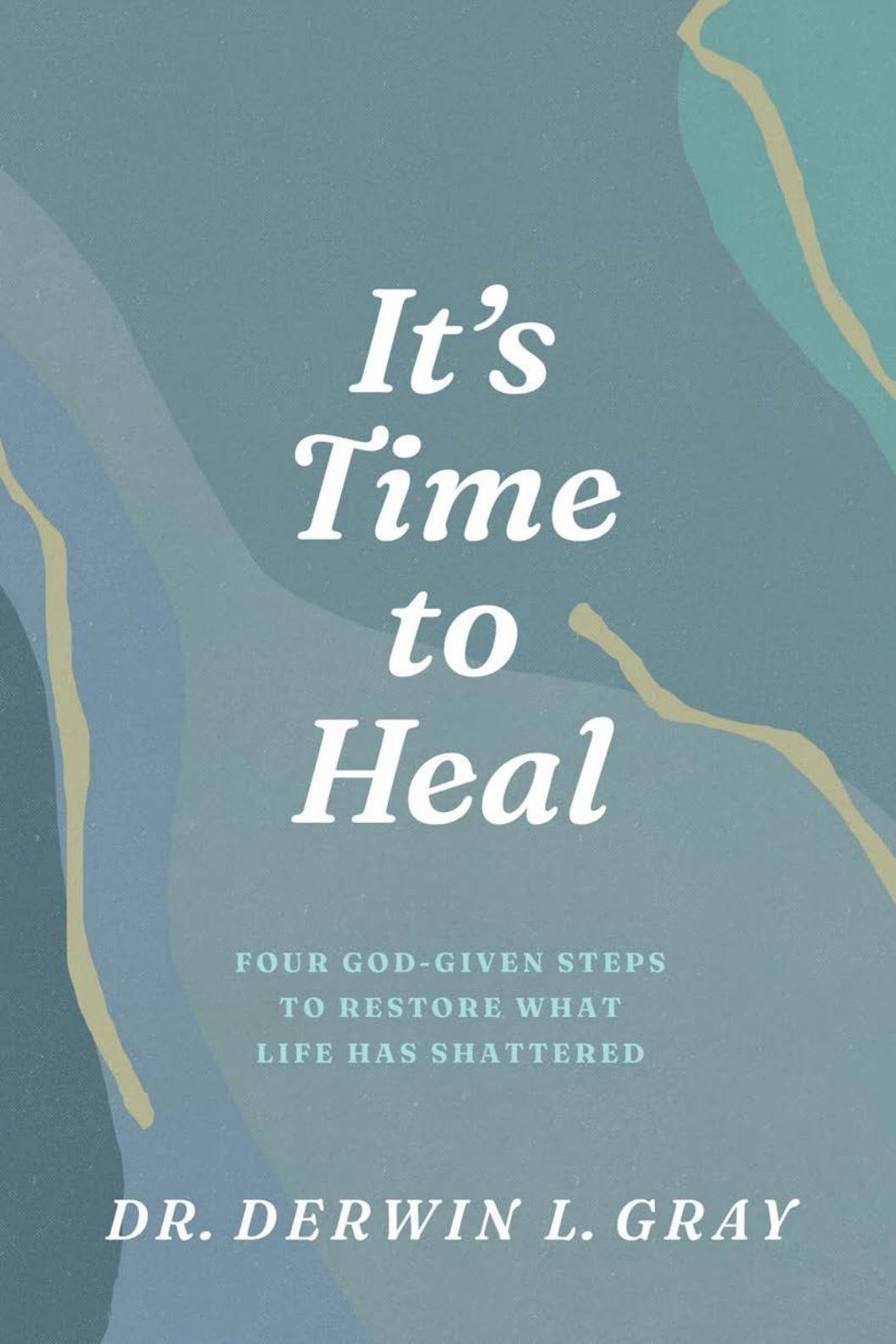




It's Time to Heal

FOUR GOD-GIVEN STEPS
TO RESTORE WHAT
LIFE HAS SHATTERED

DR. DERWIN L. GRAY

We're all carrying something—scars, stories, silence. This book reminds us that God doesn't waste pain. He redeems it. Derwin gives language to what we've buried and points us to real healing in Christ.

