



Helping People  
Through  
Difficult Times

# FIRST AID

for Emotional Hurts

Edward E. Moody Jr., Ph.D.

REVISED AND EXPANDED EDITION



randall house

To my dear wife Lynne, who is always prepared  
to aid those who are hurting.



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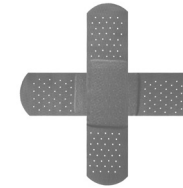
# Introduction

We must prepare ourselves to administer emotional first aid to one another. After Job lamented the great tragedy and pain he had experienced (Job 3), his friend Eliphaz reported an observation. In the past Job had instructed, strengthened, upheld, and made firm those who had stumbled and were feeble (Job 4:3-4). Then Eliphaz said, “But now it has come to you, and you are impatient; it touches you, and you are dismayed” (Job 4:5). All of us know those who have emotional needs, and we are called to help them. Yet we must remember, we too will have periods of life where trouble comes to us and touches us. I may help you today, but you may help me tomorrow. The goal of this book (and all of the First Aid resources) is to equip ourselves to strengthen one another in the most difficult situations that come to us throughout our lives.

Much has happened since the first edition of this book was released nearly ten years ago. On occasion the original book was given to those who were depressed, anxious, or recently bereaved, which was not the purpose of that book. One bereaved person told me, “That was information I was not ready for yet.” That led me to write a series of booklets that could be given directly to those who struggle with depression, grief, addictions, and many other difficulties. I have updated this book and more clearly delineated tools and techniques you may use with those you try to help. I have also tried to describe the ways you might use the booklets with those you encounter.

This book is written for a wide audience. Many people will have opportunity to help a family member, classmate, or co-worker in America. However, I realize that many will use this book in other countries that may have limited access to mental health professionals. I have attempted to provide the reader, wherever they may be, with tools to help in various situations or settings. It is my prayer that God will use these resources to help people through the most difficult times in their lives and that His name is glorified.

Eddie Moody



Chapter 1

## THE CALL

*“Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”*

Jesus, Matthew 11:28

A few years ago, I was about to walk into a grocery store when I received a call. I stopped and looked down at my cell phone, “Why would Nicholas Tan be calling me on a Saturday afternoon?” I answered the phone and Nicholas, a teenager at our church said, “Are you in town?” I sensed something was wrong. “Yes,” I responded, “Is everything okay?” He said his father, Jeng Yoong, had become ill. The family had been enjoying dinner at a restaurant in town when Jeng Yoong went into cardiac arrest. A bystander observed Jeng Yoong at the moment of the sudden arrest. She rushed across the room and began to perform CPR. She helped Jeng Yoong survive until he arrived at a local hospital and was eventually transferred to a major hospital where he underwent surgery. Jeng Yoong’s survival began with a woman who knew what to do to help him and responded immediately to meet his need.

Every year, 350,000 people in the United States go into cardiac arrest outside of a hospital and 90 percent of them die. Jeng Yoong was one of the few who survived because someone knew how to perform first aid and took the time to help him.<sup>1</sup>

Much effort has gone into equipping people to administer physical first aid. However, the purpose of this book is to propose a different type of aid, first aid for emotional hurts. We often overlook the importance of emotional aid. At the moment that Jeng Yoong began to experience physical problems, his wife and two children experienced great emotional stress. Fortunately, there were people there to help with those needs as well. When I arrived at the restaurant that day, I was met by a patron who stayed with Jeng Yoong's children as the first responders worked on their dad. Then I noticed two people from our church. Another patron had taken the phone of Jeng Yoong's wife, Michelle, and began calling her friends so they could come and help. As I drove away from the restaurant to take Jeng Yoong's children to the hospital, two more people pulled alongside and clasped their hands together and mouthed "praying" as encouragement. Their aid made these emotional hurts a bit more bearable.

