MINISTERING TO THE
SEXUALLY ABUSE

Introduction

Sexual abuse is not a modern problem. It's been around a long time. In II Samuel 13, King David's son, Amnon, rapes his sister, Tamar. In Judges 19, a woman is gang-raped and left for dead. The sin of incest and sexual abuse is alive and all too well in our modern day society. It is estimated that 1 out of every 3 or 4 females and 1 out of every 8 or 10 males will be, or has been, sexually assaulted by the time they reach 18 years of age. It is also estimated that 85% of those who have been abused know their abuser personally. They have turned out to be fathers, grandfathers, brothers, uncles, friends of the family, boarders. Most of these abusers are upstanding citizens in the community and involved in service organizations, such as teachers, pastors, doctors, counsellors, scout leaders, etc. Sexual abuse is not a cultural problem or class problem. Every culture has its share of sexual abuse and it is a middle and upper class problem as well as one invading lower income groups. Sexual abuse, sad to say, is prevalent even in Christian families. I seriously doubt that there was much help offered to Tamar that ministered healing to her. However, for today's victims of abuse, and for their offenders, there is hope and there is healing in Jesus Christ.

"... we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us (Rom. 8:37b)."

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted . . . to comfort all who mourn . . . to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit . . . (Is. 61:1-3)."

Symptoms and the Devastations of Abuse

Psalm 55:4 - "My heart is in anguish within me, the terrors of death have fallen upon me. Fear and trembling come upon me, and horror overwhelms me. And I say, 'O that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest; yea, I would wander afar, I would lodge in the wilderness.'"

1. Betrayal: One can feel betrayed on three levels --
   a. An authority figure that betrayed trust
   b. Parents: Looking for protection and they didn't protect. Or, you told them about the abuse and they didn't believe you.
   c. God: All seeing, all knowing, all powerful God -- where were You, God?
2. Shattered trust - can result in:
   a. Putting up walls of self-protection
   b. Self-reliance
   c. Inner vows
   d. Need to be controlling: Safety becomes a major issue.
   e. Feelings become an idol

3. Abandonment and deep loneliness (Secretiveness)
   Sometime, one feels like "I'm the only one who has felt this way." There is a sense of **deep personal pain.**

4. Fear: Moderate <---> overwhelming (Irrational fears)
   a. Fear of men
   b. Fear of being alone
   c. Fears of vulnerability
   d. Fears about self: An identity crisis in both sexes. "What am I? How come this happened to me?"
   e. Afraid of her own femininity; fragile sense of masculinity. Lots of shame surrounds one's sense of sexuality.

5. Irrational running (Coping mechanism)
   a. Irrational urge to run when feeling threatened, afraid, overwhelmed
   b. Girls not coming home from school; gone to a friend's house for days
   c. Sabotage relationships: Avoid intimacy.
   d. Not show up for appointments

6. Identity confusion -- The wheel and line is a tremendous healing tool for victims of abuse.
7. Crippled self-esteem, because:
   A. Intruded upon
   B. Disrespected as a person
   C. Unclean/defiled/dirty
   D. Robbed
   E. Sense of dignity taken away
   F. Deep humiliation
   G. Leper/outcast/ruined

8. Unable to sleep at night, for various reasons:
   A. Abused at night
   B. PJs or lots of clothes to cover themselves, even in hot weather
   C. Bad dreams; nightmares; flashbacks

9. Poor daytime concentration
   A. Kids cannot concentrate at school. They get poor grades and end up dropping out of school.
   B. Show signs of burnout on the job. Problems with fatigue.

10. Tremendous guilt feelings
    A. Feeling somehow they were responsible for what happened.
    B. Meet the person where they're at and minister to the feelings of guilt.
    C. Momentary enjoyment of sexual stimulation.

11. Passivity/co-dependence - especially if it happens by an authority figure. Can result in:
    a. Becoming passive in abusive situations (spiritual, mental, emotional, physical)
    b. Becoming a chronic care-giver (Marry an alcoholic or an abusive person)

12. Anger: Violent, explosive, abusive (if judgments in place). Murderous feelings. This can be a coping mechanism, keeping the abused person in control. It can be directed towards:
    Mother
    God
    Authority figures
    Church leaders or people
13. Desperate need to be loved
   a. Highly performance-oriented
   b. Leeching
   c. Identifications of love: If you don't yell at me, hit me, or take me to bed, you don't really love me.

14. Promiscuity (very destructive behaviour)
   a. Identity: "I'm a sexual thing." Her worth and value is tied up in her ability to give out.
   b. Hopelessness: "It's gone anyway, so what difference does it make?"
   c. Punish herself: Promiscuity is a slow inner suicide. Proverbs 5:15-16 Proverbs 7:21-27

15. Drugs; alcohol; suicide; self-mutilation -- These are ways of coping with the pain, to numb out

16. Dissociative features:
    Memory loss <-------------------------> Dissociative Identity Disorder

17. Trembling: This is an involuntary reaction that occurs when a victim finds herself in a threatening situation

18. Chronic depression
Ways to Minister Healing to Those Who Have Been Abused

In ministering healing to those who have been abused, one needs wisdom, sensitivity, patience and perseverance; wisdom to do only what you see the Father doing, and releasing revelation at the proper time; sensitivity to symptoms and needs; patience when there are setbacks and fear-and-flight reactions; perseverance to hang in there for the long haul.