LECRAE, four-time Grammy Award winner and twelve-time Dove Award winner

In his biblical and compassionate way, my friend Derwin has written a powerful guide for those who have been carrying the weight of life's wounds and have decided it's time to heal. Truth and wisdom are the heartbeat of this book, which will guide you toward the wholeness you've been waiting for. If you're ready for your story to be redeemed for the Kingdom, read this book.

LYSA TERKEURST, #1 *New York Times* bestselling author and president of Proverbs 31 Ministries

It's Time to Heal is one of the most honest, compassionate, and spiritually grounded books on healing I've read in a long time. Derwin beautifully integrates faith, emotional honesty, trauma awareness, and even modern neuroscience in a way that feels deeply human and deeply hopeful. As a physician who has spent decades studying the brain, trauma, and recovery, I appreciate how clearly this book affirms what science and Scripture both teach: What we name we can heal; what we hide keeps hurting us. If you've been wounded—by life, by others, or by your own choices—and you're tired of surviving instead of living, this book will meet you with grace, courage, and truth. It doesn't shame you for your scars; it shows you how God can redeem them. I highly recommend this book to anyone who wants real healing, not just relief.

DANIEL G. AMEN, MD, founder of Amen Clinics and author of *Change Your Brain, Change Your Pain*

Many of us have learned to live with our wounds instead of letting Jesus heal them. In his new book, *It's Time to Heal*, Dr. Derwin L. Gray confronts the unresolved pain, shame, and trauma that too many believers try to carry alone. With pastoral warmth, theological depth,

and courageous honesty, Derwin offers a biblically rich and deeply compassionate path for turning wounds into testimonies. This is not a shallow call to “move on” but a Spirit-led invitation to real, lasting wholeness. This powerful and hope-filled book will serve as a trusted guide for anyone ready to step out of shame and into the healing embrace of Jesus.

CRAIG GROESCHEL, senior pastor of Life.Church and *New York Times* bestselling author

Dr. Derwin Gray brings the rigor of a New Testament scholar and the raw testimony of a man who has been in the pit. Without pretense, and with hard-won faith, *It's Time to Heal* does honest, rare work, offering truth that is academically grounded, pastorally tender, and viscerally alive. Your wounds get to meet the healing of the God who does not run from your scars—because he still carries his own.

ANN VOSKAMP, *New York Times* bestselling author of *One Thousand Gifts* and *WayMaker*

It's Time to Heal is *exceptional*, and it's the essential book for our generation in this pivotal moment. Derwin presents practical steps for embracing the freedom available to all who are in Christ. Through his compelling writing, he transforms profound theological truths into accessible guidance, infused with pastoral compassion and prophetic insight. The powerful message that what Jesus has done for us far outweighs anything that has been done to us is the hope our world desperately needs. This is a truth that we, as followers of Jesus, can boldly embody and live out loud.

CHRISTINE CAINE, founder of A21 and Propel Women

Healing from our wounds can feel so complicated. But it doesn't have to be. My dear friend and one of the most trusted pastoral voices of our time, Dr. Derwin Gray, has written a gracious guide unpacking what God's Word actually says about our deepest pains and tenderly showing

us a path forward because of the healing work of Jesus. I'm so thankful for these freeing pages! I'll be getting copies for many people I know.

HOSANNA WONG, international speaker and bestselling author of *Uncomplicate It* and *You Are More Than You've Been Told*

Derwin is a dear friend and a trusted voice, and he has written another powerful book. In *It's Time to Heal*, he offers practical, grace-filled guidance for anyone carrying hidden pain. Derwin reminds us that we don't have to hide our wounds and that real healing is possible. Drawing on the love of God and insights from neuroscience, he shows how deep, lasting healing can take place. With the heart of a pastor and the wisdom of a seasoned leader, he guides readers beyond the pain of the past and into the life God has for them. This book will help you get there.

BOB GOFF, four-time *New York Times* bestselling author

I've had the privilege of knowing Derwin Gray for years, and the best part is that he keeps growing in grace, transparency, and love. This book is an honest account of the grace of God meeting Derwin and many others just as they are. The world (and the church) needs more of this.

CAREY NIEUWHOF, bestselling author, podcaster, and speaker

With kindness, clarity, wisdom, and focus, *It's Time to Heal* offers an important path on the vital journey of pursuing health in body, soul, and spirit.