Often, we concentrate on helping people with their physical needs but emotional needs are important also. It has been estimated that as many as 1 in 4 Americans will experience a mental health problem or abuse substances at some point in their lifetime. In 2014, nearly 44 million Americans aged 12 and older experienced a mental health problem, and for almost 10 million adults, this was a serious mental illness that met standard psychiatric diagnostic criteria—very debilitating conditions. In 2013, 17 million adults said they were misusing or dependent on alcohol, and 24 million people over the age of 12 said they had used illicit drugs during the prior month.<sup>2</sup>

<i><b>Concern</b></i>	<i><b>Percentage</b></i>
Depression & difficulty functioning	30
Feeling overwhelmed	85
Exhausted (not from physical activity)	80
Feeling very sad	60
Feeling very lonely	57
Overwhelming anxiety	50
Feeling hopeless	45

<i><b>Hurt</b></i>	<i><b>Can Lead To</b></i>
Anger and bitterness	Depression and divorce
Poor self-image	Eating disorders and depression
Unaddressed fear	Anxiety
Unaddressed trauma	Anxiety, depression, panic attacks
Rejection and disappointment	Depression

We are very likely to encounter someone with an emotional need. Consider the table above,<sup>3</sup> and the table indicating the concerns of college students.<sup>4</sup> We all know people who experience significant losses, suffer from depression, and struggle with anxiety, an addiction, or some type of mental illness. In fact, anxiety and depression are far more prevalent than many physical problems like sudden cardiac arrest. It is estimated that every year, 40 million adults in the United States, age 18 and older, or 18 percent of the population, struggle with some type of anxiety disorder. Depression is believed to affect more than 15 million American adults, or about 6.7 percent of the U. S. population every year over the age of 18.<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, many do not get the aid they need. Every year on average, 44,193 people take their lives in the United States (an average of 121 a day).<sup>6</sup>

There are even more common emotional hurts like the death of a loved one, the breakup of a significant relationship, disappointment over failing to get a promotion, or failing to get into the school to which one applied. Left unaddressed, these hurts develop into major problems. Though we have pastors, professional counselors, psychologists, and other helping professionals who can help with these problems, there are many who never reach these professionals, like the victim of sudden cardiac arrest who does not survive long enough to benefit from a cardiologist.

Therefore, we would do well to learn emotional first aid techniques. You may be wondering if you can really help someone struggling emotionally. Research dating back to the 1960s indicates that you can. In one landmark study, nonprofessionals were found to be as effective at helping people as professionals.<sup>7</sup>

Today, there is a growing body of research on Psychological First Aid that is used to help people in the aftermath of traumatic events. Guy Winch has discussed how the application of emotional first aid is very beneficial to our everyday lives. Practicing emotional first aid can enhance and save lives. We need to learn these techniques because when people are in distress, they tend to seek those who are closest to them to help.

*He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.*

Psalm 147:3

*“ . . . Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.”*

Luke 10:27

## The Calling

We are called to love God and love people. So, aren't Christians called upon to administer emotional first aid? The words of Jesus (Matthew 25:31-46) seem to indicate that emotional first aid is not optional for the believer. But what does administering

*When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.*

Matthew 9:36

emotional first aid look like? Certainly, Jesus ministered to the emotional hurts of others. Jesus fulfilled the prophecies that indicated He would be a Wonderful Counselor (Isaiah 9:6) possessing wisdom and knowledge (Isaiah 11:2). The gospels describe Jesus' compassion for the harassed and helpless (Matthew 9:36).

Jesus administered aid to those who were grieving and trapped in sin. There are examples of the aid He administered to a widow who lost a son (Luke 7:13) and harlots and tax collectors entangled in sin (Matthew 9:11). Jesus invited everyone who hurt to come to Him for aid (Matthew 10:28). How does one get aid from Jesus since He does not have a private practice in the suburbs or an office at the local clinic?

Jesus told His followers how to get this aid in John 14 as He began to prepare them for His departure. He promised He would

not abandon them, but He would send a “Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth” (John 14:16b-17a). Jesus said this “Helper, the Holy Spirit . . . will teach you” (John 14:26). Jesus acknowledged we would not be able to see the Holy Spirit. Jesus indicated that it was advantageous for Him to depart so the Holy Spirit would come to us (John 16:7). Jesus' words indicate that the Holy Spirit can help people with whatever problems they face. In particular, Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would convict us of sin (John 16:8-9) and guide us into all truth (John 16:13). But the Holy Spirit does not have an office in the suburbs or at the local clinic either. How does the Holy Spirit meet these needs?

