

## **When A Child Is Hurt,**

by William Rush, Ph.D.,LP

A child is like a blank computer hard drive. Life teaches him or her an operating system. The rules for how the world works. What are men like? What are women like? And most importantly, who am I and how do I fit into this world. Am I adequate? Am I loved? Am I good enough?

All too often we had imperfect data input as children. A distant, missing or alcoholic father becomes our prototype for men. A child can easily adopt the mistaken belief that father's distance or anger is a reflection upon their value. He is the adult. His anger must be my fault. Our adult minds easily evaluate abusive behavior by an adult upon a child and know the child is innocent. For the child, that reasoning has not yet been developed. It is for this reason that abusive trauma, when a child is the victim, often wreaks much more havoc on the child's self esteem than his or her physical body.

- A Lie Is Installed: When a child is abused, he/she believes they are at fault. "I made daddy angry because I am bad" is a classic example of how a child might reason. The angry adult who blames his/her rage on the child often confirms this lie.
- The Lie Gets Buried: The pain of the abuse, especially if it is repetitive, and the attached lie is too much to bear for the child. As the child reaches adulthood, the lie that "they are bad" fades into the background.
- The Lie Remains Alive: The adult who was abused as a child carries the lie unconsciously through life. It is just below the surface and the adult struggles to compensate. Anxiety, people pleasing, perfectionism, depression, and anger, are just a few of the possible symptoms as the adult unconsciously tries to compensate for the devastating lie. Any reminder that "they are bad" can trigger enormous pain that flushes out as anger. The pain must be managed which can only be accomplished by building walls, workaholism and/or addictive medicating behavior.

**The Hope of Truth:** Often, the adult who was abused as a child experiences many difficulties in life trying to compensate in unhealthy ways for the lie that unconsciously plagues him/her. Jesus longs to shine the light of His truth on this lie. A trained Pastor, or counselor can help the adult expose the lie. Its power is in the darkness. Once exposed, truth can begin to slowly replace the lie. Jesus can heal the deep wound that accompanies the abuse of a child. Theophostic prayer can aid in this healing process. If you or someone you know was harmed as a child, know that His peace and wholeness are meant for you. Take the first step on the journey to truth by praying that God show you His love and His truth. May God touch your heart and bring you truth.

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