

Leader's Guide

for

Bridges To Healing - Africa



Rev. Chris Adsit



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This book is not a substitute for appropriate medical or psychological care for those experiencing significant emotional pain or whose ability to function at home, school or work is impaired. Chronic or extreme stress may cause a wide assortment of physical and psychological problems. Some may require evaluation and treatment by medical or mental health professionals. When in doubt, seek advice from a professional.

***“Bear one another’s burdens
and so fulfill the law of Christ.”***

– Abagailiya 6:2

***“And they came, bringing to Him a paralytic, carried by four men.
And Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, ‘Son, your sins are forgiven . . .
Get up, pick up your pallet and go home.’”***

– Mark 2:1-12

Observation: The wounded one might lack the strength and faith to go on, but God will honor the love and determination of those around him who come to help. But think about this: it only takes *one person* to make the difference, to call the other three and say, “I’ve got a mission. Join me.” **You, Group Leader, can be that one.**

– *Chris Adsit*



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BRIDGES TO HEALING

Leading a Combat Trauma Care Group

Using *Bridges To Healing - Africa*

1. MAIN PHILOSOPHY OF THE “BRIDGES TO HEALING” APPROACH.

- God is the Healer (Exodus 15:26) and you are NOT. Don't put pressure on yourself thinking that you must try to figure out a way to “heal” those in your group. You cannot do it!
- But God wants to partner with you to construct an environment that will enable His Holy Spirit to have the best possible access to the Combat Trauma sufferer's body, soul and spirit for healing. He *can* do it!

2. HOW YOUR COMBAT TRAUMA CARE GROUP WILL HELP MEET NEEDS CREATED BY THE TRAUMA OF WAR AND POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD).

Whenever someone experiences an event in which they fear they may suffer severe physical injury or death, or when they witness atrocity or horror, God enables their brain to react in a way that will help them stay alive during the crisis. The brain does two things simultaneously. First, it suppresses the person's normal emotional and analytical response. Secondly, it coordinates all of the body's abilities in such a way that he or she can focus on the threat. In this mode, they can either fight the attacker with uncommon strength, quickness and endurance, or run like a gazelle to escape.

When the crisis is over and the almost-victim has escaped and is in a safe place, these suppressed emotions and analysis need to be addressed and “processed.” They need to allow the memories of the traumatic event to come back into their conscious mind and be thought about and expressed. This allows their normal emotions about the event to be experienced. They may become angry, sad, depressed, weepy, fearful or indignant, but that's *good*. They may need to consider the injustice of what they saw or experienced. They may even need to express disappointment or anger at God over the incident. This is all part of processing the trauma. If it isn't done, and the person tries to continue suppressing his or her emotional responses, or tries to act as if what happened wasn't very significant, the symptoms of PTSD will show up before long.

It's not enough for the trauma sufferer to merely *think* about his or her traumatic event. The need to put those thoughts into words (either written or spoken) and to share them with someone who understands and can supply sympathetic, compassionate responses. This significantly opens a person up to God's healing influence.

As you lead a small group through *Bridges To Healing – Africa*, you are giving them that safe place where they can gain an understanding of what happened to them physically, mentally and spiritually. You're helping them to share their experience and in this way process their traumatic event(s). In addition, you're giving them practical steps that will help them to address many of the difficult responses that are common to those who have encountered a traumatic event. This includes such as feelings as guilt, grief, fear, anger, depression, loss of self-identity, and anger with or mistrust of God. You're showing them that they are not alone, that there are others whom they can count on. Most importantly, you are showing them how they can make and maintain a strong connection to their Creator and Healer.

3. WHAT ARE THE MAIN NEEDS OF COMBAT TRAUMA SUFFERERS WHO ATTEND?

- Forgiveness – forgiving themselves, forgiving those who hurt them, seeking forgiveness from God.
- To understand what happened to them – physically, mentally and spiritually.
- A place and a way to process their trauma, grief and loss.
- To understand and to experience the filling of the Holy Spirit – His controlling, empowering and guiding influence, day-by-day, moment-by-moment.

- Control of their symptoms – recognizing what “triggers” them and causing their responses to these triggers to decrease in severity.
- To gain hope for the future.
- Friends who understand their condition and know how to help them construct their environment of healing.
- Respect and honor for the sacrifices they have made and for the struggles they are currently experiencing.