*But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.*

John 14:26

*Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.*

2 Corinthians 5:20

This is where we who are Christians come in. The Christian is called to administer emotional first aid. Paul wrote that every Christian is an ambassador for Christ. God works through the Holy Spirit residing within believers to help people become reconciled to God. Christians are the hands and feet of Christ today. When a Christian comes alongside a hurting person to aid them, Jesus is there (Matthew 18:20). The Christian represents Christ to those who are in need. Even though Christians are called to “do good to everyone” and to “bear one another's burdens” (Galatians 6:2, 10), it often seems like there are not enough responders to provide aid to those in need.

*Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.*

Galatians 6:2, 10

All of us are very busy these days with places to go and things to do. This is not a new problem. Long ago Jesus told a story about this kind of situation (Luke 10:25-37). There was a man who made a journey through a country that was known for its danger. Most dared not make the journey, and people said those who did went through the area at their own risk. As most people probably predicted, the man was accosted, assaulted, and robbed. In the end, he was lying on the side of the road bleeding. His assailants left him to die. Maybe he was about to give up hope of surviving when he heard someone traveling on the road. Perhaps he moaned or cried out to draw their attention to his plight. It was to no avail. The traveler, though a very religious person, passed by on the other side of the road and sped away. The bleeding man's heart must have sunk. Soon, he heard the shuffling of another traveler approaching. His spirits lifted. He cried out for help yet again. Although he had much in common with the wounded man, the traveler also passed by on the other side of the road and continued his journey. There seemed to be little hope for the hurting man, and he could probably feel his life slipping away. Then he heard the sound of a third traveler. The man who had been assaulted might have lacked the energy to lift his head, but the traveler rushed to his side. The wounded man got a glimpse of the traveler and realized he was quite different in many ways. However, what was really noticeable was the difference in attitude between this man and the others who had passed him by. This traveler was willing to risk his life and expend great energy and fortune to aid a stranger. The survivor was very fortunate to have the Good Samaritan come to his aid.

You have probably heard that Bible story many times. As you hear it, with whom do you identify? Are you one of those who pass by on the other side of the road and continue with your journey, or do you stop and help? Perhaps you can even relate to the wounded traveler.

As Jesus told this story, He wanted us to emulate the Good Samaritan. Most who encountered the wounded traveler continued with their business. They saw the needy man, but refused to respond to him. Perhaps, they did not know what to do or see any way in which they could respond so they passed by.

*Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.*

Luke 10:31-32

## Barriers to Responding

What if we do not respond? Too often it seems like the hurting people at our workplaces, schools, families, and even our churches are passed by. This has always been the case. Most passed by the wounded traveler: there was only one Good Samaritan. But that does not mean that it is okay to pass by. When we pass by, it hurts our Lord. The gospel of Matthew records a moment when Jesus looked at those struggling with all kinds of afflictions at Capernaum. He had compassion for them and lamented, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few" (Matthew 9:35-38).

*And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction... Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."*

Matthew 9:35-38

## What Made Jesus Angry?

*And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored.*

Mark 3:5

When we fail to respond, Jesus grieves. In another passage (Mark 3:5), we see an event where there was a man who had an injured hand. Those around Jesus and the man lacked empathy for him. Jesus was grieved and angered by their lack of concern for him. The Lord views our failure to respond to those in need of aid as dereliction of duty, like a soldier who leaves his post. We



### What Made Paul Indignant?

*Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to fall, and I am not indignant?*

2 Corinthians 11:29

are called to consider and encourage one another. The writer of Hebrews warned us not to neglect each other (Hebrews 10:24-25). Further, Paul told us we have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak (Romans 15:1), and to build them up (Romans 15:2). Paul indicated that he was indignant

when someone fell. So, it is not okay for us to pass by the one in need. You might say when we became believers we signed up to be a helper, a first responder to the spiritual and emotional needs of others.

The majority of the people passed by the wounded traveler. Unfortunately, this neglect continues today when the wounded are ignored at work, schools, in neighborhoods, in families, and even churches. Therefore, we must be aware of the barriers that impede our ability to respond and know how to deal with them.

