



Emotional Healing and Personal Spiritual Growth: A Case Study and Discussion

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2025 thoughts: 1. This case study has historical value, in that it describes my very first experience of perceiving the tangible, interactive, personal, attuning, friendship presence of Jesus. And it also describes what our emotional healing work looked like twenty-four years ago. 2. This first perception of Jesus' tangible, interactive presence followed *many* years of earnestly seeking this kind of experience, but previously only encountering disappointment. 3. My current Immanuel Approach work is much less mechanistic and much more relational than the Theophostic-based work described in this session from twenty-four years ago. 4. If my 2025, 65-year-old self with my current troubleshooting tools and skills could go back in time, I think I could have helped my younger self experience the tangible, interactive, personal, friendship presence of Jesus many years earlier. 5. It is striking/interesting how hard the enemy worked to try to prevent me from thinking, talking, and writing about this first experience of His tangible presence (see discussion).

This case study is from a Theophostic[®]-based therapy/ministry¹ session I (Karl) received October 30, 2001 (Dan Yutzy facilitating). One of the most significant aspects of this case study is that it illustrates how emotional healing can contribute to personal spiritual growth. Through the Theophostic[®]-based process in this session, the Lord removed judgment and lingering bitterness towards those who have stolen from me, exposed the sin of idolatry in memories where I had betrayed Him, and resolved lingering guilt and shame in these memories. All of this, in combination with earlier healing, opened the way for experiencing the Lord's *tangible* presence, *as a person*, for the first time in my life. And this relational experience of the living, tangible, personal, interactive, attuning² presence of Jesus broke deep roots of legalism.

Case Study

The initial target in this session was fear of conflict. I had been noticing persistent anxiety regarding a certain situation with a colleague, and with a little reflection realized that the anxiety was

¹“Theophostic[®]-based” therapy/ministry: We use the term “Theophostic[®]-based” to refer to therapies/ministries that are built around a core of Theophostic[®] principles and techniques, but that are not exactly identical to Theophostic[®] Prayer Ministry as taught by Dr. Ed Smith. Our own therapy/ministry in the early 2000s would be a good example – it was built around a core of Theophostic[®] principles and techniques, but it sometimes also included material that is not a part of what we understand Dr. Smith to define as Theophostic[®] Prayer Ministry (such as “Immanuel Interventions,” our material on dealing with curses, spiritual strongholds, generational problems, and suicide-related phenomena, and our material on journaling, spiritual disciplines, community, and medical psychiatry). Theophostic[®] is a trademark of Dr. Ed Smith and Alathia Ministries, Inc., of Campbellsville, Kentucky.

² A person is attuning to you when they see you, hear you, correctly understand you, care about you, join you in your emotions, and are glad to be with you.

coming from fear of conflict that might arise if I tried to address the situation. During the opening prayer I focused on “fear of conflict” and on the anxiety I felt about this particular situation.³

The Lord then brought a number of childhood memories into my mind, each one being an example of my turning away from what I knew was right because I was afraid of conflict, and afraid of the humiliation and/or rejection and/or anger and/or physical violence that often came with conflict.

I remembered being afraid to tell the truth about a humiliating “accident” in second grade. Whenever someone asked to go to the bathroom, my teacher would make angry comments about the kids that used the bathroom pass to run around the halls. I was so afraid of being the target of my teacher’s angry disapproval that I never asked to go to the bathroom. This was not usually a big problem, but then one day I had diarrhea. I waited until I felt like I was going to explode, and then hurried to the front desk, asked for the bathroom pass, and raced to the bathroom. I almost made it – I got to the bathroom and into a stall before having a messy accident in my pants and on the floor. I felt like I would be ridiculed, humiliated, and exiled from grade school society **forever** if anyone discovered this horrible and shameful failure, and I was mortified when several older kids came into the bathroom while I was cleaning up the mess. “Look what somebody did” I blurted out immediately, lying in an attempt to avoid being ridiculed, humiliated, and rejected.

I remembered being afraid to assist another kid on our playground because I knew I could get hurt in the process. He was being taunted, slapped, and sexually abused by one of the angry 5th graders, and the whole event was surrounded by a group of the perpetrator’s jeering friends. I was horrified to watch the abuse, but I didn’t interfere in any way because I was afraid I would be abused as well. I didn’t even go and tell one of the teachers because I was afraid of retribution for being a “tattle tale.”

