

WHEN TRUST IS BROKEN

The Damage of Sexual Abuse

Victims of sexual abuse often wonder how things that happened long ago can cause damage here in the present. The damage of the past is not erased by time.

Here's an example. Let's say someone breaks an arm in an accident. The two parts of the broken bone may connect back together without the help of a doctor, but they will probably end up crooked. If a doctor helps right from the beginning, the arm can become strong and straight. God wants the arm to heal well.

The damage caused by sexual abuse is a little like that broken arm. Time may take away some of the pain of the

memories, but it takes more than time to make the wound heal properly.

In the same way, the damage caused by sexual abuse does not disappear when a person becomes a Christian. Following Christ is like fixing up a wonderful old house that badly needs repairs. The last owner destroyed its beauty, but the new owner plans to make it as lovely as when it was first built. Every room must be redone. The fact that our lives are finally given back to God does not mean that every room is suddenly fixed up like new. In fact, people often refuse to allow God to work on certain rooms. We may not even know about a secret room on the top floor that is in bad shape.

Very often, something keeps victims of sexual abuse from getting all of the repairs they need. Some people who were abused in the past say that the past cannot affect their life today. Other people do not even remember how badly they were hurt. Still others just say,

“God is my new owner. I’m OK now.”
But all of these people need to see clearly how they have been damaged. Only then can the repairs begin.

What is the damage to those who have been sexually abused? Sexual abuse (no matter how many times it happened, or who did it, or what it was) makes the victim feel powerless, cheated and confused. It even makes the victim feel as if God has turned His back on her or him.