

Healing Hidden Hurts – Reflection Guide

A follow-up resource from the sermon on Genesis 43:26–34

Why This Matters

Your family of origin is the most powerful, influential group that has shaped who you are today.

That's not fatalism — it's honesty. And honesty is the first step toward freedom in Jesus.

Some of the patterns in your family may have been healthy and life-giving. Others may have been painful or harmful. Without God's transforming work, the unhealthy patterns tend to repeat — in our families, friendships, workplaces, and churches.

The good news is, those patterns do not have to define your future.

How to Use This Guide

1. **Find a safe space** – This is best done with a trusted friend, mentor, counselor, or small group.
2. **Pray for God's guidance** – Ask the Holy Spirit to help you see with clarity and compassion.
3. **Reflect on the questions** – You don't have to answer them all. Start with the ones that resonate.
4. **Share what you're ready to share** – The goal is not to re-live the pain but to bring it into the light where healing can happen.

Starter Reflection Questions

- How was conflict handled in your family — avoided, explosive, or manipulated?
- Who were the “favorites” or “heroes” in your family? Who were the “scapegoats”?

- What unspoken “rules” did your family live by? (e.g., *Don’t talk about feelings*, *Never admit weakness*)
- How did your family handle money, success, or failure?
- Were there family “secrets” no one talked about?
- How did your family talk about (or avoid talking about) faith and God?

Going Deeper

If you want to explore more fully, here are 15 questions adapted from *The Emotionally Healthy Church* that can help you identify your family’s patterns and how they may be shaping you today:

1. Describe each family member with three adjectives and their relationship to you.
2. Describe your parents’ relationship.
3. How was conflict handled in your family?
4. How were gender roles and authority worked out in your family?
5. How well did your family do in talking about feelings?
6. How would your family describe you? How do you think your family thinks about you?
7. How was sexuality talked about or not talked about? What were the implied messages?
8. Were there any family “secrets” (e.g., pregnancy out of wedlock, abuse, addiction, major scandal)?
9. What was considered “success” in your family?
10. How was money handled? How was spirituality handled? Holidays? Relationships with extended family?
11. How did your family’s ethnicity shape you?
12. Were there any heroes or heroines in your family? Scapegoats? “Losers”? Why?

13. What kinds of addictions, if any, existed in the family?
14. Were there traumatic losses (death, illness, miscarriage, divorce, bankruptcy)?
15. How was spirituality expressed?

Next Steps

- **Pray:** Invite God to speak into what you've discovered.
- **Share:** Bring what you're learning into a trusted relationship.
- **Seek Help:** If you discover deep wounds or trauma, consider meeting with a counselor or joining a support group. <https://willamette.cc/care>
- **Stay Connected:** Reach out to our Community Life team for recommended groups, resources, or pastoral care.

"Joseph could forgive, but he couldn't heal the human heart. Jesus broke so your brokenness could be healed. His blood was poured out so your bloodline could be made new."