I remembered being afraid to “do what was right” when this would result in ridicule and rejection from my friends. The leader of one group of friends often came up with ideas that involved breaking parental/neighborhood rules in one way or another. Another friend was a shoplifter, and would occasionally ask me to go with him on his stealing expeditions. His older brother liked to play with fire, and would sometimes ask me to go with him when it was time to set off his home-made bombs. I would usually become anxious, and object to these proposals, but would then agree to go along when my friends would call me a sissy, coward, goody-goody, etc. I felt miserable the whole time we were engaged in any of these activities, but I went along because I didn’t want to be ridiculed and rejected.

The last memory that came forward was my earliest experience of stealing. I was standing outside the neighborhood convenience store with several of my friends and they were enthusiastically telling me about how easy it was to steal candy. “Come on!” “You can do it,” “Watch us,” they encouraged. The oldest and most experienced casually walked into the store, took a candy bar and started eating it, put other candy in his pockets, and then went to the cash register to buy one inexpensive item. I was intensely uncomfortable with the whole situation, but as I balked the encouragements turned into challenges and taunts, “What’s the matter? Are you

³ Several different roots of my fear of conflict came forward, and we bounced around between these different roots of my fear of conflict during the session. This case study records the trail of only one of these roots (fear of accepting the conflict consequences of obeying the Lord).

scared? Are you a sissy? We do it all the time.” Eventually I walked into the store, picked up a piece of gum, and walked out with it. It was one of those really long sticks of bubble gum that you could get for five cents back in the 1960's. (It had a red wrapper, and it was cherry flavored if I remember correctly.) I felt terrible. I experienced such persistent guilt that I eventually told my parents, told the store owner, and paid for the stolen gum.

As I looked at all of these memories, I knew that in each situation I had gone against what I now realize was the Lord's presence in my heart – I just “knew” these things were wrong, and I felt bad when I did them. At first I thought the primary sins in these memories were lying, stealing, disobedience, and cowardice, but I was puzzled because I had not been able to get free of lingering guilt and shame even though I had confessed these sins repeatedly. Periodically throughout the session Dan and/or myself would pray “Jesus, what do you want us to know about this?”, and I think this was one of the places where we asked for more light. I didn't see Jesus or sense His presence, but suddenly was aware of an important insight: more important than lying, stealing, disobedience, and cowardice was the sin of idolatry. I chose to hurt others and to disobey the Holy Spirit in my heart because I wanted to fit in, because I didn't want to be ridiculed and rejected, and because I didn't want to get hurt – I had been putting the avoidance of rejection, the avoidance of ridicule, and the avoidance of physical harm in front of obeying the Lord. I went through the sample prayers to address sin (idolatry), and felt like this opened the way for the healing process to take another step forward.

“Lord Jesus, what else do you want Karl to know about all of this?” My mind went to several memories where my friends decided that they would “help” me get rid of my conscience – so that I could go along on their adventures without being tormented by anxiety and guilt. I think maybe they were also tired of having Jimminy Cricket (me) riding along with them, constantly worrying and volunteering to be their consciences. The plan was to “practice” breaking rules until my conscience stopped protesting. At some level, I agreed to this plan and went along with this plan because I wanted to fit in. I could also feel that at a deeper level I didn't want to do this, and I didn't cooperate very enthusiastically. In fact, my participation was so unenthusiastic that the plan quickly petered out, and I spent less and less time with these friends. However, as I thought about these memories I realized that I had never explicitly confessed and renounced this plan to intentionally silence the Lord's voice in my heart. I confessed and renounced this plan, asked the Lord for true repentance, and took back any psychological and spiritual authority I had given to the enemy through making this plan.

We asked again, “Lord Jesus, what else do you want Karl to know about all of this?” and then I began to think about my experiences of being robbed. When I was a kid, someone stole my bicycle. When I was in highschool, someone stole my really nice calculator. When I was in college, someone broke into my dorm room and stole a bunch of stuff. When I was on a college biology field trip, someone stole my camera and binoculars. When I was in medical school, someone broke into my home and stole a bunch of stuff. When I was on vacation in residency, someone stole another pair of binoculars. And there were many other examples in addition to these.

I realized how powerless to protect myself, vulnerable, and violated I felt when people stole from me. Angry thoughts welled up inside me: “You people who steal make it harder for the rest of us – we worked hard for what we have. . . . Get a job and pay your own way!” I wanted to apprehend and severely punish all those who had ever stolen from me in the past, or who would ever steal from me in the future. It was pretty obvious that I still had judgment and bitterness

towards those who had stolen from me, so I went through the sample prayers for judgments and bitterness.