*By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.*

1 John 3:16-18

### Will Someone Else Deal With It?

Too frequently, we may avoid a friend or co-worker in need because we think someone else will deal with it. You have probably heard of the account of the murder of Kitty Genovese in Queens, New York in 1964. It was reported that many of her neighbors heard something or saw glimpses of the attack upon her, but they did not come to her aid. This is often described as the “bystander effect.” Interestingly, people are less likely to respond and help an individual in need when other people are present but not helping. More people being present decreases the likelihood that someone will come to their aid.

This may happen with emotional needs because we think, “We have people to take care of that kind of thing—pastors, psychol-

ogists, professional counselors, and health care practitioners.” It will help us to think about emotional problems the way we think of many physical problems. We have cardiologists, but we still administer proper first aid when an individual goes into cardiac arrest. We know the ill person will never make it to the hospital to benefit from the treatment of those professionals unless we respond. If we answer our calling to “Love your neighbor as yourself” and respond, others will follow and needless suffering can be averted. The best way to defeat the bystander effect is to respond. When one person responds, another tends to follow and pretty soon the needs of the person have been met.

*Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.*

Ephesians 5:15-16

### Time

It is also very possible that the people who passed by the wounded traveler were simply too busy to stop. We all have very active lives. The travelers on the Jericho Road were no different. It would have sidetracked their plans to stop and help the wounded man. Besides, they were not friends with the man nor related to him. Would God really expect them to take time to help a total stranger? Time is the most valuable investment we can make in others.

Helping people does take time, so it is important that we invest it wisely. I used to work as a staff psychologist for the North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice. Some of the youngest youth at the facility required most of my time. I began to use a technique called pair counseling with them in which they learned new ways of developing relationships and solving problems. This technique was very time consuming. However, as I looked at my time, I realized I was spending less time on them than before the intervention. Before pair counseling, I spent a lot of time with these youth on suicide watch or in isolation after they had committed an assault or some other major infraction. Further, they spent more time at the facility because they had trouble maintaining the behavior necessary to be released.<sup>8</sup> I saved time (and

a lot of trouble) by investing time with them early in their stay at the facility.

Some people, because of their circumstances or life challenges, will require more of your time. You can invest in them and use that time prosocially (like taking the time to listen to someone who is hurt or disappointed). Should the disappointment lead to depression, you might find yourself taking time to take them on a walk to fight depression. However, should the depression develop into suicidal ideation, you might spend that time remedially (like trying to get them involuntarily committed because they are a danger to themselves). Sometimes, a time investment can go a long way in changing the trajectory of a person's life. The Lord asks us to "make the best use of our time and you just might prevent a lot of unnecessary trouble" (my paraphrase of Ephesians 5:16).

*For God gave us a spirit not of fear  
but of power and love and self-control.*

2 Timothy 1:7

## **Fear**

Perhaps the travelers passed by the wounded traveler because of fear. It was said that only a fool would travel alone the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. Yet all of the people in Jesus' story seem to have been traveling alone. Perhaps those who passed by were afraid they too would become a victim if they stopped to help. They would have been putting their lives at risk. This barrier is cited often today. It is a legitimate concern. For example, there is fear in helping a victim of domestic violence. One may wonder, "What if the abuser comes after me?" It can be frightening to help someone who is hearing voices or someone addicted to a substance. Whatever situation we are in, we often wonder, "If I respond, could I get hurt?" The answer is, yes. In some cases, the one you are trying to help may even hurt you. One of my first jobs was as a clinical therapist in an alternative school. I worked with troubled youth, and one in particular who had experienced severe abuse. One day we had a field trip and this young man attacked another youth. I quickly restrained him from behind.

He leaned down and bit me. I immediately thought, "Well, hurt people hurt people." I still find that to be true. Sometimes the people you are trying to help turn on you and hurt you. They may not bite you (physically), but they may disparage you or hurt you in any number of ways. Does that mean we shouldn't try to help them? Not at all! We have a long list of those who have been harmed trying to help people by spreading the gospel. We should try to help them, and it is worth it. Getting hurt helping people is like a running back getting bruised on a tackle or a baseball player getting scratched trying to steal second. We will get a few bumps and bruises, but the football player sees the first down marker moved in the direction of the end zone, and sometimes the baseball player gets into scoring position. We may get hurt, but we also help the person get a little closer to where they need to be.

