



## Keeping Our Priorities Straight

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For many years I perceived that the primary purpose of emotional healing was to relieve suffering. For example, someone would come to me because she had panic attacks that were causing her much suffering and severely disrupting her life. She came to me, as a psychiatrist who uses a variety of emotional healing tools, for the purpose of getting relief from her panic attacks. Or someone would come to me because he had depression that was causing him much suffering and severely disrupting his life. He came to me, as a psychiatrist who uses a variety of emotional healing tools, for the purpose of getting relief from his depression. I had observed that people often also received spiritual benefits when they addressed unresolved emotional issues, but I saw symptom relief as the primary objective.

When I discovered Immanuel interventions, I was still thinking about emotional healing from this perspective. My first response was something along the lines of: "Great! A new tool that we can use to help people resolve their symptoms. Now we can facilitate emotional healing and relieve suffering even more effectively." And then one day I was facilitating a session in which the person began to complain about how long the Lord was taking to relieve her pain. She was in a memory where she could perceive the Lord's presence, so I encouraged her to engage directly with Jesus regarding her concern. She expressed her unhappiness directly to Jesus, paused for a couple minutes, and then reported that the Lord had responded with the following comment:

"I love My children, and I am glad to free them from suffering, but the primary, most important purpose of all this emotional healing stuff is to remove the blockages that are between your heart and Me. ***The primary, most important purpose of emotional healing is to remove the blockages that hinder your heart from coming to Me.***"

He also talked with her about her discouragement regarding her ongoing suffering, but the above comment about the primary purpose of emotional healing struck both the person and myself as being especially profound.

In the 20+ years that I have provided psychiatric care, I have *never* had a person come to me with the request that I help them remove blockages so that they can have a closer relationship with Jesus. It almost makes you grateful that God designed us so that unresolved emotional issues cause pain. Even if we won't pursue emotional healing for the primary purpose of deepening our relationship with Jesus, at least we will pursue healing in order to make the pain stop. And isn't it nice that emotional healing also removes blockages that are between our hearts and Jesus? What a nice side effect!

Since the session described above, I have thought about the Lord's words many, many times. I am grateful for pain relief, but I want to agree with Jesus on this issue. I have been asking the Lord to change my heart, so that I would relentlessly pursue emotional healing because I long for a more intimate relationship with Him, and therefore want to remove every blockage that might get in the way. I want to pursue intimacy with Jesus as the primary purpose, and receive symptom relief as a pleasant side effect, instead of the other way around.