As soon as I finished releasing judgments and bitterness, images from the convenience store came back into my mind. I could see myself, 5 or 6 years old, standing in front of the cash register counter and trying to decide whether or not to actually walk out with the 5 cents' worth of soon-to-be-stolen bubble gum. And then, all of a sudden, Jesus was beside me. As I write these words, I can still picture the Lord's "visible but invisible" presence (I can see Him, but nobody else can see Him). He is about two feet away, to my right, and just a little behind me – between the cash register counter and the pastry rack – and He's squatting, with his knees bent and His elbows on His knees, so that His face is just slightly above the level of my own. He is all white, but opaque like a cloud as opposed to translucent like a ghost, and He is smiling and looking towards me. I am "inside myself" looking towards the corner between the front windows and the cash register, and I can see Jesus' face out of the corner of my eye. At the same time I can also see the whole scene from an outside observer perspective (from a distance of maybe fifteen feet away, positioned above and to the left). In addition to the visible image, I also had a tangible, subjective sense of the Lord's gentle friendship presence. I could feel the Holy Spirit's presence convicting me of the truth that it was wrong to steal the gum, but I could also feel the Lord's friendship, relational presence as a *person*.

As I stood beside Jesus, seeing His smiling face and feeling His presence, I began to perceive a number of important truths:

I realized that the most important question in all of these memories was whether or not I would honor and be faithful to my personal, Lord-brother friendship with the living Jesus Christ. I had always been able to feel that it was wrong to lie or steal or disobey my parents, but this had always been a vague, impersonal, mysterious sense of wrong. Now I went back through all the memories we had been working on, and could perceive, *experientially*, that the core choice was whether I would honor and be faithful to my relationship with Jesus, regardless of the consequences, or whether I would betray and deny my friendship with Jesus in order to protect myself from ridicule, humiliation, rejection, anger, and physical harm. (This encounter with Jesus totally changed the way I thought about disobedience and sin.) I prayed to confess all of these incidents as betrayal, denying the Lord, and dishonoring and turning away from Him as a personal friend, as opposed to just breaking some rule that He made or hurting some other person.

I realized that I *did* get ridiculed and rejected for sticking up for the right thing, for being faithful to Jesus. That happened in my childhood and it can still happen today. Jesus doesn't guarantee that we won't be rejected and ridiculed for being faithful to him – in fact, He tells us in scripture that we *will* be persecuted for following Him.⁴ But then I also realized that I would not be alone. Facing fearful situations all by myself, as a child, seemed overwhelming. It felt very different to think of standing next to Jesus, even holding His hand, and saying to myself "The choice is to deny Jesus or to be faithful to Jesus." Knowing Jesus was with me, and being aware of the constant, simple question: "Will I be faithful to my relationship with Jesus, who is standing right here?" dramatically changed my experience of the whole situation. I could feel that a certain child place in my heart was no longer afraid that I would be overwhelmed –

⁴ See, for example, Matt 24:9, Mark 13:9-13, Luke 14:25-27, John 15:18-16:3

“broken” to the point of denying the Lord – by some terrible ordeal or hardship in my life.

It suddenly seemed almost humorously ridiculous that I was called a coward and a sissy for supposedly being afraid to break the rules. It didn't take any courage to go along with the pack, with very little risk of physical harm or being caught – the *real* courageous thing was to be faithful to Jesus in the face of peer ridicule and rejection.

I realized that the Lord had always been with me – that He was with me during my childhood, but that I just couldn't see Him or feel Him because of all the junk that had been in the way. One of the most painful parts of my traumatic childhood memories had been that I could never perceive the Lord's presence, and I felt like He was choosing to remain absent and/or silent for some reason. Why wouldn't He help me? Why wouldn't He come to me? This healing moment was the first time in my life I had been able to see and feel the Lord's tangible, personal presence in a childhood memory, and as I stood beside Jesus, seeing His smiling face and feeling His presence, I suddenly realized that He had always been with me. For the first time in my life, it actually *felt* true that he had been with me during my childhood, and I could see how I hadn't been able to see Him or feel Him because of the distortions, lies, judgments, bitterness, vows, defenses, sins, and demonic infections that had been in the way. *The garbage was on my side of the relationship.* He had been there the whole time.