*For though by this time you ought to be teachers,  
you need someone to teach you again the basic principles  
of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food.*

Hebrews 5:12

## **Helpless**

It is not always a lack of concern, time, or fear that keeps us from responding. Sometimes we do not respond because we feel inadequate, even helpless. When faced with people having problems, who hasn't wondered, "But I don't know what to say or do"?

Perhaps those individuals who passed by the wounded traveler on the road to Jericho felt helpless at the sight of him. Were they physicians? Where would they start even if they wanted to help him? Perhaps they whispered prayers for him as they rushed by. It is even possible they did not know how to help him or could not imagine what they could do to help. We might feel that same sense of helplessness when we encounter people with serious problems. We sincerely want to help them, but we do not know what to say or do or even where to start. This is just like a person who observes someone go into cardiac arrest, but they cannot help because they do not know CPR.

One day there was an accident near the church where I pastor. A driver was traveling at a high rate of speed, ran off the road, overcorrected, and the car flipped over several times. Immediately the car began to burn. A passerby pulled over, stepped out of his car and used his fire extinguisher to extinguish the flames. Tragedy averted. Had this man not prepared by having that fire extinguisher in his car, there would have been a different outcome. Sometime in the past he prepared for the day when he would encounter an accident. When he saw the accident, he was ready and responded.

We listen to the news and we know people get killed in accidents, children tragically drown, some people struggle with depression, veterans have experienced trauma, and others are entangled with substances and sexual sins. Rather than bemoan these situations, we would do well to prepare ourselves to help people with them. If you are a Christian, you simply need to know the basics of Scripture and how to apply them. God expects us to be ready to aid the wounded traveler when we come across him. The goal of this book is to prepare you so the Lord will never need to say to us “you ought to be teachers” or “you ought to be ready to help the depressed or traumatized.” Let us get ready so we are less tempted to pass by.

*For it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*

Philippians 2:13

## Be Ready

Sometimes we need to be reminded of how God has already prepared us to help in the crises we encounter. He knows what we will encounter tomorrow, so He is preparing us for it today. A few years ago, I checked my email and the subject line read, “Help!” The email was from a recent graduate of the university where I am a professor. The former student was working as a school counselor. There had been a shooting at her school and the school was locked down. She knew she would be dealing with traumatized students and faculty as soon as the lockdown was lifted. She asked, “What do I do?” I quickly wrote back to her and

reminded her of various tools and techniques she had learned in her different classes, “You remember in Crisis Counseling when you learned . . . and how in assessment we discussed . . . ?” Later she wrote back and indicated that as her day went along, the training she had received “kicked in.”

I have felt the same way and I bet you have too. I have encountered various people in need, and wondered, “What do I do?” Sometimes, I even say to myself, “God knew I would be here in this situation” and begin to think about various teachings from the Bible and how those apply to the particular event.

*I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another.*

Romans 15:14

Sometimes, it is good to remind ourselves that Paul noted he was satisfied. We are up to the task of helping others because the Christian is full of goodness and knowledge. Because of that, Christians are able to instruct one another (Romans 15:14). In a different circumstance, Jesus told His disciples that the Holy Spirit would teach them what to say when they were called before councils (Luke 12:12). Similarly, the Holy Spirit will help you know what to say or do as you seek His guidance and prepare to help those around you. So be ready!

*Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?” He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” And Jesus said to him, “You go, and do likewise.”*

Luke 10:36-37

## Go and Do Likewise

Fortunately, the story of the wounded traveler on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho did not end with those who passed by. The Good Samaritan did stop and help the wounded traveler. After telling the story, Jesus told those people listening to him to

“go and do likewise” or to go and be like the Samaritan. But what does God want us to do?