4. WHAT SHOULD YOUR MAIN OBJECTIVES BE?

- To deliver some helpful material regarding their Combat Trauma. The more they understand about their condition, the less anxious they will be, and the more they can concentrate on their healing.
- To provide an environment where the Holy Spirit can work on them directly. It is the Holy Spirit who can truly *heal* them, so we want to help them focus on *Him* as their primary avenue of support and healing.
- To help them become involved in helping and serving others. Their own needs will seem smaller as they shift their attention to the needs of others. They will learn that “the more you give, the more you will receive.” (Acts 20:35 – *It is more blessed to give than to receive*; Luke 6:38 – *Give and it shall be given to you . . .*)

5. WHO ARE YOU? WHAT IS YOUR ROLE?

- Even though the title of this manual refers to “leading” a Combat Trauma Care Group, you are not truly the “Leader” – you are the “Facilitator.” God is the Leader. Your role is to facilitate what God wants to accomplish, and you must seek His counsel as to what that is each meeting. You are His assistant. Expect *Him* to lead you and the group.
- Requirements of a Facilitator:
 - ♦ A heart to love, care and listen.
 - ♦ Willingness to look to God and move in response to His leading.
 - ♦ Humility. A prideful heart will make you less effective as God’s partner. (I Peter 5:5 – *God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.*)

6. HOW MANY WEEKS SHOULD YOU MEET?

- How long do you think it’s going to take for them to experience healing? No one can say for sure, but it won’t happen overnight. Even though the book is only nine chapters long, don’t think that you will get through it at a pace of one chapter per week. It *may* take as long as six months or even longer. The point is: “getting through the material” isn’t the objective. “Getting the material into the group members” *is*. Allow God and the group members to set the pace.
- However, most people don’t like to commit to something without knowing how long their commitment will be. So ask people to commit to a definite period – perhaps eight or ten weeks. Then tell them that at the end of the period they can re-evaluate and decide if they want to keep coming for an additional eight or ten weeks. After only a few weeks, most of them will see how much they are being helped, and will want to stay with the group indefinitely.

7. HOW LONG SHOULD EACH CLASS BE?

- An hour isn’t really enough time to get a good discussion going and to make much progress through the lesson – but if you have no other options, take it.

- An hour and a half would be better. Two hours even better– but not everyone likes a meeting that lasts that long, especially some people struggling with PTSD. So once again, let the Holy Spirit (and the wishes of the group members) guide you.
- Whatever you decide, show respect to your group members by starting and ending on time.

8. GROUP ISSUES

- Three basic approaches:
 - ♦ **Solo** (a person going through *Bridges To Healing – Africa* alone) – This is **OK**. But here is the difficulty: in order to bring about a Combat Trauma sufferer's healing, it will be necessary for him or her to work through some of the most traumatic and painful memories of their life. The manual helps facilitate this. Therefore, many people would rather abandon the manual and *not* confront those memories. So it may *not* be the best thing to give the manual to a Combat Trauma sufferer and simply say, "Here – I hope this helps you." Most people need someone to help hold them to a difficult task such as this, otherwise they may become discouraged and set it aside. However, there are some people who are so motivated, are good self-starters, and are so desperate to pursue their healing that they will not be put-off by the difficult things the manual (and God) asks them to do.
 - ♦ **One-to-one** (a person acting as a mentor to a Combat Trauma sufferer and helping him or her progress through the manual) – This is **better**. When the manual asks him or her to go to those difficult places, the mentor can be there for encouragement, prayer, strengthening and assurance. In addition, while the Solo approach doesn't provide the Combat Trauma sufferer with anyone to share his or her stories with, the One-to-one approach does.
 - ♦ **Small group** – This is **best**. There are many benefits to this approach:
 - ▲ There will be several people present with similar experiences to listen to each other's stories – with great interest and compassion. This motivates a person to want to *tell* their stories.
 - ▲ Each one will feel encouraged by the fact that the other group members understand at least some of what they experienced. This will also prompt them to share more deeply and honestly without fear of judgment.
 - ▲ Each one will learn more from other group members through the rich cross-talk and discussions that are generated. They will learn more than an individual would in the one-to-one approach.
 - ▲ As one group member shares their insights with another, and they counsel and encourage each other, each will feel more useful and gain self-esteem and confidence as they see how their words helped someone else. It goes back to the need these men and women have to *serve others* in order to help themselves heal. This is one important way of doing that.
- Size of group
 - ♦ It should be big enough for good interaction and discussion . . .
 - ♦ . . . and yet small enough so no one will feel too shy about speaking up. People can get lost in a big group. If there are too many, it's easier to stay quiet and not be noticed. Staying quiet will *not* be helpful for any group member.
 - ♦ Minimum: 3 group members plus you.
 - ♦ Maximum: 10 to 12 group members plus you and at least one assistant (suggestion: one leader can normally handle a group of up to six members, but add an assistant if there are seven or more).

- **Makeup of the group.** Here are some things to think about as you consider the numerous qualifiers that could (and perhaps should) limit the group's makeup:
 - ♦ **Gender.** Should it be all men, all women, or a mixture? Some would say that a mixture could be distracting. Men might not want to share as deeply, honestly or graphically if there are women present, so they will be hindered. Women might feel intimidated to share some of the trauma they suffered at the hands of men, so they would be hindered. Or a person might want to impress certain members of the opposite sex who are present, so they might put themselves in a more positive light than they truthfully should.

