



## **“How Long Will it Take for Me to Be Healed?”**

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People sometimes read our stories of recipients who have had dramatic, rapid Immanuel approach breakthroughs, or they watch our Live Ministry Series (LMS) sessions that present dramatic, rapid healing in breakthrough sessions, and then they understandably expect/hope that their own healing work will be just as dramatic and rapid. However, emotional healing can sometimes go much more slowly, and when facilitators and/or recipients encounter healing that is more slow and difficult they might ask, “What’s wrong? Why isn’t it working? Why is it taking more than three sessions?”

It is definitely true that some people have experienced life-transforming healing around long-standing problems after only one or a few Immanuel approach sessions. We have seen this in our practice, and many other Immanuel Approach facilitators and recipients have reported similar dramatic and rapid results. It is also true that many people have found faster and deeper healing from Jesus through the Immanuel approach than they did through other types of prayer or counseling, but that the healing still took more than a few sessions and felt more like a process than a single dramatic healing moment.

Our experience is that the Immanuel approach to emotional healing is more thorough, more effective, easier, faster, and safer than any other form of prayer or counseling we’ve seen. So, whether it takes one session, twenty sessions, or even years of persistent work to resolve the presenting concerns, if the healing occurs more thoroughly, more completely, more quickly, more easily, and more safely than through other means, we think it’s worth it to use the Immanuel approach. Of course it’s natural for each of us to hope that our problem will be one of those that can be cleared up in only one session of a couple of hours. After all, who doesn’t want to be healed and free sooner, and be able to spend one’s time and resources on other things, like raising a family, carrying out some other ministry, or even just relaxing? The reality is that there are a number of factors that influence how fast or slow healing may go, even with the Immanuel approach. Some of these factors can be guessed at before one begins, but mostly, you don’t find out until which ones will be issues for you until you start working.

Here is a brief discussion of a number of factors that we perceive to influence the length of ones healing journey:

### **I. Individual pieces of trauma vs. “Total recovery”:**

Individual pieces of trauma are completely resolved instantaneously when Jesus helps the recipient finish all of the processing tasks, but “total recovery”<sup>1</sup> is a process that takes a lifetime. Most of us have much more medium sized and minor trauma than we realize, and if these small trauma are considered, we have not yet met anyone who we perceive to be totally healed. Our experience is that we have been blessed by steadily increasing freedom and steadily decreasing

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<sup>1</sup>“Total recovery” is the term Dr. Ed Smith uses for the healing of all traumatic memories and freedom from all lies. See *Beyond Tolerable Recovery*, p.7,12-13, 30 for Dr. Smith’s comments regarding healing of individual lies vs “total recovery.”

symptoms as more and more of our wounds and lies have been resolved, but we have embraced emotional healing as a lifestyle that we expect to continue for the rest of our lives.

## **II. The amount of wounds there are to heal:**

Some people experience the somewhat disheartening revelation after beginning Immanuel approach emotional healing that they have more wounds than they realized. The encouraging side of this picture is that the positive change with healing will be proportional to the size of the pile of wounds. If the pile of wounds is much larger than initially expected, then the benefit with healing will be larger and have wider implications than initially anticipated.

## **III. Getting to the moment of healing can be slow, even for individual pieces of trauma:**

Our experience is that specific, individual traumatic memories (or pieces of a complex traumatic memories) are resolved instantaneously when Jesus helps the recipient finish her journey through the pain processing pathway. However, although the moment of healing resolution for an individual traumatic memory (or piece of a complex traumatic memory) is instantaneous and complete, our experience is that even individual piece of trauma can take months to resolve if there are strong defenses in the way of finding and connecting with the traumatic memory and if there is complicated clutter in the way of connecting and working with Jesus. All of the factors discussed below can determine the amount of time and energy required to resolve a single piece of trauma.

**A. How accessible are the memories?:** Our minds are some of God’s most amazing creations, and they have many fascinating ways of protecting us from traumas too painful to bear consciously – at least at the time they happen. The speed of healing will be greatly affected by the extent to which the traumatic memories are blocked from one’s conscious awareness. Advanced troubleshooting tools and skills are highly effective in identifying and working around the blockages, but this can still sometimes take a lot of time and effort. Not uncommonly, memories have been “put away” by the mind in a multi-layered process of many decisions over time, and getting those memories back into consciousness can take a lot of work. Removing these layers may include: 1) releasing self-protective vows such as “I will not remember,” or “I will never talk about it,” or “I won’t feel it,” 2) willingness to let go of idealized images of myself and/or people who wounded me, 3) recognition of and willingness to release the ways I presently cope with or numb out or displace my pain rather than face it honestly (for example, methods of avoidance such as self medication, and psychological defenses such as dissociation, denial, and repression).