One of the specific lies I have carried has been “The Lord never comes to me, the Lord never talks to me, because I'm not special enough or important enough for him to want to be with me.” The Lord showed me that my father did consistently prioritize other things over spending time with me – he often came late or left early, and sometimes never came at all because he perceived that something else was more important. *But this was not and is not true for the Lord. He was with me, He stayed with me, He never left me. I just couldn't sense or see Him because of all the crap in the way.* The Lord showed me that Dad chose not to be with me because he felt something else was more important, but this had nothing to do with him not wanting to be with me. “Dad doesn't *want* to be with me” was coming from the self-pity swamp. The Lord also showed me that I was still judging my father for not spending more time with me, and that I needed to release this.

Discussion

Opening the door for an experiential encounter with the Lord's tangible, personal presence: I have longed for an experience of the Lord's tangible presence as a person and friend since my earliest memories of hearing others talking about a “personal relationship with the Lord” or about Jesus being their “best friend.” The longing was mixed with confusion and frustration, because I couldn't find anything in my life that felt like a personal or friendship relationship with the Lord – I never had *any* subjectively tangible experiences of the Lord's presence, let alone experiences of His presence as a person or a friend. The people who made these comments never included any concrete details, and I could never understand their answers to my questions about these wonderful things they talked about in such vague terms. I was encouraged and excited in the 1970's when people in the charismatic renewal started describing profound experiences of the Lord's tangible presence, but I became discouraged again when I receiving prayer (many times), with no subjective experience except being acutely aware of my fear of disappointment. After years of disappointment I finally decided that these phrases had no real meaning, and that the people who used them were engaging in some kind of wishful thinking/fantasy/self deception.

I felt hope again when I heard people in the Toronto renewal telling such profound stories of meeting the Lord. Some described vivid and powerful encounters with the Living Jesus Christ, and others reported being overwhelmed by waves of the Father's love. I would cry with longing just from reading about other's experiences. Fear of disappointment, my familiar companion of so many years, was right beside me, but I thought "Maybe this time... the stories are so convincing." I pursued this hope with renewed intensity, including various personal spiritual disciplines and enough fasting to lose 35 pounds. I went to Toronto several times, and also to many local renewal meetings. I went forward for prayer at every opportunity, and since I never fell down, I would stand for two or three hours – until every ministry team in the building had prayed for me at least once (one of my friends believes I have the spiritual gift of tenacity). I would receive prayer 5, or 8, or even 10 times at a single meeting.

I felt like I was receiving benefit from this personal discipleship and these times of prayer ministry – I would sometimes get a vague, inchoate, nebulous sense of the Lord's presence and encouragement during the prayer time, and I especially noticed indirect evidence of His presence in the form of personal spiritual growth and other positive life changes that would unfold in the days and weeks following. I also began to feel the same vague, inchoate, nebulous sense of the Lord's presence and encouragement during my personal times of prayer and worship, and I often perceived indirect evidence of His presence when I would ask for guidance in some situation and then "just know" the right thing to do.

But I could never sense His presence as a *person*. I could never feel His subjectively tangible, personal presence as a friend.

I eventually decided that other people's experiences of the Lord's tangible, loving, personal, friendship presence were real, but that part of the faith challenge the Lord had given me was to believe in His goodness and remain faithful to His plan for my life even though I never had any of these experiences for myself. I resigned myself to the disappointing conclusion that it was the Lord's will that I never experience any tangible sense of His personal presence – that somehow this was necessary for His greater plans, and that I was accomplishing something important by faithfully trudging through my somewhat grey and impersonal walk of discipleship.

At some point in the several years prior to this session, it had occurred to me that wounds, lies, vows, judgments, etc. might hinder a person's ability to experience the Lord's tangible, personal presence in much the same way that "clutter" often hinders a person's ability to receive truth from the Lord during Theophostic[®]-based ministry. What if the Lord is present to be a person and friend for *every* one of us – just like he is *always* present with healing truth in Theophostic[®]-based ministry – and the only reason we can't perceive this is that there is too much garbage in the way? What if the Lord's presence in my life has been like a light bulb that has been so totally encrusted that I can only perceive a vague, general glow through the layers of crud, but no direct light. If this was true, then the Lord was there waiting for me, and I could experience his tangible, personal friendship if I could just get the garbage out of the way.