On the other hand, these may *not* be issues with the people you are working with. Sometimes, for instance, a group made up of both men and women soldiers can generate some very open and honest discussion. Issues that would not be brought up if it were all men or all women are discussed with great interest, and both genders gain from it.

So, as you will read often in this section, bring the question before God and see what He has to say about it. Seek *His* guidance regarding each particular group you lead. There is no absolutely wrong or right approach to this issue.

- ♦ **Singles/Couples.** Should it be all single people, or should we allow married couples who suffer from Combat Trauma to be mixed in too? Or should we split couples and singles? There are issues that are not relevant to singles, and some might think that time spent in the group on those subjects is a waste of time for the singles. On the other hand, there are issues that singles need to discuss that are not relevant to couples. So for these reasons, you might want to segregate singles and couples.

But others would observe that many – if not most – of those singles will someday be married, and the things they could learn from the couples could be of great benefit to them. And the insights and richness of the insights from the wives could add great perspective to the single men. In addition, the married men, in a noble but not-helpful attempt to protect their wives from the gruesome experiences they had, might not share as deeply or honestly with the group if their wives are present. By this they are limiting communication with their wives. But the single men might not feel as hesitant to bring up many of these traumatic incidents, giving the wives an idea that perhaps their husbands aren't telling the whole story. They could then lovingly urge their husbands to be more complete in their sharing.

So again, seek God's guidance on this issue. What do you and the Lord think would be best?

- ♦ **Combat/non-combat; military/non-military.** A person can get Post-traumatic Stress Disorder in both combat and non-combat situations. A person can experience war-related PTSD as a member of the military, or as a civilian who was unjustly traumatized by the military. And one doesn't have to be in actual combat – you could have been a support person way behind the fighting lines, and still get PTSD. Should you mix these groups together? Again, the various groups may feel hesitant to share some of the aspects of the trauma they experienced if they feel some members of the other groups would not be able to understand what they went through, or if they might feel judged by them. Then again, it may not be an issue. So as before, you and God decide.
- ♦ **Christians/non-Christians.** *Bridges To Healing – Africa* takes a definite Christ-oriented approach to Combat Trauma. It makes no apologies about presenting God as the One who made us and who can heal us, and urges the reader to pursue a deepening relationship with Christ. If we try to back off from that stance, then we really have nothing new to share with those who suffer from Combat Trauma. So, many would say that it would be a bad idea to include non-Christians – they may distract the group with theological arguments that the Christians have already settled in their own minds.

On the other hand, many would say that it would be *great* to include the non-Christians, because they might find Christ during the meetings! This is true, but it would be important to let the non-Christians know right from the beginning that this study is being presented from a Christian point

of view. They don't have to be Christians to attend the study, but the study will present God as the most vital element of a healing environment. If they're OK with that, they are welcome to attend.

- ♦ **Combat Trauma sufferers/care givers/friends/family.** Would it be alright if those who provide care for someone suffering from Combat Trauma also attend? The argument is similar to what we presented in the Singles/Couples discussion above. The presence of care-givers *may* make the sufferer reluctant to share all of the difficult details of their trauma – out of a desire to protect them.

But if he or she felt comfortable sharing openly and honestly, the care-givers could gain a great deal of insight into what the sufferer is going through. It will be very important in this case for the care-givers to communicate that they don't want their loved-one holding back for their sake. They need to lovingly urge him or her to share their pain openly and honestly, so that they can be more supportive.

- ♦ **Different wars, conflicts.** Each conflict is fought uniquely. The amount of casualties, the tactics, the number of people involved, the nations or factions involved – all of these are different. Some soldiers may feel that, "If you didn't fight in the war I did, you couldn't possibly understand what I went through." There may even be a harmful sense of pride: "My war was worse than your war – so my trauma is greater than yours." If you think this might be an issue, it would be best to keep your group closed to all but those who fought in the same conflict (suggestion: host several groups).

On the other hand, if pride isn't a problem many warriors will have the attitude of, "You fought, I fought, we are brothers and we can help each other," regardless of the specific conflict. In the United States, many of the young men coming back from the present wars in Iraq and Afghanistan seek out the older men who fought in the Vietnam war, to get their advice on how to cope with their PTSD symptoms. Unfortunately, many Vietnam vets don't know how to counsel them (PTSD wasn't studied until long after most of those veterans had left the service), but the camaraderie is there, nonetheless. It would be very useful if the older soldiers *knew* what to say to the younger men and women who come to them for advice. This could be accomplished if you mixed troops from different conflicts in the same group.

But again, you and the Lord need to decide what would be best.

