual
2. Lunatics – Healing of the mind and emotions (soul)
3. Paralytics – Healing of the physical, body.

We can go to Jesus to heal trauma.

But when we have trauma, it can be very hard to go to Jesus ourselves. It just is. That is one reason why it is so important to have people that will pray for and with us. And why prayer ministries exist.

- **James 5:16** Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.
- **Ephesians 6:18** praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—
- **Galatians 6:2** Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Jesus can heal instantly. I have seen this.

Sometimes trauma takes a long time to heal because the person cannot trust. While it would be wonderful to simply trust God for healing, they must first trust the person that is telling them to trust God for healing. But their trust has been betrayed.

Sometimes it takes multiple prayer times. I don't know why. I just know it does.

Your Role

What your role IS NOT:

1. To meet your own needs of love, acceptance, worth and security—nor anyone else's.
2. To make God love you, or to ensure that He keeps loving you—by what you do or don't do.
3. To fix yourself. "Fix" is a flesh word. You cannot fix flesh with flesh.

Our Role is: SURRENDER

- SURRENDER: To give up. To yield.
- **Galatians 5:16:** *I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.*
- This can only be done with a life of intentionality.
- You must surrender your mind, will and emotions—your soul—to the Lord.
- The degree to which you surrender is the degree to which you will experience Christ's life in your soul.

REMEMBER who you are

- Sin and Satan do not have authority over you anymore; YOU have authority over them. You are an heir of Christ, you have the authority of Almighty God backing you.

Trauma brings big emotional responses

What is the right way to deal with emotions?

Ask yourself a series of questions:

- a. "What am I feeling?"
- b. "Why am I feeling this way?"
- c. "What's the lie that I'm believing?"
- d. "What is God's Truth about me?"

John 16:33 These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

- We used this at the beginning to show you will have suffering
- But now we look at the hope at the end of this verse – Jesus has overcome everything that causes suffering.