It seemed almost too good to be true, but it made so much sense. My adult mind knew the truth about God being perfect, loving, always present, etc., but I had child places in my heart that carried an amazing variety of lies/distorted perceptions about the Lord. In these wounded child places it felt true that He was criticizing me instead of helping me – like my first grade teacher when I couldn't read because of my dyslexia. It felt true that He was absent and negligent – like the teachers sitting in the coffee lounge when they should have been preventing abusive behavior

on the play ground. It felt true that He failed to enforce justice – like the gym teacher who didn't seem to notice that certain kids got to bat five times while others never got to the plate. It felt true that He was always making excuses and blaming others – like the politicians of my childhood. It felt true that He was angry and judgmental – like the 1960's activists that told me I was responsible for all the problems in the world because I was a white middle class American. It felt true that He was insecure and dangerous – like the “psychotic cult leader” God described by one of the disturbed members of our church.⁵ And I lived in dread of His disapproval like I lived in dread of my father's disapproval. It seems like I transferred lies/distorted perceptions onto the Lord from every authority figure trauma in my childhood, and I had judgments and bitterness towards the Lord to go with each of these distorted perceptions.⁶ I had judgments towards myself and just about everybody else in the world, and felt that God would certainly apply this same legalism to me. I carried sins that had never been named or resolved, with corresponding guilt and shame. I carried sinful vows and defenses that prevented the Lord from having full access to every aspect of my life. And I carried demonic infection attached to all the rest of this garbage. It made sense that these sins, vows, defenses, demonic spirits, and distorted perceptions, judgments, and bitterness towards the Lord would get in the way of perceiving and receiving His presence as a friend (just maybe?).

I had been diligently shoveling this garbage out of my heart and mind for several years – what if I got to the bottom of the pile and found the tangible presence of the living Jesus Christ? I could feel the fear that I would let myself hope again, and then be disappointed again. But what if it were true? Several of our clients had Theophostic[®]-based sessions that were especially encouraging. They had felt for many years that the Lord had left them alone in their suffering, but then removed layers of interference that had been hindering their ability to perceive the Lord's presence, and discovered that Jesus had been there with them the whole time. I went back and forth for months, sometimes almost *believing* that I would experience the Lord's tangible, friendship presence some day, and at other times thinking that maybe I should focus, instead, on accepting that this just wasn't the Lord's will for me. And then, after only 37+ years of waiting, I experienced the Lord's presence in the Theophostic[®]-based session described above. I could *see* Him, and *feel* His personal presence as my friend, brother, and Lord. It felt like this session removed several more layers of clutter, and that for the first time in my life there was a hole in the encrustations all the way to the surface of the light bulb. Suddenly a beam of light shown forth as opposed to the usual vague glow.

Hurt and confusion replaced by gratitude: Most of my life I had carried judgments and bitterness towards the Lord for never being with me when I needed Him. After going through the prayers to release judgments and bitterness, I just felt hurt and confusion that He had never come to me in a way that I could perceive and receive. By the end of this session I felt gratitude in place of this hurt and confusion. I felt both thankful and amazed that He had found ways to get so much of His spirit, presence, encouragement, etc. through all the layers of crud. My distortions/lies regarding who He was, my judgments and bitterness towards the Lord and everybody else in the world, my vows, defenses, sins, and demonic infections had prevented me from experiencing the Lord as a

⁵ See “God, the Psychotic Cult Leader” on the Case Studies page of our web site for a detailed description of my experience with this particular distorted perception.

⁶ See “Judgment and Bitterness Towards the Lord” on the Ministry Aids page of our web site for additional comments regarding my experience with distorted perceptions, judgments, and bitterness towards the Lord.

tangible, personal, friendship presence; but in spite of all this, He still managed to give me enough to sustain me, to keep me committed, and to keep me working for something better.

Spontaneous visible image and sense of the Lord's *personal* presence: It is significant to me that the visible image of Jesus and the subjective sense of His presence was a *spontaneous* occurrence during the session. I could picture an image of Jesus in my mind if I intentionally and deliberately tried to imagine Him, but I don't think I had ever experienced a *spontaneous* image of Jesus in my life— not during Theophostic®-based sessions, not during other kinds of prayer ministry, not during personal devotions, not during listening prayer, not during worship, nor during anything else. I had never experienced anything that I identified as the Lord's presence (personal or otherwise) in a traumatic memory that was being resolved. I had never felt a tangible sense of the Lord's *personal* presence in my life – not during Theophostic®-based sessions, not during other kinds of prayer ministry, not during personal devotions, not during listening prayer, not during worship, not associated with intentional imagination, nor with anything else.