- ♦ **Basic principles to use regarding these qualifiers:**
 - ▲ Be creative and innovative in how you lead the group, but trust God to direct you.
 - ▲ A group made up of similar people with similar experiences may generate more relaxed, honest, and deeper sharing, but a diverse group may accomplish more extensive healing as they consider issues that might not have occurred to the less-diverse group.
 - ▲ If you facilitate a group of mixed genders or with couples, consider having a few sessions where they are separated for part of the study, and then come back together later. In these separated groups, you (and an assistant) could address issues that are more applicable to them and which may be hindered if they were all together.
 - ▲ If you are a man leading a group that has some women in it, get your wife involved . . .
 - She will understand the needs and responses of the women better and act as your "interpreter."
 - She can add the necessary feminine touches to the meeting environment and discussions.
 - She can defend you from any women who may try to make advances on you.
 - Don't get involved in any one-to-one time with a member of the opposite sex.

9. FIRST SESSION – THINGS TO GET ACROSS . . . AND REVIEW FREQUENTLY.

- Emphasize Jesus as the Healer. (Exodus 15:26 – *For I, the Lord, am your Healer.*) Their healing won't come from you, from a doctor, from a manual or from one of the other group members – *God* is the one they need to be looking to for help. (Psalm 121:1,2 – *I lift up my eyes to the hills – where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.*) You might say something like, "I'm not going to be able to fix you; no one here can fix you; this manual won't fix you – God is the only One capable of helping you at all."
- Make it clear that this group will be approaching PTSD and Combat Trauma from a Biblical perspective. Help them understand that, "The purpose of this group is to try to provide an environment in your life where God has the best possible access to your body, mind and spirit for the purpose of healing – and we want to help you build that environment."
- If a group member hasn't yet made that decision to connect with God, let them know that the group will be looking at that important issue in the second chapter. Help them feel relaxed and *not judged* about not being a Christian. Our objective is to let our lights shine and to *love* them into the kingdom. Our objective is *not* to force them into the kingdom through guilt or intimidation just so they will feel more comfortable around us.
- Let them know that, "If you'd like to talk with me more in depth about this issue [of becoming a Christian], let me know."
- Ask them a few questions about their **expectations**. "What do you hope to get out of these meetings? What are your expectations for me? For yourself? For that person sitting next to you?" Make sure their expectations are realistic.
- Help them understand the concept of "New Normal," and that positive growth can be the result of traumatic times. By "New Normal" we mean that, if a person has experienced an event so traumatic that they end up with PTSD, it is probably not possible for their lives to go back to how things were before the traumatic event – even though they probably want this more than anything in the world. But God will help them come to a *new* normal, where they are once again strong and stable and reconciled with their trauma and the changes it brought to their lives. The "New Normal" could even be better than their "Old Normal," because God always uses trials to build good things into us. (Romans 5:3-5; James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 5:10)
- Help them understand that progress may be slow, but persistence and consistency will carry them along.
- Nothing happens by accident for the Christian – God has brought you here for a reason. "And if you are here today and not yet a Christian, it may very well be that God has brought you to this group so that he can make you one of His own, and heal you. This, too, is not an accident."

10. SESSION FORMAT.

• Homework or No-homework?

Which would be best – to require your group members to read a few pages ahead before each meeting, filling out the blanks and doing the various exercises that the manual instructs them to? Or would it be better *not* to require them to do anything between meetings, and go through the pages together?

The old learning principle will always apply: "You'll get out of it what you put into it." If a person will take the time and effort to do homework before each session, think through each principle on his own, interact with the questions, with the Scriptures, with God, he will get much more out of it when everyone comes together and discusses the lesson. But many people who are suffering with Combat Trauma simply don't have the patience and focus to sit down and *do* the homework. We certainly don't want to exclude them. So once again we would encourage *you* to make the decision about this. At the beginning of your series of group meetings, you might encourage the group to read the next

couple of pages before the next session and just see how it goes. Never assign more than three or four pages – even two is OK if the group is progressing slowly. If the majority of the group members keep coming to the study without having looked at their manuals, don't require them to do so.

It would still be a good idea to let them know at the end of each session what you plan to cover next – in case any *do* want to continue working ahead.

- **Have a plan, but be willing to depart from it.** Below we will be giving you a suggested format for your meetings. But don't let this be carved in stone! Allow the Holy Spirit to change your plans along the way! Achieving your written objectives for each chapter or session is not nearly as important as allowing the Spirit to achieve *His* objectives!
- **Preparation.** First, spend some time in prayer asking God to prepare your heart and the hearts and minds of those in your group. Ask God to help each person to remember the meeting and to make it there with no problems. Ask God to help them come with attentive and learning attitudes.