ANNIE F. DOWNS, *New York Times* bestselling author of *That Sounds Fun*

It's Time to Heal compassionately bridges clinical wisdom and gospel truth. With clarity and grace, Dr. Gray exposes the lies that exhaust the soul and invites readers into rest, self-advocacy, forgiveness, and true identity in Christ. This book is a trustworthy guide for anyone seeking deep, lasting healing.

DR. VICKEY MACLIN, PsyD, LPA, licensed psychological associate and associate director of graduate programs in counseling at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

It's Time to Heal is a deeply thoughtful and beautifully integrated work. Derwin Gray brings together a clear and faithful biblical foundation with solid psychology and neurobiology, therapeutic wisdom, and spiritual formation insight in a way that is both accessible and profoundly helpful. This book does not offer shallow fixes or spiritual clichés. It's a needed resource for anyone who has experienced trauma, loss, or deep emotional wounds and for pastors, counselors, and leaders who walk with people on the long road toward healing. I highly recommend *It's Time to Heal*.

JIM CRESS, MA, LPC, CSAT, CMAT, cohost of the *Therapy & Theology* podcast, executive advisory board member for the American Association of Christian Counselors, and licensed professional counselor

In *It's Time to Heal*, Derwin L. Gray offers more than inspiration. He offers a pathway. This is a beautiful, practical, hope-filled guide for anyone carrying wounds. As a neurosurgeon, I have spent decades in the operating room repairing brains shattered by trauma, tumors, and tragedy. But I have learned that the deepest wounds are not always visible on a scan. They linger in the hidden places of the mind and heart. Derwin leads readers into that sacred space where real healing begins. His *HEAL* framework is clear, biblical, and deeply personal. As a man who has known the scars of war and the devastating loss of a son, I found this message healing my own wounds. Derwin seamlessly blends theology and neuroscience, showing you how to turn regret into resilience and pain into purpose. This is not a book you simply read. It is a book that walks with you toward wellness. If you long for lasting healing, this book will meet you there.

W. LEE WARREN, MD, neurosurgeon and author of *The Life-Changing Art of Self-Brain Surgery*

We all carry things we'd rather not look at. And most of the time, we either try to outrun them or spiritualize them. Derwin doesn't let you do either. This book is an honest invitation to face what happened to you

and let Jesus meet you there. No shame, no clichés. Just real healing at the heart level. Derwin writes as a pastor who has done his own work. He understands that healing isn't soft. It takes courage. It takes humility. And most of all, it's worth it. If you're ready to stop pretending and to start becoming whole, this book is a wise guide for the journey.

TREY TUCKER, licensed therapist and author of *Tough Enough*

We live in a profoundly fractured world, carrying trauma and hidden wounds that we too often try to spiritualize away. In *It's Time to Heal*, my brother Dr. Derwin L. Gray offers a gritty, grace-saturated road map out of the shadows. Derwin refuses to traffic in the shallow, Christianized platitudes that plague so much of our modern discourse. Instead, with the tenderness of a seasoned pastor and the truth telling of a prophet, he invites us into the heavy, holy work of reckoning. Derwin calls us to be brutally honest about our pasts, to wade through the unavoidable turbulence of our pain, and to bravely accept our reality so that true, holistic renewal can begin. The crowning achievement of this book is its relentless drive toward liberation: learning to live an embodied life from the deep well of God's love rather than exhaustingly striving for it. If you are tired of the performance and ready to embrace the radical freedom of becoming a wounded healer, this book is a lifeline. *It's Time to Heal* is an essential guide for the journey toward wholeness.

LÉONCE B. CRUMP JR., founder and lead pastor of United Church

In *It's Time to Heal*, Pastor Derwin presents a powerful approach toward healing. The path he lays out comes from a place of deep faith, conviction, and humility. With clear, actionable steps that are illustrated by relatable, very human stories, the book shows readers the work they can do to find healing in their own lives. This book will certainly change lives.

