

Supplementary Chapter 17b, Car Wreck Catastrophe, Tough Questions, and Immanuel:

When Joseph was four years old, his family was out driving on a hilly, winding road. As they came around a bend in the road, an oncoming truck took the corner too fast and toppled into their lane. Tragically, the load of pipes it had been carrying went through the passenger's side of their car. Joseph's mother and three sisters were all killed.

This was all incredibly horrible, but a part of the accident that made the trauma even worse was that Joseph believed he was responsible. His memory was that he had been standing in the back seat behind his father, and his last memory of his mother was of her turning to him and yelling at him to sit down. His perception was that she was angry as she told him to sit down. His perception was that she was angry because he was being bad. And in his four-year-old mind, he had come to the conclusion that somehow his being bad had caused the accident.

In the Immanuel session, the first thing we did when Joseph went to this memory was help him perceive and connect with Jesus. Joseph quickly saw Jesus sitting next to him in the back seat, and when he asked Jesus about his belief that he had caused the accident, Jesus showed him a slow motion replay of the last seconds before the accident. Jesus showed him that his father had *not* been distracted by Joseph standing in the back seat. Rather, his father had been watching the road, and his father had seen the oncoming truck, but there was just nothing he could do. Furthermore, Jesus showed Joseph that his mother had turned to him and yelled for him to "get down," not because he was being bad and she was angry, but because she was trying to protect him. He had previously thought that the last interaction between he and his mother had been his mother angrily telling him to sit down because he was being bad. Now he realized that the final interaction between he and his mother had been her last desperate effort to protect him – yelling at him to get down so that he wouldn't be killed by the pipes coming through the windshield.

This was all powerful and important in cognitively challenging Joseph's mistaken belief that he had caused the accident – adult Joseph could see, from what Jesus had just revealed, that he had not contributed to the accident in any way; but we were both struck by the observation that nothing moved emotionally. It still *felt* true, to the child in the memory, that he had caused the accident. And then, as we asked Jesus about this, Joseph realized that he was still emotionally disconnected. Whenever he would go *inside* the child in the memory, he could see Jesus but he couldn't *feel* Jesus. In fact, he couldn't feel anything, except guilt that he had caused the accident.

When we asked Jesus for help with this, he took Joseph to a memory for events after the accident. Joseph was standing and watching the accident scene from a distance, and Jesus was standing beside him, holding him. Joseph just stood there, looking at the accident scene, with Jesus standing beside him and holding him, *for thirty minutes*. I would occasionally check in to make sure he was still with Jesus, and Joseph or I would occasionally make some comment, but mostly he just stood there with Jesus, looking at the accident.

At first we weren't sure what Jesus was doing, but then Joseph realized that his emotions were beginning to connect. As he just stood there, with Jesus holding him, he slowly but surely became more and more able to *feel* Jesus' presence with him. At this point in the session I can

remember Joseph spontaneously commenting, “I can *feel* Jesus standing beside me. I can *feel* Jesus holding me.”

Finally, when Joseph could fully feel Jesus’ presence with him, Jesus said, “It wasn’t your fault. You didn’t cause it.” Joseph reports that it was just like the scene from the movie *The Kid*: “Just like in the movie, where the adult Russell is standing beside the kid Russell and reassures him, ‘No, it’s not your fault. You didn’t kill Mom.’ Jesus is standing beside me and holding me, just like that, and He’s telling me, ‘No, it’s not your fault. You didn’t cause the accident.’” And then Joseph commented, “And it *feels* true! It feels true that it’s not my fault. The guilt is gone. I don’t feel guilt for causing the accident any more.”

With respect to capacity, I would like to point out that just standing with Jesus, and being held by Jesus for thirty minutes, increased Joseph’s capacity so that he could connect emotionally and receive healing.

Continuing with Joseph’s story, it shouldn’t surprise anyone to hear that the kid place in Joseph’s heart eventually asked, “Jesus, why did you allow this to happen? Why didn’t you stop it?” Actually, the kid part in this memory said, “Why did you do that to me? Why did you kill my mom and my sisters?”

Fortunately, Jesus was willing and able to address this really tough question. I just kept coaching Joseph to engage directly with Jesus, and Jesus addressed the question himself. He said a little bit about the difference between *causing* the accident and *allowing* the consequences of sin in our fallen world, but mostly he said something along the lines of 1) “Your brain isn’t big enough to understand why the Father and I allow so much suffering,” and 2) “I am with you, and because of who I am, that is enough.”

As described in Chapter 11 regarding Bruce’s story, coaching the person to take these *really* difficult questions directly to Jesus is now the response that I always turn to. And the biggest point to note is that the recipients have always been satisfied when we finish this interaction. Every person that I have helped to have this interaction with Jesus – when they have finished the conversation, and have really addressed all the points they were angry, hurt, and confused about – every one of these people have told me that they are fully satisfied with Jesus’ presence and answers.