Next, go over the Chapter Objectives in the section of this manual entitled “**Discussion Questions – Chapter-by-Chapter**” (starting on page 12) so you'll get the main idea of what each “Bridge” will be trying to help them incorporate into their lives.

Then, read through the suggested discussion questions. **By no means should you try to discuss all of the questions that are suggested!** We have provided many more than you will need to generate good discussions. Just pick out the ones that seem the most interesting to you, and which will connect best with your group members. You may want to write the questions you choose right into your *Bridges To Healing – Africa* manual. This way you won't have to keep flipping back and forth between the manual and this guide. Of course, you may think of many other questions that could be even better than the ones that are suggested. Please use the questions that God gives you!

- **Suggested format:**
 1. **Welcome any newcomers.** Once the study series has started, some people don't like to admit any newcomers because they have to continue bringing them up to date on what has been discussed. Others do allow newcomers, to add new energy and perspective along the way. Again, it's up to you.
 2. **Opening prayer** (one person – asking for God's guidance and praying for special needs that are already known). Don't throw it open to prayer requests from the group at this time – you might not have time for the study! Either you lead the opening prayer or ask someone else ahead of time to do it.
 3. **Warm-up sharing.** Rather than jump right into the lesson, share something of interest to the group. Don't make it too heavy or time-consuming – just something to catch their attention. It might be late-breaking news that's relevant to them, an interesting article you found, show them other resources or books you might be aware of, ask someone (ahead of time) to share their testimony, bring in a special speaker, do some kind of a interesting game, show a video clip, share insights from your personal study time in the Bible, etc.
 4. **Reiterate the rules** which you will read about below (especially “Respect members' privacy.”). Don't go over *all* the rules every time – just review and remind them about a few of them as needed.
 5. **Quick review of last week's study** (five minute maximum).
 6. **Start into this week's content.** See below to receive some suggestion about how to do that.
 7. **Pray through the rough spots.** From time to time, someone may have a difficulty with some of the content, memories or discussions. They may become very angry or sad or stop participating or emotionally leave. When those times come, stop right then and pray as a group for that person. This will really aid in your group becoming a “band of brothers” (or sisters)!

8. **Preview of next week.** Share your objectives for next session (pages to read, what the topic will be).
9. **Close in prayer.** Now would be a good time to ask the group if they have any prayer requests they'd like to share.

11. HOW TO COVER THE CONTENT.

- Unless you have already agreed otherwise, assume they have all read ahead. But feel free to read (or have someone else read) a section before you start to discuss it.
- **Opening question.** Come up with a question designed to engage them with the topic of that section or chapter. Some of each kind of question mentioned below will be suggested later in this guide.

For instance, with Bridge 7 on Grief . . . “Outside of your war-related experiences, what is something that you have grieved about in the past?” This would be a wide-open question that they could answer from their personal experiences or observations, even if they haven't read the chapter.

- **Content question.** Ask a question that can be answered by the content they read (or which you just read to them).

For instance: “What triggers grief?” What you're looking for is found in the third paragraph after the opening story: LOSS triggers grief.

Think of a couple of Content questions for each section in the study ahead of time.

- **Follow-up questions.** Build on that answer with a Follow-up question:

“As a result of your traumatic experiences [or combat experiences – whatever is appropriate for your group], what are some of the things that you have lost?”

Note: the *content* of the study will lead into this question. It will help the members start looking inward – moving from the theoretical to the personal, specific and practical.

You could then follow the Follow-up question with more Follow-up questions, depending on what was shared, such as:

- ▲ “How were you able to handle that loss?”
- ▲ “How did it affect you?”
- ▲ “Think back. Can you think of any ways that God helped you through that difficult time?”
- ▲ “Do you think you'll ever receive back what you lost, or be able to replace it? How does that make you feel? What do you think you should do about those feelings?”

Redirect. A very useful tool for follow-up is a practice known as “redirecting.” After someone has responded to one of your questions, redirect it to the group in general. “What do some of the rest of you think about what Samir just shared?” Or to a specific individual, “Mwai, would you agree with what Samir shared?” Or, “Kamili, how about you? What do you think about what Samir said?”).

- **Application questions.** Try to compose two or three questions that will prompt the group to make some kind of a personal, practical response to the issues that are being brought up. Examples:
 - ♦ “Does this suggest any course of action that you ought to take?”
 - ♦ “What could you do about this? When?”
 - ♦ “Can any of you think of a practical way to respond to this issue within the next 48 hours?”
 - ♦ “Is this something we just need to think about and be aware of, or do you think we're actually supposed to DO something about it?”
 - ♦ “When you've encountered this issue in the past, how have you dealt with it? Did that work for you?”