JENNY MARRS, author of *Trust God, Love People* and cohost of HGTV's *Fixer to Fabulous*

Derwin has written an incredibly beautiful book! *It's Time to Heal* offers something both deeply pastoral and profoundly practical. With honesty and compassion, Derwin guides readers through the courageous work of healing, of naming what has happened, facing the pain, and choosing to live from love rather than fear. This book doesn't rush you. Derwin walks with you in a way that allows you to feel seen and supported in its pages. Poetic yet practical, rich in Scripture and grounded in wisdom, each chapter invites real transformation through reflection, prayer, and tangible next steps. If you are ready to heal not just in theory but in the deep reality of your everyday life, then this book will meet you there.

JO HARGREAVES, psychotherapist and host of *The Faith Filled Therapy Podcast*

In a world full of performance and pretending, Dr. Derwin Gray calls us back to truth. *It's Time to Heal* is a bold invitation to step out of denial and into real transformation. This book doesn't just expose the pain we hide—it points us to the Savior who can heal it. Don't simply turn these pages—let Jesus turn your story.

TIM TIMBERLAKE, lead pastor of Celebration Church and bestselling author of *The Bumpy Road to Better*

It's Time to Heal

**FOUR GOD-GIVEN STEPS
TO RESTORE WHAT
LIFE HAS SHATTERED**

DERWIN L. GRAY

NavPress 

Published in alliance with Tyndale House Publishers

It's Time to Heal: Four God-Given Steps to Restore What Life Has Shattered

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CHAPTER 0

Would You Like to Get Well?

*Healing is holy, hard, and beautiful.
It's a collision of pain and glory.*

Long ago, in a distant land, there lived a kind and wise man with a peculiar love for broken pots. While others walked past the garbage heaps without a second glance, he wandered among them, searching for treasures. With patience and tenderness, he sifted through what looked like trash to the untrained eye, piles of deformed metal and rotten food—until he caught a glimpse of the clay shards beneath. Then, with hands calloused by compassion, he carefully gathered the broken pieces and joyfully went to work. He bound the fragments together using a mixture of melted gold, turquoise, and emerald flecks. Slowly, painstakingly, he transformed what was once broken into an object of breathtaking beauty.

Some would watch him work and shake their heads. “That one’s too far gone,” they’d say. “Why not just throw it away?” But he would smile and reply, “A pot may be broken, but it’s never beyond repair. All it needs is love and a little attention. Broken things can be beautiful.”

Where most folks saw worthless rubble, he saw *potential*. Where others saw shattered pots, he saw *stories waiting to be redeemed*.

One day, a stranger came to him with their favorite pot and said, “Sir, this one’s never been broken.”

The compassionate man took the pot in his nail-pierced hands and turned it slowly, tracing the shimmering lines of gold, turquoise, and emerald that danced across its surface.

“Oh, but it has been broken,” he said. “Years ago, when I found this one, it was shattered, buried deep beneath heaps of garbage. Maybe someone threw it on the floor in a fit of rage. Or perhaps this pot was neglected, dropped and forgotten, left unseen in fractured pieces. But it does not matter how broken a pot may seem, or what caused it to break. What you see now is the result of my love. I’m in the business of resurrecting what was once broken.”

Cracked Pots

We are all cracked pots.

Broken by the fall.

Fractured by our own sin.

Crushed by the sin others committed against us.

Full of cracks that whisper regret and echo pain and shout shame.

But in the hands of the wise, kind Potter—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—our brokenness isn’t wasted. It’s *redeemed*. God himself, in his eternal Son, purchased our life with his own. The One who has always loved us doesn’t run from our scars; he runs to us and shows us the scars on his

hands, his feet, and his back. It's his scars that heal ours. It's his pain that heals ours. It's his strength that becomes ours.

Day after day, month after month, year after year, he keeps pursuing us, keeps mending what's broken. He's a Carpenter, a Potter, a Creator who never tires of shaping, carving, and repairing his children. His chasing of us stretches from eternity to eternity. Healing is a journey of God walking before us, beside us, and through us. As we journey with him and trust his faithful care, we begin to love the One who heals us more than the actual healing itself. The scars we once looked at with shame become testimonies of his mercy.

The longer the Carpenter holds us in his hands, even our cracks and fractures, the wounds and scars we carry, become proof that what the enemy thought would break us God has used to remake us. Your wounds are no longer marks of defeat; they are medals of honor. Your scars shout, "God brought me through!"