**B. How ready am I to give up my existing ways of avoiding or coping with the pain (my defense mechanisms, or strategies of self-protection)?:** Sometimes it seems that the most challenging folks to minister to are not the ones whose lives are in the midst of crisis, or what therapists would call “decompensation,” but those who are mostly keeping their acts together (at least where other people can see it), but have depression, or some intractable fear, or some problematic behavior they want to be rid of. We suspect that the reason this latter group of people (including ourselves!) are so difficult to minister to is that deep down they think that their defenses – their ways of avoiding or disguising their pain – are still working. Also, they’ve probably gotten a certain amount of self-esteem over the years from “handling things” themselves, and they greet the prospect of confessing and experiencing their own helplessness with ambivalence at best. Since they still have their external image largely intact, it feels harder

to lose. For these folks, the length of time it takes to heal will be directly related to their attachment to their various defenses, and their prideful self-sufficiency.

Psychological defenses are many and varied. Some examples of letting go of defenses are: 1) Being willing to see myself and others in my past and/or present as we truly are, rather than as I wish we were. Only the truth will set us free. 2) Being willing to take responsibility for my own feelings, rather than holding others responsible for them: “he *made me* so angry,” “I can’t rest until *you* agree.” 3) Being willing to stop blaming others for my problems or conflicts, but instead looking inward to what sins or lies I bring to the situation.

**C. How willing am I to embrace my suffering? (Escaping the self-pity swamp):** Probably all of us at one time or another get bogged down in the swamp of self-pity. Karl and I have been humbled to discover far more self-pity lurking in our hearts than we would have guessed before doing this deep healing work. Self-pity is a place from which one must choose to leave. It is a unique prison. Like other prisons, the walls are thick and impenetrable, and it is dark and unpleasant. The unique part is that all the locks are on the inside. No matter how much those on the outside may want to help those imprisoned there, they cannot open the doors. The ones on the inside must want to get out.

Even the most high-functioning people have secret (even from themselves) pockets of self-pity. “Yes, I will continue to do what’s right, even though somebody owes me. But don’t expect me to let go of my bitterness toward my wounder, because it was just too unfair, too unjust.” Such people may be struggling with the fact that the people who wound us are rarely the ones who walk with us to find healing – and they are never the ones who actually heal us, because only the Lord can do that. Some part of one’s mind is holding out for God to apologize for letting us get wounded, and refusing to let go of the pain until He does. The person mired here is quick to notice all the reasons why his distrust is justified, or why she should never have to risk being hurt again – even in seeking healing.

What is the antidote for self-pity? One answer is to embrace one’s suffering. To embrace our suffering is not to seek out pain, or to wear our suffering as a “martyr’s” badge. It is not to take on the role of the tragic hero, nor to expect any compensation for one’s suffering. It is to recognize that every life contains some suffering; my life is no different. I don’t have to be happy about the hard things that have happened to me, but if I am going to be healed, I do have to accept that they did happen, and that God allowed them to happen. I do not believe that God wants us to suffer, but He certainly does allow us to suffer sometimes. Can I accept that God is good, and that I have suffered some traumatic thing? Can I honestly grieve what I’ve lost, feel the pain of what I’ve suffered, and then let it go?

Someone who wants a magic pill to make them better without facing their pain or taking responsibility for their lives will not succeed in getting healed through the Immanuel approach any more than through any other means. The Immanuel approach might help them, however, to get a clearer picture on why they’re not getting healed, so they can honestly face their choices and decide how much they really want to get healed.

**D. The “fit” with the minister/therapist:** Although Jesus is the healer with the Immanuel approach, the person who is facilitating definitely affects the process, and therefore is a factor in how long healing will take. The pattern of wounds and lies and sins in the facilitator will shape how she or he works with someone seeking healing, giving him or her an overly sensitive

“meter” in some areas, and a blind spot in others. See “Unresolved Issues in the Facilitator: One of the Most Important Hindrances to Emotional Healing” on the Ministry Aids page of [www.kclehman.com](http://www.kclehman.com) for a thorough discussion of how unresolved issues in the facilitator can hinder the emotional healing process.