In this session I was aware of various details of my surroundings in the memory image, and was aware of insights/truth “just coming to me” (my usual experience with Theophostic® – based sessions), *and then all of a sudden I perceived the Lord's tangible and visible presence beside me*. I hadn't been asking “Where is Jesus?,” looking for Him in the memory, or trying to sense His presence. It never even occurred to me to look for him in the memory, that He might appear, or that I might sense His presence, since I had never experienced a visible image of Jesus or a subjective sense of the Lord's identifiable presence in any memory I had ever worked on. When Jesus appeared in this session it was the first time in my life that I experienced a spontaneous visible image of Jesus, it was the first time I felt anything that I identified as the Lord's presence in a memory, and it was the first time in my life that I experienced His tangible presence as a *person*.

Changes at the roots of legalism in my life: It feels like my relationship with the Lord is changing qualitatively as a result of this session. I feel like the nature of my relationship with the Lord is moving another step away from fear-based legalism and towards love-based, personal, brother-Lord friendship. It's not about breaking “rules,” fear of being hurt physically, fear of being cut off, fear of rejection, fear of God's judgment, anger, contempt, or disapproval, but rather about whether I will betray or be faithful to my tangible *personal* relationship with Jesus, my brother, friend, and Lord. It is interesting to note that this experience, removing important roots of legalism in my life and replacing them with personal relationship-based discipleship, came after praying to confess and renounce judgments every day for a month.

Lingering bitterness: In spite of working on “being stolen from” memories and going through the bitterness prayers many times, I have never been able to get completely free of bitterness towards people who have stolen from me. It makes sense to me that carrying judgments towards these people and the deep roots of legalism in my life hindered my ability to release bitterness. I can't yet tell if bitterness towards those who have stolen from me is totally and permanently gone, but it is certainly much less since this session.

Lingering guilt and shame: I felt guilt and shame immediately after each of these incidents, which is understandable in light of the reality that in some of them I was disobeying the Lord's specific commands “Do not steal” and “Do not lie,” and that in all of them I was making fearful/ cowardly choices to protect myself instead of doing what was right (not steal, tell the truth, come to the aid of others in need). I confessed stealing, lying, and cowardice to the Lord and asked his

forgiveness, I told my parents what I had done, and I eventually went back to each person I had stolen from, telling them what I had done and returning/paying for the stolen goods. This helped—the persistent guilt and shame decreased significantly—but what confused and troubled me over the years was that I could never get completely free of lingering guilt and shame attached to these memories. It now makes sense that I could not feel completely free of guilt and shame in these memories since I had not yet seen, understood, and confessed the sin of idolatry, nor seen, understood, and confessed betraying my relationship with Jesus-*the-person*. I think carrying judgments against those who had stolen from me was also preventing me from experiencing forgiveness in the memories where I had stolen from others.⁷ I can now go back to these memories, and they are finally completely free of guilt and shame.

Note that the lingering pain—the lack of complete peace and calm—was persistently signaling that there was still something in these memories that needed to be resolved. This illustrates an important psychological/spiritual principle: When the Lord is truly finished with a memory, there will be *complete* and *permanent* peace and calm. Lingering pain in a memory *always* indicates that there is still something that needs to be resolved (Can we say “Thank you, Lord, for persistent, lingering pain?”).

Spiritual clean-up procedure: Several days after the session, I realized that the confusion and interference at the end of the session had interfered with the thoroughness of cleaning up loose ends. I decided to go through my usual “spiritual clean up” procedure, and was surprised to experience gagging, coughing, and dramatic, sudden, and compulsive yawning as I went through the prayers to tear down strongholds, throw out demonic spirits, and break curses associated with betrayal/denial of my relationship with Jesus, cowardice, idolatry to self protection, idolatry to avoidance of rejection and ridicule, fear, fear of rejection, fear of ridicule, fear of physical harm, condemnation, and self condemnation. This was a good reminder of the importance of going back and cleaning out any lingering garbage after trauma has been resolved.