In the hands of the Potter, your scars and your trauma no longer define you. They tell a new story about the God who has given you a new name: *HEALED*.

H: Held in the Potter's hands.

E: Embraced even with your wounds.

A: Anointed with a new identity.

L: Loved into wholeness.

E: Empowered to rise again.

D: Defined by God, not your past.

Our hurt no longer has the greatest influence in our lives. Jesus does.

Our trauma is no longer the loudest voice in our heads.
The Spirit of God is.

Our disappointments no longer dictate our lives. The
Father's love does.

He Has Scars Too

I know someone else with scars. He has jagged holes in his wrists and feet where Roman nails once pinned him to a cross. His side bears a deep gash where a soldier's spear tore flesh to prove he had died. His back looks like a map of suffering, lacerated like crisscrossed train tracks.

Some might look at his scars and see failure and a tragic, brutal defeat. But those who've been reborn see them differently.

We see glory.

We see *grace*.

We see triumph.

We see healing.

He was pierced because of our rebellion,
crushed because of our iniquities;
punishment for our peace was on him,
and we are healed by his wounds.

ISAIAH 53:5

For all eternity, Jesus' scars will remain, tattooed into his glorified, resurrected body. Not hidden. Not erased. Not forgotten. But *on display* as a living memorial, a sacred reminder to the redeemed of the price he paid to heal us. Every time

we look at him, we will see love that bled for us. We will see the Lamb who was slain and who still bears the wounds of our healing.

Saving the Word *Saved*

What does it mean to be saved?

In the New Testament, the Greek word *sōzō* (σῴζω) means far more than going to heaven when we die. The saving, sanctifying love of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is continuously rescuing, healing, and purifying us to reflect Jesus. The grace of God never sleeps, never takes a day off, and is unrelenting in redeeming us so we can experience life to the full.

Sanctification is the patient work of God drawing us back to who we truly are: his beloved ones. Sanctification isn't driven by fear or pressure to perform for humans or God. It grows in the quiet places where we let ourselves be seen by God as we truly are. When we bring our wounds, our fears, and the lies we've believed into the light of Jesus, the sacredness of healing begins.

The Holy Spirit begins to soften what has grown hard and heal what has been broken. Little by little, he forms Christ in us. Day by day, he frees us from the lies we created to survive and awakens our true selves, whom God has always known and loved.

Sanctification is a lifelong journey of becoming whole, becoming authentic, becoming rooted in the love that will not let us go. In it God shapes us in such a way that our lives, our desires, and our hearts come to reflect Jesus, the One who calls us his own.

I have found that many people think of our ongoing

sanctification as an academic endeavor of acquiring more biblical knowledge. As a New Testament scholar, I love academic study, but if I do not allow the gospel I study to penetrate and integrate into my emotional wounds, I will remain stuck in my hurt. True sanctification doesn't gloss over pain or pretend that trauma didn't happen. It invites us to trust the Spirit of God to lead us into the deep, soul-level healing that equips us to look our scars in the eye and say, "I'm still here." "I'm moving forward." "I'm reclaiming the life God has meant for me to live." It brings the kind of healing that doesn't erase your story but honors every wound as evidence that you are more than a survivor because you are more than a conqueror in Christ.¹

When Jesus saves us, he delivers us from the penalty of sin (past),² breaks the power of sin (present),³ and one day, in the new heaven and new earth, he will free us from the very presence of sin (future).⁴ Salvation is the beautiful, gracious act of God whereby he loves us so deeply that he forms the very life of Christ within us,⁵ shaping us to become who we were always meant to be.

Salvation means that our God doesn't waste our pain. He is *Jehovah Rapha*, the God who heals. The apostle Paul says it this way: "Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy."⁶

Like a gardener planting seeds, God plants the life of Christ in you. The Holy Spirit nurtures, teaches, and empowers you to live by faith as someone already made whole. Healing doesn't delete your scars. In the mystery of grace, God takes what was meant for evil against you and uses it for good in your life, making you "mature in Christ."⁷

Would You Like to Get Well?