All of us are wounded, so it’s unrealistic to expect to find a facilitator who is completely healed, and free of any hindering or distorting “junk” of his or her own. It may be a good idea, however, if working with one facilitator seems to be stuck, to try having a different person facilitate a few sessions. We say, “a different set of eyes, a different set of lies,” meaning that the combination of a different facilitator and the issues one is facing may yield some new insight into what’s cluttering the way to healing.

The gender of the facilitator is also a possible issue in ensuring a good “fit” for healing work. If the recipient is triggered by men in authority, for example, then working with a male facilitator may be very difficult. Sometimes, if the one receiving recognizes that his fear of the facilitator is an emotional echo, then he can focus on it, stir it up, and follow it back to the historical memory. If the level of triggering is too great, however, and the person receiving cannot see behind his present-moment fear, then he should work with a female facilitator. This type of problem is not an issue of the facilitator’s woundedness, but of the nature of the lies in the one seeking healing.

#### **E. Other factors determined by the facilitator:**

*The facilitator’s knowledge:* Some sessions are straight forward, and a beginner with only basic training and minimal experience can still facilitate successfully Immanuel approach healing. In other sessions, the facilitator’s knowledge can make a big difference. For example, before we knew how to work with dissociation, the healing process would frequently bog down because important memories and emotions were “missing.” Now we know much more about dissociation and are usually able to work with the dissociated parts carrying the “missing” memories and emotions. Before we learned about vows, we would remain stuck for long periods of time whenever a vow was blocking the way. Now that we understand much more about vows, we can quickly identify and neutralize them. Another way to say this is that the emotional healing process can bog down when there is something in the way that we don’t yet know how to recognize and/or resolve.

*The facilitator’s experience:* Confident, experienced facilitators will be more time efficient. We have been clumsy and slow with each new piece we learned. Now we can see this same pattern in those we train. People are usually clumsy and slow as they are learning. This factor could make the difference between getting a certain wound and lie resolved in an hour as opposed to 2 to 3 hours. (However, it should not cause healing of a specific target to take 20 sessions as opposed to one session.)

**F. Sometimes seeming “pauses” or delays in the healing process are desirable:** We have had clients who reached a certain place in working on their healing, and then decided that they didn’t want to move ahead just yet. “This is the first time I’ve ever felt permission to be angry... I think I’m going to let myself feel it for a little while before I go on.” Another recipient recognized a deep sadness and loss about a specific aspect of his childhood, and wanted to give himself a bit of time to grieve before completing the healing in that area. These situations could be considered delays to healing, but on closer inspection, it seems that God was leading the

people on at the pace which was just right for them, to give them the fullest healing possible.

**G. Sometimes there is more than healing of specific wounds going on:** Although we’re sure that God doesn’t want us to suffer unnecessarily, we believe that the true joy that comes from connection to Himself is a *higher priority* than the removal of all our pain. So while we are spending a lot of time working towards healing for some particular pain, we may discover that God is using that time and effort for other significant purposes as well. One of our colleagues who does a lot of emotional healing work described one such journey with one of his clients. After some months of working on healing for a particular wound, the client reported with satisfaction that he could see many evidences of real and positive transformation in his life, even though the original target remained unresolved. Along the way, the Lord had been reshaping his way of looking at life, his way of dealing with his problems and conflicts, and had been deepening his spiritual life. Furthermore, the client could see that he was much closer to being able to face the original target wound than before. It wasn’t an either/or situation – either grow closer to the Lord in discipleship or get healing for this particular trauma – but rather a question of priority and sequence. The former apparently was part of the process of getting to the latter<sup>2</sup>.

Karl and I have certainly experienced this type of process in our own lives as well. I have two painful memories in particular that we have worked on repeatedly, and although I can tell that they are both somewhat desensitized, they still get triggered and so I know they are not completely healed. What has happened along the way, however, is that the Lord has been leading me through the recognition, confession, and repentance of many ways that I have managed my life, pain, and even the people around me (!) that are not founded on truth. These would, of course, be some of my defense mechanisms. I feel as if the Lord is showing me where the edges of the plastic coating on my personality are, and then giving me the opportunity and the grace to peel them back and throw them away. I feel like I know who I am. I am less stressed and more honest than I can ever remember feeling in my adult life. Everything I do is affected for the better in one way or another. I can think more clearly, minister more effectively, feel more peaceful when facing others’ anxiety or anger, pray with more faith, and discern more accurately. So, although dealing with my defenses wasn’t *my* goal originally, I can see now how it was/is an important part of the Lord’s goal for my overall healing and discipleship, and I am content to let Him lead the way. We’ll keep working away at the resolution of those two particular memories, and I trust when the other necessary ingredients are in place, the healing will happen.

