

The Mother Wound

Alfred C.W. Davis
MBA, M.Div.

We all come into the world needing the tender presence of a mother's touch, nurture, care and love. In fact the mother's influence begins when we are in the womb. The absence of this mother love is a wound that is created in three ways:

- 1) Mother is separated from the child through:
 - illness of the mother
 - mother's death
 - divorce
- 2) Child is separated from the mother through:
 - illness of the child
 - incubator/hospitalization
 - adoption
- 3) Unhappy relationship with mother through:
 - neglect
 - abuse
 - mother's mental and emotional distress
 - attempted abortion

When this most important attachment is traumatically interrupted, there is emotional pain that produces consequences within the individual. The effect of the wounding includes:

- a feeling of abandonment and dread of aloneness
- a loss of self and being
- a powerful hunger for feminine touch that can be eroticized
- an emotional dependency
- possible gender confusion, fear and insecurity

There are two main responses to a mother wound that affect one's ability to achieve healthy friendships and healthy married love:

- 1) **Emotional Detachment** – This defensive response to the breakdown in the mother's love causes a detachment from the mother. The legitimate need for love from the mother is repressed, leaving the child hungry but unable to secure relationships because of the emotional shutdown. The person fears the pain of attachment and therefore builds protective walls to hide behind.
- 2) **Emotional Dependency** – In this response, the person strives endlessly to fill the void which often turns into co-dependency with grasping, clutching and infantile tendencies. This striving for attachment is based in low self-confidence, fear, insecurity and often a confusion about self worth.

Implications for Women

- internalize a low view of women
- addictive, emotional and romantic dependencies
- infantile desire for union with women
- sexual confusion related to touch

Implications for Men

- ambivalence towards women – need them but very wary
- fixate on feminine objects of desire to fill the deprivation of mother love
- either detach or remain in toxic grip of a sinful alliance with mother
- sexual confusion related to touch

Other Implications

- separation anxiety that leads to striving, passivity and depression
- fantasy bonding - attaching to fantasies
- fetish bonding – attaching to things, clothing, hair
- attachment to self – fantasy image of self
- emotional incest – meeting emotional needs of mother
- weak sense of identity and of being

Addressing the Mother Wound

There are four steps to addressing the mother wound:

- 1) invite Jesus into your initial memories and emotions,
- 2) release your pain to Jesus instead of living from the center of your wounded child,
- 3) forgive your mother,
- 4) strengthen your sense of identity and knowledge of your True Self in Christ.

- 1) Inviting Jesus into the wound.

“Though my father and mother forsake me,
the Lord will receive me.” (Psalm 27:10)

“As a mother comforts her child,
so will I comfort you.” (Isaiah 66:13)

Knowing that Jesus wants to heal the brokenhearted, invite Jesus to come to the place of brokenness, whether it is in the womb, at birth or early in life.

- 2) Ask Jesus to take the pain that is in the memory and replace it with his love. He will creatively remove the pain (different for each person) and then transform the memory with his love and truth.



- 3) Choose as an act of your free will to forgive your mother and let go of all the resentment, bitterness and anger. Jesus' transforming love will change the perspective of the trauma and free you to accept the circumstances with grace and mercy.
- 4) Strengthen your sense of identity and knowledge of your True Self in Christ by asking Jesus to reveal the truth about who you are. As Jesus affirms your sense of being, he provides an assurance of worth and helps you know the True Self that he created. Then, look to your success stories to see the outworking of your True Self in real life.

As you connect with Jesus' profound love for you, the need for other attachments reduces your need to be loved and allows you to look outward in loving relationships with others. With your self and being affirmed, you will be free to grow in your own story instead of constantly striving to attach to your mother or the substitute for your mother.