This deep work of the Spirit isn't a quick fix. People are not like yesterday's leftovers that just need a quick spin in the microwave. Healing is the slow work of God in the hearts of the willing. It's a sacred, lifelong journey of walking with Jesus, the Wounded Healer. At times the path will twist, turn, and jolt like a roller coaster with a loose seat belt, leaving you breathless and gripping for stability. Some days it'll be as gentle as an autumn breeze, wrapping around you like a whispered promise of renewal. Healing is holy, hard, and beautiful. It's a collision of pain and glory.

One day, in the new heaven and new earth, you won't need healing anymore. What God declared over you when you first began to journey with him will finally become a reality, and you'll be fully whole.

No more tears.

No more suffering.

No more trauma.

No more brokenness.

Only beauty.

Only joy.

Only flourishing.

Do You Want to Get Well?

For thirty-eight years, a man laying by the pool of Bethesda had been ill. Thirty-eight years of waiting. Thirty-eight years of disappointment. So much time spent hoping someone would carry him to the water. Then Jesus showed up. "When Jesus saw him and knew he had been ill for a long time, he asked him, 'Would you like to get well?'"⁸

It's Time to Heal

That is the question Jesus is asking you right now.

I'm inviting you to step into the healing waters God has already prepared for you. Jesus died and rose to give you abundant life. The days of settling for mere survival are over. The powers of darkness, the pain caused by others' sin, and your own foolish choices have stolen enough from you. It's time to get up and take back what hell has taken from you.

As a wounded healer and pastor, I count it a sacred honor to walk with you in the healing grace God offers. You're not walking this path alone. Along the way, you'll also hear from trusted friends in the mental health field in the "Counselors' Corner." The spiritual and sanctifying journey through our pain is vital. So is the way God reveals himself and shapes us through modern research and science. These wise guides will share practical insight and encouragement to help you take steps toward healing and wholeness.

Together in these pages, we're going to walk through four transformative truths about what God invites us into on the path to HEALing:

- **H:** *Honesty about what happened to you.* You cannot heal from what you will not name.
- **E:** *Expecting pain on the journey.* Healing is hard. But so is staying unhealed.
- **A:** *Accepting what happened (but not letting it define you).* Acceptance is not approval. It's refusing to let your past hold the pen that writes your future.
- **L:** *Living from love, not for love.* You are already loved. Live like it.

Would You Like to Get Well?

Today is a new day. It's time to heal and turn your scars into testimonies.



Prayer

Father,

You are the God who sees, who knows, who heals.

I surrender my past, my pain, and my plans.

And I take your hand, ready to walk,
step-by-step, into healing.

Jesus,

I hear you asking me, "Would you like to get well?"

And with trembling faith, I say: *Yes*.

I don't want to just manage my pain; I want to be healed.

I don't want to keep pretending. I want to live.

Holy Spirit,

Come into the places I've buried,

the wounds I've ignored,
the stories I've tried to forget.

Heal what's broken.

Redeem what was stolen.

Make me whole again.

In Jesus' healing name,
amen.

Reflection Questions

1. Which parts of your story still carry hurt when you touch them?
2. Where do you notice yourself reacting out of fear, distrust, or anger (even when you don't want to)? These tender places are not signs of failure. They're invitations. They reveal the areas of your life where Jesus is gently saying, "Let me heal this with you."

MY HEALING COMMITMENT

It's time to say yes to the healing journey.

I believe that Jesus can heal what has been broken in me. I believe that my scars can become testimonies. I will not waste another day waiting by the pool. I commit to reading this book with an open heart and to taking every step God calls me to take. By his grace, I will move toward healing.

I am ready to heal.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

PART 1

H: *Honesty About What Happened to You*

You cannot heal from what you will not name.

CHAPTER 1

Hide No More

Healing begins when you name what happened.

In 1995, I was a team captain for the Indianapolis Colts. We were playing a critical game against the New Orleans Saints in New Orleans, and I played well, except for two personal penalties. One was questionable. The other one was on me. Both penalties were costly, and we lost the game. I was devastated—and I didn't have the emotional tools to process the loss.

Deep down, I wasn't just afraid of losing the game. I was terrified of losing my identity. If I lost my job as a football player, who would I be? I'd go back to being just the poor, stuttering boy from the west side of San Antonio if I wasn't an NFL player. I'd be a nobody from nowhere.

When we landed back in Indianapolis, I went to a restaurant bar with some teammates instead of going home. I got hammered trying to drown the fear I didn't want to face.