**IV. The phenomenon of continually raising one’s expectations:** When we began doing emotional healing work with one another, we were amazed at the real internal transformation which resulted. Problems which we had fought for years were simply gone, and were no longer a struggle at all. We tasted the fruit of genuine healing, and we knew there was no going back.

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<sup>2</sup> A particular benefit to using the Immanuel approach to emotional healing is the inherent connection between one’s relationship to Jesus and one’s healing. One cannot get healed without encountering Jesus in a real way, and contact with Jesus is always beneficial in developing as His apprentice or disciple. In my (Charlotte’s) experience, the Immanuel approach is always an occasion of increasing honesty in the depths of my being, and that often exposes some pattern of sin about which I need to repent, along with exposing the lies which Jesus will replace with healing truth. For non-believers, meeting Jesus and experiencing his personal love and care is often a bridge to their surrendering their lives to Him, and experiencing salvation. These spiritual benefits may not be one’s initial reasons for trying the Immanuel approach, but they are non-trivial to say the least – and worth taking the time to accomplish.

Furthermore, the more experience we got with effective emotional healing, both with others and with ourselves, the more we began to see the evidence of unresolved trauma in our lives. It's not that new problems were created (though in one's moments of prideful denial, one might assert that), but that our eyes were opened, and we began to see what had been there all along. And this revelation was not welcome at first. “How depressing! I never realized that I was so wounded and, dare I say it, ‘dysfunctional’! It'll take years to resolve all of these wounds and lies!”

Perhaps some of what happened was receiving a healthy dose of humility. We had to own up to our own woundedness, and the sin which always grows up with it, and grieve the death of our former images of ourselves as much better off than we were! The good news is, however, that after taking those first hard but healthy steps out of denial, the wonderful promise of God's grace hit us. “Wow! If so much of the stress and pain and conflict in my life is caused by my wounds and lies, then it's curable! I don't have to live like this forever – it's not like being stuck with some biological trait that I just have to accept – God has made real change possible!” We began to see whatever healing work we did as a wonderful investment. We found we could actually do more work more effectively and with less stress as the Lord removed our lies about having to be perfect, earn acceptance, etc. So even as we could see more and more issues to be healed in ourselves, we also felt more relaxed about it, knowing that there was only benefit to be had as we pressed in.

We know that we will always be seeking more healing and freedom from the Lord. There will be seasons of greater intensity when life circumstances trigger previously unrecognized areas of woundedness, causing them to be accessible for healing. It's likely we'll spend more hours working on our own healing than most, because studying the process is part of our life's calling, and every personal healing we get usually gets translated into some note that goes out to benefit others as well. Also, why stay miserable if you live with someone who can pray with you and help you get the clutter out of the way so Jesus can heal the wound?

So to answer the question of “How long will it take for me to be healed?”, ultimately, we say that what it means to be “healed” is a moving target – once you've reached one summit, you see the next one, and after a bit of a rest you set out. It's not that you can't experience joy until you reach that ever-unreached goal – no, you experience joy in the Lord all along the way. But the expectation of how much we can receive of the Lord into every fiber of our being keeps increasing.

In the last book of his Chronicles of Narnia series, C.S. Lewis describes the adventure of a group of people who finally reach the end which is really only a beginning. In this fantasy story which gives a picture of heaven, those who have come to know and love the Christ-figure, Aslan, in the old world, find that in the *real* Narnia of heaven, the “inside is larger than the outside.”<sup>3</sup> As they run on in tireless joy, pressing further and further in to the heavenly country, they discover more of the Creator's wonders and rejoice that there is so much more of Him to be known. Although *we* certainly do not live in heaven now, we do have the “down payment” (see Ephesians 1:14) of the Holy Spirit in us, giving us a foretaste of the Kingdom, and enabling us to press in to God through healing and discipleship. The more of the baggage of our wounds and sins we shed, the more room we have to experience God and be filled with the things of God, and to join Him in his Kingdom purposes. So rather than saying “How long until we get there?” our rallying cry is,

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<sup>3</sup> Lewis, C.S. *The Last Battle*, (New York:HarperCollins Publishers, 1956) p.207.