A. We are to approach these counselling situations with no hidden agendas. It truly is a process to win their trust, and that takes time. We don't demand trust, we earn it. There are three things that can hinder the counselling process:

1. Getting stuck in a cycle or self-pity
2. Getting trapped in a victim mentality
3. Being in too much of a hurry

Lovingly and gently help your counsellees over these hurdles as led by the Holy Spirit.

B. Steps in the healing process (not necessarily in this order)

1. Intercessory prayer plays an important role in the healing process.
   a. God would prepare their heart to receive healing. (Remember, they are fearful, distrustful, and want to run.)
   b. That God would reveal the hidden things of the past through dreams, visions, flashbacks, etc.
   c. Pray for protection from blocking spirits
   d. Grace to forgive
   e. Eph. 1:18-19; Eph. 3:16 Greatest healer - love of God.
   f. Deep cleansing of sinful responses. (A big hurdle to get over)

2. How to pray for the retrieval of memories
   a. Before you start praying for the retrieval of memories, it's important to have your counsellee's permission. She must be ready and willing to deal with the issues. Begin to pray and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the hidden things to you and your counsellee during the course of the counselling
process. Pray this pray often.

b. Instruct on how God reveals a hidden abuse:
1) Dream life
2) Flashbacks
3) Emotional memories
4) Physical memories
5) Revelatory pictures
6) Triggers

c. A helpful way to pray for the actual retrieval of a memory:

1) "Lord, show us what's here."
2) Silence -- waiting on the Lord for the pictures, revelations, etc. 
   **Don't rush the process!** Be gentle and never make the counsellee feel it's her fault things aren't happening. If nothing is revealed, leave it alone.

d. First reactions to revelations:

1) Denial: "Did this really happen to me?" There can be such an unreality about it.
2) Disassociate: The counsellee may withdraw to lose the memory. Everything shuts down. This calls for patience.
3) Clues to a memory trying to surface: Headache, stomach ache

3. Catharsis: To purify or relieve the emotions to bring about spiritual renewal or release of tension

4. Forgiveness -- It's a **goal**, but don't rush it! This is a difficult issue, therefore, teaching on forgiveness may be required:

a. What it cost God to say, "I forgive you."
   Ezekiel 18  
   Hebrews 9:22  
   Matthew 18

b. It puts an end to the abuse.

5. The need to receive forgiveness
a. Where they feel guilty

b. Sinful responses (Hurt people hurt people)

c. Receive cleansing

6. Prayer of separation between the abused and the abuser (where intercourse or hand penetration has occurred)

a. Bring the unholy union to death on the cross

b. Pray prayers of renunciation (soul ties), renouncing any spirits that were transferred.

c. Pray prayers of healing for the wounded spirit.

7. Lots of prayer for comfort and healing

8. Teaching wheel and line

9. Breaking inner vows and judgments

10. Bring old habits to death on the cross

11. Support groups: A.A.; Drug rehab programs; narcotics anonymous; support groups for the sexually abused

Comment: Demonic activity
ERRORS IN MINISTRY TO THE ABUSED

1. "You've received Jesus. That's all under the blood. Now shape up and act out your new life."

2. "That's in the past. Forget it."

3. "You have a demon of lust."

4. The counsellor reads a number of scriptures to the counsellee, preaches a sermon at him/her, and thinks he/she ought to change his or her behaviour accordingly.

5. The minister does do some inner healing, but too soon, or insensitively -- and then is bemused or offended when the person is not immediately healed.

6. People are too busy to be bothered.

7. Some in-depth counselling and healing is done, but without installing the person in a loving support group.

8. If the abuse victim is a child, sometimes counsellors fail to follow legal requirements established to protect the abused.

9. The victim is told, "You have brought this on yourself."

10. The credibility of the abuse is challenged.

11. Insistence that the victim relive the experience emotionally in order to be healed.

12. Using imagination falsely to get rid of anger or hatred.

13. Using imagination falsely to change a hurtful remembrance.

14. Healing wounds in a individual without sensitively probing to discover the nature of woundedness in the context of the whole family.

15. Using hypnotism to uncover things hidden in the unconscious.

16. Attempts to receive gifts of knowledge in sinful or insensitive ways:
   a. Receiving a word from the Lord and blurting it out too soon
   b. Trying to receive insight by occultic or psychic ways of seeing
17. Demanding repentance or forgiveness when the counsellee is not ready.

18. Insisting that the victim talk it out with the abuser too soon in the healing process.

19. Taking the victim through a surface ritual of forgiveness with the offender and then insisting that the 'repentant' and forgiven abuser be restored immediately to his home.

20. Comforting only, without bringing forgiveness and the cross to bear.

21. Allowing catharsis to become rehearsal.

22. Becoming emotionally involved with the counsellee and failing to discern a transference relationship.

23. Perversion...

*An adult who is still suffering severe emotional effects of childhood sexual abuse is not be judged to be a 'consenting adult' especially if she is in a state of regression.