Meanwhile, my wife was at home pregnant and sick. She had a condition called hyperemesis gravidarum, which caused her to vomit constantly. She had been throwing up every day, all day, for months.

We didn't have cell phones back then, so she had no clue where I was and no way to reach me. Selfishness emboldened my shame. I didn't want to reach her. I wanted to gorge in self-pity.

A teammate carried me into my house that night. I stumbled down the hallway and into our bedroom, reeking of alcohol and regret. My wife looked at me and asked, "Where have you been?" I opened my mouth to speak, but vomit poured out instead. I dropped to my knees, sobbing, "I let you down. I let the team down. I let myself down."

But the truth was deeper. I had made football my god. I thought being a professional football player would heal the hurt parts of me. But when you worship a false god, it's never satisfied. It never delivers on its promises. It keeps demanding more. And when you fail it, it crushes you without mercy.

I passed out. My wife was too sick to clean up the mess. Her sister, who was taking care of her, cleaned up for me. The next morning I stood in the bathroom, staring at myself in the mirror. And that's when I said aloud, "Derwin, something is wrong with you."

When you don't know how to deal with pain, denial becomes your escape. But when I finally faced the truth, that was the beginning of leaving the River of Denial. The beginning of being honest with Jesus. He knew I was messed up. It was time for me to acknowledge that I was messed up.

Healing begins when we are honest with God about where we are.

Denial Won't Deliver You

The River of Denial always carries you somewhere painful. You can't heal when you won't deal with what happened to you. God only heals the true version of us. We may fool other people with our perfectly curated Instagram pages, but God knows the real us.

He knows the dark places we hide.

He knows our self-harm.

He knows the tears we shed. And he has bottled each one.¹

Denial will never deliver you from your brokenness. Denial only delays your deliverance. Denial is a cruel abuser. It threatens, *If people really knew you or what happened to you, they would never love you.* Denial lies. And lies keep us in bondage. Only the truth can set us free. I know from experience that pretending protects our pain instead of helping us process it. Pain that goes unprocessed grows like a cancerous tumor. The surgery to remove the tumor will hurt, but the healing is worth it.

We can be completely honest with our Father in heaven. He knew us before time began. Before the sun smiled and the ocean waves roared, he knew everything about us. On the cross, Jesus suffered to take the burden of our sins and the burden of the effects of how people have sinned against us. He rose again to give us a new life that is defined no longer by our scars but by his scars. But you must come to him asking to be made well. Grace can only be poured into broken, needy hearts.

One of the reasons Alcoholics Anonymous is effective is because of step 1: “We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.”² Healing starts with an admission that we need help. That’s why Jesus’ Step #1 for how to live in the Kingdom of God is “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.”³ Blessed are those who realize they can’t heal themselves.

Don’t walk past the Doctor’s office. He’s waiting for you to come in.

The Eye in the Sky

In the NFL, the day after a game is film review day. It is a brutally honest experience. Every team will film the game from multiple angles. NFL alumni call the film crew “the eye in the sky.” The eye in the sky misses nothing. You can tell your teammates you played great. You can convince your family you played great. But the film often tells another story—the true story. Every mistake. Every success. It’s all right there for you and all your teammates to see.

Before we gathered as a team, the coaches would watch the film and assign every player a grade for how they’d played in the game. Then, on Monday, we’d sit together in a dark room and watch every play from multiple angles. There was nowhere to hide. You’d feel exposed. But if you were humble, it could also be a moment of growth. You can’t get better if you’re not honest.

Facing the truth about ourselves doesn’t have to be a place of shame. It can be a place of transformation. Jesus is the ultimate Eye in the Sky. He sees it all—not just the wrong we’ve done

to others but also the wrong done to us. And when he grades our game films, he covers our sins with his blood. Through his resurrection, he gives us a new identity with an A+ grade.

Stop hiding from the film review with Jesus. He already knows. You can be honest with him. Let him be honest with you. His grace is big enough to heal you.

A Man Who Faced His Wounds

Can you imagine your own brothers hating you so intensely that they beat you, threw you into a pit, and then sold you into slavery? That they could be so jealous and angry that they'd lie to your father, telling him you were dead? That as proof they'd hand him the bloodstained coat he had lovingly handcrafted just for you?