The importance of reviewing and talking about healing experiences with the Lord: An interesting aspect of this session is that I have experienced persistent demonic interference and opposition *after* the session. I have experienced confusion, resistance, and all kinds of doubts and fears with the obvious purpose of trying to prevent me from thinking about it, talking about it, or writing about it—all of which would have prevented it from sticking with as much power. It’s not like the demonic interference could make me believe the lies that the Lord had resolved, but it feels like they could have hindered my fully appreciating the significance of the session—hindered my ability to receive the full benefit with respect to knowing the Lord’s goodness, receiving personal encouragement, etc.

I felt vague confusion about the whole experience, and a persistent opposing “pressure”/resistance whenever I thought about the session, tried to get clear words for what happened (even in my own mind), tried to talk about it, or tried to write about it. I kept having thoughts that maybe it wasn’t *really* what it seemed to be because the experience of the Lord’s presence wasn’t high energy or dramatic – no shaking, no falling down, no “waves of overwhelming love,” no huge and spectacular experience of the glory of God. These doubts and anxieties weren’t questioning the content of the truth I received, but rather were questioning whether I really experienced the

⁷ See Matt 5:7, Matt 6:12-15, Matt 18:21-35, Mark 11:25, Luke 6:36-37, and also “Judgments as clutter that can hinder prayer for emotional healing” on the Ministry Aids page of our web site.

tangible, personal presence of the Lord. Thoughts came that maybe it wasn't really as important as it seemed, that maybe I was just picturing with my own mind/making up/imagining Jesus' presence, that maybe somehow the whole thing was just a product of my own mind – all doubts and fears that didn't survive careful inspection once I got through the initial confusion. I felt resistance to talking about the experience because I worried I would make a big deal out of it, but then it would somehow turn out that I had overstated the situation, and I would then be both disappointed and embarrassed. I didn't even tell Charlotte about the visible image of Jesus until several days after the session.

I experienced a strange difficulty when I tried to focus on the details of the image, and an especially unusual difficulty when I tried to find words to describe the details—I kept thinking “I don't think I can tell anybody about this image because I just can't get words to describe it—it's just too complicated/difficult to describe.” I experienced sudden and dramatic yawning when I described the details to Charlotte, and more sudden and dramatic yawning when I sat down to write about them. Part of the oddness of the whole experience was that once I got started, there wasn't anything complicated or difficult about finding words for the clear and simple details as described above. In retrospect, it seems clear to me that the persistent “I can't tell anybody about this... it's just too complicated/ difficult to describe” thoughts were deception from the enemy.

This experience with “post-healing” interference and opposition has helped me understand the value of both Dr. Wilder's and Dr. Smith's recommendations that the person receiving ministry should describe, out loud, whatever they experience at the healing moment, and also that the therapist/ministry facilitator should review and reinforce the truth from Jesus.⁸ I had thought that this wasn't really necessary, since my experience has been that Jesus doesn't need my help to completely and permanently remove the lie – the lie doesn't have power and never comes back once Jesus speaks the truth. What I realized through this experience was that even though Jesus doesn't need help with removing lies, there are other ways the enemy tries to erode the full value of the Lord's healing work. The wider value and importance of this experience has increased as I have focused and articulated different specific aspects, and as I have shared it with others. It feels like the enemy's opposition has been trying to hinder this process of increasing the wider value and importance of the session (for myself and others).

Some experience this kind of spontaneous connection with Jesus more regularly in the context of Theophostic-based work: Note that with some people, this kind of spontaneous experience of God's tangible, personal, interactive, attuning presence occurs much more frequently in the context of Theophostic-based work. But this was not my experience. For myself, until I started using the components of the Immanuel approach that are designed to deliberately and systematically facilitate this kind of perception and connection, I experienced this tangible, personal, interactive, attunement connection with God only on this one occasion.

Good news: I think this is tremendously good news for all of us. I think the Lord is waiting with many more blessings for every one of us, and that we will perceive and receive these blessings as we work with Him to remove the garbage that is in the way. I specifically believe that all of us can experience the Lord's tangible and personal presence if we persevere in removing the distortions, judgments, bitterness, vows, defenses, sins, and demonic spirits that are in the way.

⁸ Personal communications with E. James Wilder 4/7/2007; Smith, Ed. *Beyond Tolerable Recovery* (Campbellsville, KY: Alathia Publishing, 2000) p.152,153.

“And so I tell you, keep on asking, and you will be given what you ask for. Keep on looking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened.” (Luke 11:9)

I would be happy to receive e-mail from any others who are having experiences consistent with this hypothesis.