*But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion.*

Luke 10:33

### Emotional First Aid

God wants us to go to people who are wounded rather than pass them by. The Good Samaritan met the specific needs of the wounded traveler when he “came to” him and “had compassion”

*He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.’*

Luke 10:34-35

(Luke 10:33) for him. When we go to a person, rather than avoiding them, we begin to get a sense of their struggle, which helps reduce that persons feeling of isolation. We do not know what the Good Samaritan may have said to the wounded traveler, but we do know that he performed specific tasks. He “bound up wounds,” poured medicine upon the man, put

the man on his animal, and “took care of him” (Luke 10:34). This is like providing for basic needs as done with psychological first aid, like giving bottled water to someone after they have received bad news or offering to clean the house of a family who is preparing for visitors after the death of their loved one. This is what the person did who stayed with Jeng Yoong’s children that day in the restaurant, and the other bystander as she called Michelle’s friends to get help. These are simple yet very helpful tasks. Note, as well as helping the wounded traveler, the Good Samaritan found further help for the wounded man by taking him to an inn where he paid for the services he received (Luke 10:35-36). An example for us would be paying for a young couple in a struggling marriage to receive marriage counseling. The acts the Good Samaritan performed are similar to the expectations Jesus de-

scribed of His followers. In Jesus’ example, His followers gave food and drink. They also welcomed, clothed, visited, and “came to” (Matthew 25:35-36) those in need (Matthew 25:40). We will examine this closer later.

### The Aid Gap

Emotional First Aid could assist in closing the mental health treatment gap. There is a major aid gap. For example, in the United States it is estimated that in 2013, 28 million people needed treatment for a substance abuse problem, and less than 1 in 10 received any treatment.<sup>9</sup>

The problem is even worse outside of the United States. For example, the World Health Organization has estimated that the gap between the number of people with emotional disorders and the number who actually receive evidence-based care—is as high as 70 percent to 80 percent in many developing countries.<sup>10</sup>

Vikram Patel has pointed out that in developing countries, the treatment for emotional problems has focused almost entirely on hospital or clinic based approaches where there are often few mental health professionals available. He indicated that if we are to help those in developing countries, we will need to equip more non-mental health professionals to address mental health concerns.<sup>11</sup> Wherever we may be, we need to know how to appropriately respond to these needs.

*For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me. And the King will answer them, “Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.”*

Matthew 25:35-36, 40

### Respond

In discussing giving CPR to someone who has gone into cardiac arrest, the Mayo Clinic Staff writes, “It’s far better to do something than to do nothing.”<sup>12</sup> Think of emotional first aid similarly.

Both the Good Samaritan and those commended by God in the final judgment “came to” or responded to those who were in need. The first step to providing emotional first aid is to simply respond by coming to the person. We often worry about saying the right thing to someone in need. Responding is not about saying the right thing—it is about doing the right thing like we see in both Luke 10 and Matthew 25. When we are on track spiritually, it is actually harder for us to walk by the wounded traveler to avoid the one in need.

You might say we were made to respond. Have you ever attended the visitation or delivered a dish of food after a death and wanted to do more? That is because helping is part of your spiritual DNA since we are called to “Bear one another’s burdens” (Galatians 6:2). Helping people is something spiritually healthy believers instinctively desire to do. Consider a sample of helpers found in the Old Testament Scriptures.

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### Burden Bearing in the Old Testament

#### Responder   Person Helped

Noah	Saved family by building ark (Genesis 9)
Job	Helped others by providing guidance (Job 29:12-16, 21-25; 31:18, 32)
Abraham	Rescued Lot and the Kings of Sodom (Genesis 14)
Rebecca	Helped Abraham’s servant by watering camels (Genesis 24)
Joseph	Provided counsel to the butler, cupbearer (Genesis 40), Egypt (Genesis 41:55), comforted his brothers (Genesis 45:5; 50:21)
Moses	Helped Jethro’s daughters (Exodus 2:17) and provided counsel to Israel (Exodus 18)
Jethro	Counseled Moses (Exodus 18)
Rahab	Helped the Israelite spies (Joshua 2)
Ruth	Stayed with Naomi after the death of her husband and sons (Ruth 1)
David	Played the harp for Saul (1 Samuel 16), provided for Mephibosheth (2 Samuel 9)

Nathan	Confronted and counseled David (2 Samuel 12)
Solomon	Provided counsel and guidance to Israel (1 Kings 3) and the Queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10)
Elijah	Helped the widow with her needs and after the death of her son (1 Kings 17)
Elisha	Provided support for Elijah (1 Kings 19:19-21)
Jonah	Reluctantly counseled (preached to) Nineveh (Jonah)
Hosea	Bought Gomer out of slavery (Hosea)
Daniel	Provided counsel to Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4)

There were times when each of these individuals put their interests aside to respond to the needs of another. For example, Noah spent a significant amount of time building an ark that saved his family. Abraham put his life at risk to rescue Lot. Rebecca put her needs aside one day to help an elderly man with his camels. Each of these people (many of whom are referred to as heroes of the faith in Hebrews 11) took the time to respond to someone in need. That is what the Good Samaritan did. He went to the person in need (responded) and he felt compassion. This is the first and most important step in helping, but it is a difficult step.

