



Church Healing

Prayer Pathways to Recovery

II Timothy 2:24-26

Intro: When sharp disagreements and deep wounds are disrupting our lives, families, and churches, the pathway to recovery and healing begins in our own hearts as we humbly seek the Lord and listen for His answers to the deep questions below, even as those around us are asking Him the same questions in their hearts . . .

Lord Jesus,

1. Has my heart been more like a bond-servant or a power-player?
2. Have I been quarrelsome or approachable to others?
3. Have I been kind, or dismissive of others?
4. Have I been instructive, or demanding?
5. Have I been patient, or defensive when wronged?
6. Have I been gentle, or irritated when correcting others?
7. Is my heart open to Your repentance, or closed by my self-justification?
8. Is my heart open to humbling truth, or closed with one dimensional thinking?
9. Am I coming to my senses, or still clueless of my blind spots?
10. Am I escaping or still trapped in the snare of the devil's lies and deception?
11. Am I therefore doing God's will in clarity, or the devil's will in confusion?

2 Timothy 2:24-26. The Lord's **bond-servant** must not be **quarrelsome**, but be **kind** to all, able to **teach**, **patient** when wronged, 25 with **gentleness** correcting those who are in opposition, if **perhaps God may grant them repentance** leading to the knowledge of the **truth**, 26 and they may **come to their senses** and **escape** from the **snare of the devil**, having been held **captive** by him to do his will.

Going Deeper

1. Has my heart been more like a bond-servant or a power-player? The former constantly look to the Lord for godly ways to serve others; the latter look for strategic ways to gain advantage over others and end up using the Bible, key leaders, the church Constitution & Bylaws, policy manuals, closed door meetings, legal means, etc. more like weapons, rather than tools for reconciliation.

2. Have I been quarrelsome or approachable with others? Heated dialogues, diatribes, accusations, warnings and ultimatums reflect the former; thoughtful discussions, town hall meetings, counseling, comforting, mutual musing and prayer reflect the latter.

3. Have I been kind, or dismissive of others? Genuine kindness from within is evidenced when we reflexively see "opponents" as people to be pastored and loved, rather than a cancer to be cut out or dismissed from among us literally, or in attitude and heart.

4. Have I been able to teach, or become demanding? In the midst of confusion and controversy, one-on-one or group gatherings can be used to carefully explain, update, and reassure people, or to curtly pressure, push, and bully people into agreement and support, or risk being disciplined, black-balled, and invited to leave.

5. Have I been graciously patient, or mostly defensive when wronged? Wounded, grieving people will sometimes inadvertently wrong others in their pain, especially in the midst of controversy, and our reflexive response can become mostly defensive retaliation, rather than patient forgiveness: "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."

6. Have I been gentle, or irritated when correcting others? Correcting others with gentleness is a healing salve to a wound; Correcting them with irritation is rubbing hurtful dirt in a wound.

7. Is my heart open to Your repentance, or closed by my self-justification? God grants the gift of repentance to those who humbly seek His heart in a matter, not to those who reflexively seek ways to justify themselves and their actions.

8. Is my heart open to humbling truth, or closed with one dimensional thinking? God's truths are multi-faceted and includes the humbling reality of the degree to which we have contributed to the impasse, rather than the one dimensional perception that we are mostly right, and they are mostly wrong.

9. Am I coming to my senses, or still clueless of my blind spots? We lose our senses when we ignore or reject the counsel of others and forget that we have blind spots splattered on our backs that everyone can see, but us.

10. Am I escaping or still trapped in the snare of the devil's lies and deception? Spiritual warfare is not so much about what the devil is doing "out there," rather it is about what he's doing "right here" in my heart by smoothly suggesting I am right and have a right to be angry, bitter, resentful, distrusting, defensive, and combative with my brothers and sisters in the Lord.

11. Am I therefore doing the devil's will in confusion, or God's will with grace? Healing, reconciliation and revival can only come when we resist the devil (and he will flee), draw near to God, humbly ask others to forgive us for our ungodly attitudes, and continually forgive others (and ourselves) with God's *grace upon grace* (remember, grace in undeserved favor and kindness toward others). That, is God's will. "Oh taste and see that the Lord is good."