- ♦ “What do you think it would take to integrate this concept into your life?”
- **Other ways to generate discussion:**
 - ♦ “What thoughts came to your mind as you read this section?”
 - ♦ “Did this raise some questions?”
 - ♦ “Could you identify with this quote (verse, paragraph)? How?”
 - ♦ “Here’s what I thought . . . what did you think?”
 - ♦ “How does this part affect you personally?”
 - ♦ “How did this section (quote, verse, paragraph) make you feel? Why do you think it made you feel that way?”
 - ♦ (Regarding a point made in a section) “Has anybody here ever experienced this?”
 - ♦ “How has this issue changed you? Changed your opinion about God? The Church? The Military? Yourself?”
 - ♦ “What bothers you about this?”
 - ♦ “How do you deal with this?”
- **Exercises or fill-in-the-blank parts**
 - ♦ When you come to a place in the manual that directs the reader to fill in some blanks or do a certain exercise, ask if anybody did them. Then ask if they would they like to share their response.
 - ♦ If not, give the group time right then to work through them, and share what they wrote afterwards. If writing is a problem for any of them, you can just ask them to respond verbally if they’d like to.

12. THE RULES:

As with any group meeting, there needs to be some understanding about what is appropriate and what is not. The following are a few rules that will enable the group to function effectively, efficiently, and with a minimum of interpersonal friction. We would suggest you make a separate document for these rules (and any others you might want to include) and pass them out to the group during your first session together.

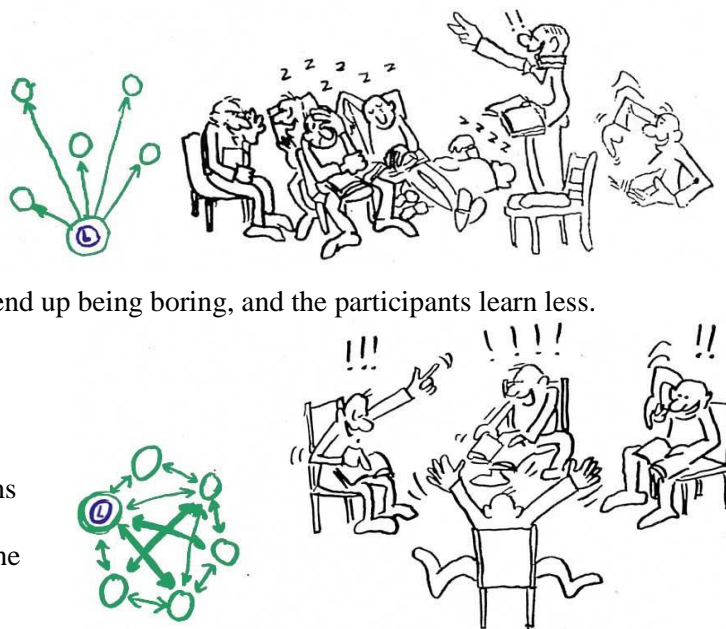
1. Respect members’ privacy. Keep everything that is shared here strictly confidential. Don’t pass on what is shared with anybody – not to superior officers, friends or even to your spouses.
2. Don’t talk with non-group members about who else is in the group.
3. Do not dominate the discussion; let others share. Avoid long, detailed descriptions of your experiences. Make your point quickly!
4. Have the courage to share what’s on your mind or what you’re feeling: it is part of your healing process. The more you share, the safer you’ll feel here, and quicker you’ll progress toward your “New Normal.”
5. But realize that you have the “right of shyness.” No one will be forced to share if they don’t feel like it. It’s OK to “pass” in a discussion or during prayer times. If you can overcome your reluctance to share, it will be better for you, but no one will *make* you speak.
6. Be prepared and willing to hear some difficult and distressing comments and stories. Try your best to extend grace, and not react negatively.
7. Listen actively and deeply; honor all contributions.
8. Don’t criticize or make judgments about other group members: show grace and mercy – just as God has shown them to you.
9. Don’t interrupt.

10. Try not to compare yourself with others in the group. Each person is unique, and at a different place in their healing journey. Focus on how God is working in *your* life.
11. Look for opportunities to affirm and honor each other during the meeting.
12. Be consistent in your attendance. Try to be there on time.
13. Share ownership of the group. We're not here to entertain you – all must be willing and hold themselves responsible to contribute to the good success of the group and its mission.

13. DO'S AND DON'T'S

Here are a number of general principles that will prove useful no matter what kind of a small group you are leading – but especially so as you lead a Combat Trauma Care Group:

- Get there early, prepare the room, set out refreshments, perhaps put on some worship music, pray, be ready to welcome them as they come. Set the pace regarding punctuality!
- Don't be a lecturer. Encourage *discussion* among the group members. There is a saying that states, "The one who is talking the most is learning the most." If you are lecturing the group on certain topics, you can be sure that you are *giving* the information, but you cannot be sure if they are *receiving* it. If only one or two participants dominate the discussion, the rest feel left out and don't enter into the learning process very effectively. The sessions end up being boring, and the participants learn less. A person will retain and apply only about 5% of what they hear in this manner.
- On the other hand, if you can encourage group members to interact with each other, share their insights and experiences, ask each other questions and *talk*, the group sessions will be much more productive, interesting and enjoyable for everyone involved. People learn, retain and apply new information *much* better if they can discover the answers and come up with insights on their own, rather than having someone simply tell them what they should know. Teaching experts call this, "Giving them an 'aha!' experience." This makes for a fun and much more motivating experience.