*These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.*  
Hebrews 11:13

A few weeks after my friend Jeng Yoong experienced cardiac arrest, I visited with the manager of the restaurant. She was clearly impacted by what had happened, as were the people who tried to help Jeng Yoong and his family. The manager told me the company paid for all the patrons’ meals that night, an indication of the stress they had experienced. These people came to the restaurant to spend a relaxing evening with family or friends. By chance they came across people in need and they responded to help. This is the same attitude of the Good Samaritan who “by chance” (Luke 10:31) came across the wounded traveler. Consider

the number of times you have gone somewhere for one reason, but unexpectedly encountered someone in need. Our lives are often altered “by chance.” I observed with the restaurant manager that though this event was initially stressful, it was clearly rewarding for those who responded.

Consider the guilt the priest and Levite may have felt for failing to help the wounded traveler. They probably knew they should have helped, but they failed to respond. In the case of Jeng Yoong, there was no guilt for failing to help on the part of the patrons or manager. Instead, there was a sense of fulfillment on the part of those who helped, knowing they had done what they could to aid someone in need.

*Even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*

Matthew 20:28

## Serve

You too know this feeling. On occasion, you may have planned to watch a movie or catch a game, but instead after learning of a friend in need, you responded and attempted to meet the need. Why did this feel so rewarding? You served. Responding is the mindset of Christ (Philippians 2:4-5). It requires us to focus on the interests of others, and serve as the One who came to serve did for us. However, we often need to remind ourselves to stay in Christ’s mindset. Even Christians can see self-interest get in the way of serving others.

*Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.*

Philippians 2:4

When I invite people to church, a frequent question I receive is “What programs does your church offer?” Sometimes I sense they are choosing a church like one might choose a restaur-

ant. I understand from where they are coming. We want to grow personally and we want what is best for our family. However, the response points to a myth that is pervasive in our culture, and has impacted the church which is: “It’s all about me.”

*But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine.*

Titus 2:1

*And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful.*

Titus 3:14

Self-centeredness is contrary to Scripture, and is the enemy of responding to the needs of others. Interestingly, when looking at people who have experienced tragedy, those who are willing to try to help other people actually cope better with loss. One researcher described it this way, “Paradoxical as it may seem, giving help is the best way of being helped.”<sup>13</sup> So, helping is helpful to the helper, and self-absorption is self-defeating. We would be healthier emotionally if we “church-shopped” for a place to serve rather than a place to be served. Paul described the service gifts that should be utilized in the church in 1 Corinthians 12 and pointed out that if one member suffers, we all suffer together. This may not sound very appealing, but Paul indicated that this was to our benefit.

## Serving Gifts

<sup>4</sup> *Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; <sup>5</sup> and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord’ To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.*

<sup>11</sup> *All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.*

<sup>26</sup> *If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together.*

1 Corinthians 12

Paul discussed helping those who were weaker in the church and described the weak as “indispensable” (1 Corinthians 12:22). In other words, we impoverish ourselves when we walk past the needy person. Not only do we fail to help them, we miss out on the

*Train yourself for godliness.*

1 Timothy 4:7b

contribution they would have provided to our own lives. Therefore, we are called to labor in love together and serve one another.

*Remembering before  
our God and Father  
your work of faith  
and labor of love and  
steadfastness of hope  
in our Lord Jesus  
Christ.*

1 Thessalonians 1:3

The manner in which we serve will be determined by the gifts God has entrusted to us. Paul indicated that each of us have been gifted in such a way as to benefit the common good (1 Corinthians 12:7). Some of us are better gifted to serve, teach, exhort, give, or lead (Romans 12:7-8), but we are all called to serve in some way (Romans 12:10, 13). We use the gifts God has given us

to assuage suffering. Therefore, we are called to train ourselves in godliness to impact those around us.

*Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ,  
God making his appeal through us. We implore  
you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.*

2 Corinthians 5:20

## Represent

Christians represent God as ambassadors for Christ. An ambassador receives word from his country's government about what the government is willing to do to help. Therefore, we must let Christ's Word dwell within us so we are providing His wishes rather than simply giving our own preference or opinion.

Consider the difference between an ambassador and a tourist. If you are an ambassador, you represent the interest of your country, presenting the position of the government. As a tourist, should a problem arise in the country you are visiting, you might actually leave the country or look for other ways to minimize the impact the problem might have upon you personally. However, as an ambassador, you look for

*Let the word of Christ dwell  
in you richly, teaching and  
admonishing one another in  
all wisdom, singing psalms  
and hymns and spiritual  
songs, with thankfulness in  
your hearts to God.*

Colossians 3:16

ways the country you represent might respond and assist with the situation. Therefore, as Christ's ambassador to the world, if we answer our calling, we respond to the problems of the people around us and represent Christ in these situations.

*For where two or three are gathered in  
my name, there am I among them.*

Matthew 18:20

When Christians are present the Lord is present, but it is critical that we be guided by the Word and the Holy Spirit. The ambassador to another country is not free to "wing it" or express their own opinions while representing their country. Similarly, this kind of helping must be performed by a believer who is guided by the Holy Spirit rather than their own words and opinions. We cannot be careless with our words or resort to our own opinions. Doing so is dangerous and harmful to those we wish to help. The responder must be immersed in the Word of God and come from a heart guided by the Holy Spirit.

The prophet Ezekiel promised that those who followed God would receive a new heart, and that God's Spirit would be within them helping them to walk in His statutes (Ezekiel 36:26-27). Later the writer of Hebrews quoted Jeremiah 31:33 saying that the Holy Spirit bears witness to us, and that He puts His laws on the hearts and minds of believers (Hebrews 10:15-16). This is critical.

*I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that  
you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with  
all knowledge and able to instruct one another.*

Romans 15:14

How does the responder know what God wants them to do? Remember, Paul reported his confidence that Christians are able to instruct one another (Romans 15:14) with the important caveat that they are "full of goodness" and "filled with knowledge." In other words, they could instruct one another because the Holy Spirit was at work in their lives and they were students of the

*Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.*

2 Timothy 2:15

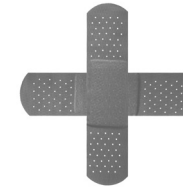
Word (2 Timothy 2:15). These two characteristics are intertwined and inseparable. Therefore, as we provide aid to others, the Holy Spirit will recall teaching that dwells in us (Colos-

sians 3:16). We will even remember hymns and songs that apply to the situation. In short, it is the Word that equips us to help others as well as provides important wisdom, guidance, and comfort to the one we are trying to help (Hebrews 13:20-21).

So, will you answer the call? Jesus lamented that there were many needs but only a few responders or laborers. There was only one Good Samaritan, most passed by the wounded traveler. Will you respond? You may get hurt. It will take time, but responding is the key to seeing changed lives. Answer the call and pray that others will as well. There are many who desperately need the Lord's representative.

In this book, we will try to equip you with what you need to be an emotional first responder. We will also provide you with what you might call an emotional first aid kit of valuable resources so you can help rather than pass by the wounded travelers you meet along the way.

For more resources go to [www.FirstAidForEmotionalHurts.com](http://www.FirstAidForEmotionalHurts.com).



## Chapter 2

# TOOLS OF THE RESPONDER

*I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.*

John 14:18

The Lord has not left us alone to deal with emotional hurts, nor will He leave us without the tools we need to help others. The Christian is given many tools from the Lord to help others.

Many years ago, I had just enjoyed a meal after work with my family at a restaurant in the town of the church I pastor. As I drove away, I received a call on my cell phone about an accident. I was asked to come immediately and told that someone was trapped in a car and I was needed to pray with them. I began to pray as I responded. When I arrived, the accident scene was surreal. There were firefighters and law enforcement

*Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.*

Hebrews 13:20-21

officers everywhere. As I began to talk to the Fire Chief, a Life Flight helicopter was taking off beside of us. Once the helicopter