“Further up and further in!”<sup>4</sup>

**V. Reference points/examples:** We thought it might be useful to provide some concrete reference points regarding “How long does it take.”

**A. “God the psychotic cult leader”:** The case study “God the Psychotic Cult Leader” (see Case Studies page of our website) describes my (Karl’s) experience with a lie that affected my faith and relationship with the Lord for 35 years. I had spent hundreds of hours battling this lie with prayer and cognitive tools, but with only temporary symptomatic control. This lie was completely resolved in one 90 minute Theophostic<sup>5</sup> session, and has remained completely resolved since that single session in 1998.

**B. 1000+ hours of emotional healing work:** Other wounds and lies have moved very slowly. Our estimate is that I (Karl) have now put in more than 1000 hours of emotional healing work over the last 26 years (as of 2024). One reason things have gone slowly is that we experiment on me whenever we learn something new – hence many clumsy and inefficient sessions. Another reason is that we were working on healing targets that were blocked by problems we did not yet understand. Yet another reason I have had to put in so much time is that some of my issues are profoundly thematic. For example, my background anxiety is anchored thousands and thousands of little (and big) memories of feeling like my neighborhood and the larger world were unsafe. Probably the biggest reason is that I personally provide good examples of every one of the defenses and hindrances that can cause things to go slowly. And one more reason I have logged in so much emotional healing time is that we have been constantly raising our expectations (see section IV above).

**C. Wide range with phobias:** It is common for a specific phobia to be rooted in a small number of traumatic memories, and there are many well documented cases of specific phobias resolving completely and permanently in one to several emotional healing sessions. In other cases phobias can be deeply rooted and much more difficult to resolve, as illustrated by one of our clients who came in with claustrophobia. He has been working hard, now with more than twenty 90 to 180 minute sessions. We have found a large pile of early, severe, dissociated traumatic memories that appear to be the source of the claustrophobia, and he seems to be making steady progress, but the phobic symptoms have not yet resolved.

**D. Steadily improving efficacy as we get more knowledge, experience, and healing:** I (Karl) was seeing significant progress/healing of some kind in probably 10% of my sessions when I first began using Theophostic in my psychiatric practice in May of 1998. This has steadily increased as I have continued to learn, gain experience, and work on my own healing. Now I see significant healing/progress in maybe 75 to 90% of my regular office sessions, and in 90 to 99% of my consultation and demonstration sessions.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Lewis, C.S., p.198.

<sup>5</sup> This was when we were still using Theophostic as our primary emotional healing tool, before we had developed the Immanuel approach.

<sup>6</sup> We have wondered about the significant difference between our regular office visits and our consultation and demonstration sessions. One thought is that since we haven’t been taking any new clients for some time, the ones still in our practice are those with especially difficult issues and/or with hindrances that we have not yet figured out how to resolve. Another thought is that there are subtle dynamics that increase the intensity and efficacy of consultation and demonstration sessions. The additional interces-

**E. Our personal experience with wounds and lies hindering efficacy:** We have observed that our own wounds and lies hinder our efficacy as facilitators, especially impairing our discernment and creating blind-spots when working with clients who have the same wounds and lies. We often didn’t realize why the work with these clients was stuck until we got healing for a certain wound and lie and then each of our clients with that specific wound and lie suddenly began to move forward. In retrospect, we could see how our unresolved wound and lie was creating a blind-spot that was hindering the process. This has happened *so many times* in our own experience that this possibility is close to the top of the list when something seems stuck and we are asking “Why is it taking so long?” We would especially encourage therapists/ministers to work more on their own wounds and lies if progress is consistently slow with most of their clients (by Immanuel approach standards). Again, “Unresolved Issues in the Facilitator: One of the Most Important Hindrances to Emotional Healing” on the Ministry Aids page of our web site provides a thorough discussion of this topic.

**Not always the facilitator:** I (Karl) have received Theophostic and Immanuel approach sessions from some of the best facilitators we know – Dr. Smith, Charlotte, and a number of close colleagues. Certain wounds and lies still seem to be moving slowly in spite of the best possible facilitators. As mentioned above, I personally provide good examples of every one of the reasons things can go slowly.

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sion usually present for consultation and demonstration sessions probably also contributes. Finally, we wonder whether the Lord is using behavior modification on us – He wants us to do more training so He “rewards” us with success when we do consultation and demonstration.