

## Small Group Guide: “WHAT CAUSES HURTS IN RELATIONSHIPS: Unresolved Emotions”

**Opening Question:** Share a time when you tried to "sweep something under the rug" (literally or figuratively). What eventually happened?

**Opening Prayer:** Begin by asking God to open hearts and minds to His healing work. Invite the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion and help group members be honest about their hurts.

### LEADER NOTES

**Sensitive Topic Alert:** *This discussion may bring up painful memories or trauma for group members. Be prepared to:*

- *Allow people to pass on questions if needed*
- *Have tissues available*
- *Know when to move on if someone is becoming too emotional*
- *Have resources ready for professional Christian counseling if needed*
- *Follow up personally with anyone who seems particularly affected*

**Remember:** *Your role is to facilitate discussion, not to be a therapist. Point people to Jesus and, when appropriate, to professional help.*

### KEY SERMON POINTS

#### Main Idea

Unresolved emotions don't die. God wants to heal us completely—not just save us for heaven, but bring wholeness and freedom to our lives on earth.

#### The Rock Illustration

Pastor Dan used rocks under a rug to illustrate how we hide hurts instead of addressing them. We live trying to avoid stepping on these hidden hurts, which takes enormous emotional energy.

#### Takeaways

1. Three steps to healing:
  - Be honest with yourself about your hurts
  - Remove old memories and replace them with God's truth
  - Refocus on the future, not the past
2. Your identity comes from Christ, not from:
  - What others have said about you
  - Your past failures
  - Your traumatic experiences
  - The world's standards

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### Part 1: Being Honest with Ourselves

#### Read Psalm 39:2 and Psalm 32:3-4

1. Why do you think it's so difficult to be honest about our emotional hurts? What fears keep us from acknowledging them?
2. What are some common ways people "mask" their pain? (Examples from sermon: workaholicism, hobbies, substances, etc.) Which of these do you find most tempting?
3. Pastor Dan said, "God knows our hurts, but He wants us to acknowledge them." Why is our acknowledgment important in the healing process?

### Part 2: Renewing Our Minds

#### Read Romans 12:2 and Ephesians 1:7-8

1. The pastor emphasized that we spend hours consuming media we don't even believe, while neglecting God's Word that we claim is true. How does this reality show up in your own life?
2. Discuss the equation: Thoughts → Feelings → Actions. Can you identify a current feeling or behavior pattern that traces back to a specific thought or belief about yourself?
3. Look at the "I Am" statements from the card: ([download here](#))
  - I am acceptable
  - I am valuable
  - I am lovable
  - I am forgivable
  - I am capable

○ Which of these is hardest for you to believe about yourself? Why?
4. Pastor Dan mentioned that "your self-esteem comes from the person you think the most of." Who or what have you been drawing your identity from instead of Christ?

### Part 3: Refocusing on the Future

#### Read Job 11:13-16

1. The sermon warned against spending too much time in "regressive counseling" (living in the past). How can we acknowledge past hurts without being controlled by them?
2. The three steps from Job were:
  - Devote your heart (invite God into every area)
  - Reach out (stretch your hand to Him)
  - Stand firm (without fear)

○ Which of these steps feels most challenging for you right now?
3. Jesus asked the paralytic, "Do you want to be well?" (in John 5). Pastor Dan suggested not everyone truly wants healing because being a victim gives us an excuse. This is a hard truth—how do you respond to it? Is there any part of you that resists being made whole?
4. The pastor distinguished between forgiveness and reconciliation:

- Forgiveness is instant and frees YOU
- Reconciliation requires time and behavioral change
- Why is this distinction important? How does correctly applying this distinction “release” a person toward forgiveness and freedom from past hurts?

**PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS for This Week** (Choose 1 or 2 that apply to you.)

**1. Do an Honest Inventory**

Set aside 30 minutes with God to identify the “rocks” or hurts you’ve been carrying. Don’t try to fix them—just acknowledge them and pray Psalm 147:3 over each one.

**2. Immerse Yourself in Scripture Truth**

Use the “I Am” card ([download here](#)). Read the statements morning and evening. When negative thoughts rise, counter them with Scripture and journal which truth impacts you most.

**3. Audit Your Inputs**

Track your screen time this week and compare it to your time in God’s Word. Choose one specific change to increase Scripture intake and share it with someone who can encourage you.

**4. Take a Step Toward Forgiveness**

Identify one person you need to forgive. Write a letter to God releasing the hurt (you won’t send it). Pray for freedom from the control this wound has had on your heart.

**5. Refocus Your Future**

Write three ways past hurts still affect you. Then pair each one with a biblical truth that replaces it. Create a short vision statement about the future God is shaping in you and share it with a trusted friend.

**MEMORY VERSE for the Week:**

*"He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds." - Psalm 147:3*

**Closing Prayer:** *Father, thank You for the healing You bring to our hearts and lives. Help us be honest with You about what we’re carrying, and remind us of who we are in Christ. Where we’re hurting, bring freedom. Where forgiveness is hard, give us strength and wisdom. Lead us forward this week with Your grace and Your peace. In Jesus’ name, Amen.*