Can you imagine being ripped from your home and sold into a foreign land, forced to serve under the rule of strangers? You give your best. You serve with integrity. And your faithfulness earns you leadership in your master's household, only to have it all stripped away again when his wife falsely accuses you of trying to violate her. You're unjustly thrown into prison. And there, in the darkness, you're betrayed again, this time by someone who promised to help you.

Years pass and *Jehovah Rapha*, the God who heals, redeems your suffering. The very gift he placed in you is the key that opens the prison doors to the gates of the palace. Now you are not just free, you are second-in-command of one of the most powerful empires on earth.

As you rise, your past still lingers like irritating background music. A famine hits the land. And while you're ascending,

your brothers, who unleashed unspeakable pain in your life, are descending into desperation. Word spreads of a wise man in Egypt with food, a man who can save them. They come, hungry and hopeless. They stand before you, but they don't recognize you. You've changed. You're not a skinny boy anymore.

The hot sun has darkened your skin.

The hard labor of slavery has made you muscular and strong.

Your time of suffering has made you wiser, humbler, and more compassionate.

You were thrown in a pit.

Betrayed by family.

Falsely imprisoned.

Rejected and forgotten.

But it didn't break you. Loving and sovereign, God remade you into a better version of you. He didn't cause the pain, but he did reshape the pain they inflicted on you to work out for your good so you could save many lives, including the lives of those who tried to harm you.⁴

Instead of retribution, you give mercy.

You give grace because your pain was not wasted. God transformed it into purpose.

You show love because your suffering has shaped your soul so you're able to feel the suffering of others. You remember: God was always sovereign. What they meant for evil, God meant for good—to bring about the saving of many lives.⁵

Joseph's story hits something deep inside us. We're drawn to him because he rose above a dysfunctional family, betrayal,

and years of unjust suffering. He went from the pit to the palace. But we miss the heart of the story if we overlook this: He didn't ignore his trauma. And because he chose to face what had happened to him, Joseph took three powerful steps toward healing. By faith, you and I can follow the same path.

Step #1: You Can't Heal What You Won't Reveal

Joseph didn't hide his wounds. He didn't bury the betrayal or sugarcoat the pain. He looked his past in the face and spoke the truth: "You sold me into slavery." His honesty opened the door to forgiveness. Healing never happens in the dark. When we name the pain, we take away its power and give God permission to start the healing.

Step #2: Forgiveness Takes Courage

Joseph's strength wasn't in his position of power. It was in his willingness to be vulnerable. Staying bitter does not require courage. But it takes courage to open your heart to trust, to forgive, to love. Joseph chose to speak truth with grace, and the floodgates of healing burst open. His courage didn't just heal him; it invited his brothers into honesty too. In this messy space of honesty and pain, reconciliation happened.

Step #3: God Doesn't Waste Your Pain; He Transforms It

The very brothers who once threw Joseph into a pit later bowed before him in Egypt. And Joseph, seasoned by God's wisdom and his trust in God's bigger picture, said to them, "God sent me ahead of you to preserve life."⁶ It's like Joseph was saying to his brothers, "You put me through hell, and

God still won!" Joseph's pain became the provision that saved people. And from those people came the Savior of the world: Jesus.

The story of Joseph is really a story about God being faithful, loving, and great enough to take trauma and transform it into triumph. The powers of darkness don't want you to heal, because your healing will lead to the healing of others. Be courageous. God is with you. God is rewriting your story.



Prayer

Father,
I'm done hiding.
I'm done pretending.
I'm done thinking I can fix myself.

Jesus,
I need your healing touch.
Restore what's been broken, redeem what's been lost,
and make me whole.

Holy Spirit,
I trust you with my scars.
You're the Healer, who never wastes pain.
Give me courage to heal.

Amen.

Reflection Questions

1. What pain or struggle have you been hiding or denying?

Be honest with yourself. What have you been afraid to face or speak out loud?

Why have you felt the need to hide it? What have you been afraid would happen if it came into the light?

2. Write this truth in your journal: "Denial only delays your deliverance."

What do those words mean to you personally?

Can you think of a time when avoiding the truth only made your pain last longer?

What would change if you stopped running and let God meet you right where you are?