

Healing My Plantar Wart

Proverbs 4:20-22

My son, give attention to my words, for they are life to those who find them and health to all their body.

This particular year I had been struggling with a plantar wart that would not go away. The doctor tried acid, burning it off, and finally surgery to remove the wart. But it kept coming back. It was an odd ailment. I had plantar warts when I was young but rarely as an adult. The fact that it kept coming back seemed very odd.

I was leading a prayer retreat with pastors in the fall of that year. As we were praying, I asked if anyone had a prayer need? We were sitting in a circle and had placed a chair in the middle for anyone to sit in who needed prayer. I humorously called it the “chair of shame,” because most people didn’t want to be the center of everyone’s attention, but really it was the “chair of blessing.” Anyone who had a need could come and sit in the chair and be prayed for by the group. What happened next surprised me.

No one came to sit in the chair. The Holy Spirit whispered to me and said, “Why don't you sit in the chair?” I thought, “Me, with all my baggage? No way. I'm not going to tell them my troubles.” Still no one came. Finally the Holy Spirit urged me to be a good example and sit in the chair. I thought it might be an opportune time for the men to pray for my plantar wart.

I sat in the chair and one of my pastor friends came up to me and asked, “Dick I want to pray for you but not for your body. I want to know what's hurting in your heart?” That caught me off guard. I thought he was going to pray for my toe, that’s what was hurting.

Without thinking about it I opened my mouth to respond and to my surprise I blurted out, “My daddy doesn't love me.” Suddenly I started crying. I sobbed, “My daddy has never loved me and never told me he loved me. He never touched me tenderly. He had never affirmed me in any way. Now he's in a nursing home and he is out of his mind and I'll never hear my dad say, “I love you, my son,” or “I'm proud of you.”

I grew up in a home where I didn't get affirmation. There weren’t many positive comments or praise given to any of us. My parents didn't know how to give affirming words because their parents didn't affirm them. No one ever said “I love you” when they were growing up. Nobody ever gave dad any tender touches. There were lots of touches, but they weren't tender. So that lack of positive

affirmations passed along through the generations to our family. We too did not get many affirmations. I remember being very insecure about everything.

A few years earlier my dad started exhibiting symptoms of Alzheimer's. He was now in a nursing home and couldn't recognize anyone. We would go in to talk to him. He would just babble incoherently.

This realization caught me off guard. I was shocked. I hadn't been thinking about my dad not loving me, but it must have been deep in my heart. It had been there for years and I hadn't recognized it. I wept as I told my story of an unloving father and the missing affirmation from my dad. Other men identified with my pain. They too had experienced a lack of love from their fathers. They were quietly sobbing in their seats as I spoke. When I finished they gathered around me to pray for me. They laid hands on me and prayed that the Lord would lift that heavy burden and that the Lord would take the bitterness out of my heart and heal it, that this healing would extend to the healing that I needed in my body.

After the prayer retreat I felt the Lord say, "You need to go visit your dad." I argued, "Lord, he's in a nursing home. He doesn't understand anything. He doesn't know anybody." But the Lord continued to say, "Go." As I prepared to go I asked the Lord for a miracle that somehow in my visit my dad would convey to me that he loved me.

A couple weeks later I drove out to Michigan to visit my dad in the nursing home. I found him sitting in his little wheelchair. His head was bowed. There was drool coming from his mouth. I walked in and approached the wheelchair. I knelt down in front of him and I said, "Dad, dad!" He just stared blankly into space as though he didn't hear me. After a few moments he looked toward me and I repeated, "Dad, it's your son. It's Richard. It's Dick. I'm here to visit you."

My dad's eyes suddenly became very clear and focused. He looked at me and smiled. Then he reached out and took my cheek and pinched and shook it lovingly. As he did this he babbled something unintelligible. He was smiling the whole time. I don't think he was speaking in tongues, but I interpreted that expression. I interpreted that as the answer to my prayer. Dad could never say, "I love you" when he was clothed in his right mind. But when he took my cheek I felt him saying, "You're my son, and I'm proud of you." He had never done that before or since.

I took it as God's blessing that dad was still able to say, "I love you. I'm proud of you son." That day the Lord healed my heart. A burden was lifted. I am so glad the Lord healed that wound in my heart that had been there all my life. Had my

dad died my heart would have remained wounded. I would have carried my bitterness deep down inside without knowing it for the rest of my life.

I drove back home with peace in my heart that my dad did love me, though his life experience kept him from being able to express it. That night when I went to bed as I took my socks off I thought of my plantar wart. I examined my foot. It was gone. Not even a red mark or a scar was left. God healed my heart and my foot. A year later dad went home to be with the Lord.