Remember that the manual supplies a format and some useful content, but the real healing will come through the sharing, the interaction, and the application as God works on them directly.

- If no one answers a discussion question right away, just wait a few moments. Silence isn't a bad thing – it could mean that people are thinking. If there is no response after a minute or so, you could ask the question in a different way, or call on someone who looks like they may want to say something, but need a little encouragement. Or, you could share *your* answer to the question, and ask what others think about what you shared, or ask if there's anyone who could build on it.
- Take every opportunity to affirm, honor and encourage each member of the group. Make a "big deal" of the fact that it takes a tremendous amount of courage for them to even show up at these meetings. Their participation shows that they are willing to do the hard work that will be required to come to a place of healing.
- Try not to correct group members who say things that are obviously wrong. Say something like, "That's a very interesting thought (or "perspective," "insight," "point of view"), Samir. I hadn't thought about it in that way before. What do some of the rest of you think about that?"

- If you ask a question that requires a number of short answers, write down their responses – either on a blackboard, large piece of paper, or even on the notes you hold in your hand. This will help you to remember peoples' responses so that you can go over them again with the group in summary. In addition, those who offer responses will feel affirmed that you find their contributions so valuable that you would write them down. Plus, it helps you to listen more closely if you have to condense their responses to writing.
- Experts tell us that about half of what we communicate is through “body language.” When someone is responding to your question, your body language needs to be encouraging and not dismissive. Every culture is different. In American culture, to do the following things expresses interest, but you may need to adjust these suggestions to fit your particular culture:
 - ♦ Look at them directly, square your shoulders to them, and even lean forward a bit toward him or her.
 - ♦ If you are leaning back, folding your arms in front of you, looking around as they are speaking, checking your notes, etc., you are communicating, “What you are saying isn’t really very interesting to me.”
 - ♦ As was just mentioned, if you take notes on what they say, this will also communicate that, “I feel that what you are saying is *so* important that I must write it down so I won’t forget!”
- Be sure you are praying for your group and every individual in it – daily!
- Have other people praying for your group too.
- Always serve refreshments! Even if it’s just some water and inexpensive biscuits or crisps, it helps provide a good atmosphere. Jesus engaged in some of his best discipling times over a meal.
- Pay attention to the environment of the study.
 - ♦ Someone’s home is a very relaxing, comforting, non-threatening setting. Having the study in church is OK – especially if you have large group and need the space. But a home is usually more welcoming.
 - ♦ Arrange the chairs in a loose circle if possible. It’s good for all group members to be able to see each other.
 - ♦ Be aware of such things as the temperature of the room, lighting, comfort of the chairs, ventilation, and distractions from the neighborhood.
- Be patient – with group members, with the process, with participation, with church administration.
- Allow them to express their anger, frustration, confusion, etc. This is all part of their processing.
- Expect them to bring up blasphemous or taboo subjects, use profanity, express disappointment or anger with God, the Church or Christians. Again, it is a necessary part of their processing. Eventually they will calm down. In the mean time, try not to react or judge them. Show kindness, compassion and understanding.
- If someone is dominating the discussions, talk with him or her afterwards: “You find it so easy to share – but I think some of the others are shy (or lack your confidence). What can we do to try to draw them out more, and give them the opportunity to share?”
- Don’t publicize names, addresses or email address lists without permission.
- If possible, recruit an assistant: he or she can act as a substitute, help with making arrangements, help keep discussions on track, and can be trained to eventually lead their own group.
- Most of the sessions are pretty intense. So try to include some *positive* things whenever possible.
- Give the manuals to the group members without charge if possible. “You’ve done your service. We want to honor you for that. It’s our way of affirming you for your taking the first step to come here.”

- ♦ If they insist on paying, say “OK. But I’ll use that money to buy a manual for someone else.”
- ♦ In your publicizing of the Care Group, note that the materials will be free – “Our gift to you.”
- ♦ Consider it a gift of healing; an investment in their healing.

14. THINGS TO DO BETWEEN MEETINGS

- Call or stop by their house to chat, find out about a prayer request they shared, see if they need a ride next week, etc.
- Email them (if available) or send them an encouraging letter.
- Find some time to spend one-to-one with individual group members.
- Plan a group outing – either a fun event or a service project.
- Plan a dinner and invite spouses.
- Plan a weekend retreat – either with or without spouses.
- It’s already been mentioned, but it bears repeating: PRAY FOR THEM!

DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS – CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER

INTRODUCTION: THERE IS A WAY . . .

Objectives:

- To let them know that God will be a primary element in the healing environment that we are proposing.
- To help them identify with the two characters in the opening story, and sense that they are not alone in their difficult circumstances.
- To give them a pattern for learning – the idea of their condition being represented by nine rivers that need to be crossed, and nine bridges that God wants to provide for that purpose to bring them to a place of healing.

Discussion Questions:

First go over the things you read about above in “**9. First Session – things to get across**” that you feel would be important. Then, get into the content of the Introduction. Either you read it, or have a group member read it – or assign one paragraph each to the group members to read.

Don’t use *all* of these questions, just choose the ones that you think will be best for your group. **Note:** not every section will have all four types of questions in them. You can always add some of your own, though!

- **Opening Questions**
 - ◊ Most of us experience trauma of one sort or another during our lives. Probably all of us. Would a few of you mind sharing some of the difficult events you’ve had to endure in your lifetime? [*They can be war-related or not.*]
 - ◊ How have these events changed you?
 - ◊ How many of you have ever heard about PTSD – Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder? What have you heard about it? [*Let them know that we’ll be learning a lot more about it in the first chapter.*]
- **Content Questions**
 - ◊ What were some of the difficulties Samuel was having? How was this affecting his wife?

- ❖ What did Samuel want more than anything else?
- ❖ How does this manual propose to help you with your trauma-related (or war-related) difficulties?
- **Follow-up Questions**
 - ❖ Have any of you had symptoms like what Samuel was experiencing? Would you mind describing them to us?
 - ❖ Samuel wondered if he would struggle with these symptoms for the rest of his life. Do some of you feel the same way? Is there anything that might give you reason to hope?
 - ❖ Samuel felt that God had forgotten about him and Imani. Do you sometimes feel that way?
 - ❖ Can you identify with Samuel in his deep desire to go back to how things were before the fighting began? Do you have any ideas about how you will get back to that place?
 - ❖ How has your war experience changed how you see yourself?
- **Application Questions**
 - ❖ Samuel cries, "We are lost!" He was being honest about how he felt concerning his disorder. But sometimes what we repeatedly say to ourselves and to those close to us may be part of the problem. It reinforces our negative feelings and makes us feel hopeless. Whenever Samuel feels these frustrations rising, what is something he could say to himself instead? We're not looking for a nice-sounding lie. What could he say that would be both realistic and *true*?
 - ❖ Take a look at the Table of Contents page. Which of these nine bridges do you think will be the most difficult one for you to cross? What can you begin doing *today* that will prepare you for approaching and crossing that bridge?
 - ❖ In this Introduction, it says, "There is a way." What are you willing to do to *find* that way to your place of healing? *[With this, you hope they will see that the Bridges To Healing – Africa manual will be one of the tools that God will use to help them find their way, and encourage them to come back for the next meeting.]*



BRIDGE 1: UNDERSTANDING ... WHAT HAPPENED

CROSSING THE RIVER OF CONFUSION, PAIN AND DOUBT

Objectives:

- To help them understand the physical, psychological and spiritual aspects of their trauma.
- To help them understand that their condition is a common response to trauma, created by God to keep them safe in a life-or-death situation.
- To go through an exercise that will help them identify their symptoms.
- To help them understand that their condition is a result of free will, the fall, and man's inhumanity to man.
- To help them understand that God is their greatest ally, not their enemy.

Discussion Questions:

Again, don't use *all* of these questions, just choose the ones that you think will be best for your group.

Why am I like this?

- **Opening Questions**
 - ❖ Can any of you identify with some of the feelings and symptoms that Jomo has?
 - ❖ Would any of you mind sharing what some of your feelings and symptoms are?

- **Content Questions**

- ◊ In what ways did Jomo's war experience change him? What was he like before, and how is he different now?
- ◊ Let's look at the spectrum of Combat Trauma in your manual. As you read the descriptions of each "milepost," put an X on the line where you think you are right now.
- ◊ Do you have any questions about the descriptions of each "milepost"?

- **Follow-up Questions**

- ◊ How has your war experience changed you?
- ◊ When you think about how you were right after you returned from war, or soon after your traumatizing experience, would you say that you are experiencing more of less of those distressing feelings and symptoms? *[This will tell you whether or not the person's Combat Trauma/PTSD is getting worse or better, or perhaps if they have delayed-onset PTSD, which can show up months or years after the traumatic event.]*

If you are struggling with Combat Trauma or PTSD, you should know . . .

- **Opening Questions**

- ◊ Before reading this section, what did you already know about Combat Trauma and PTSD?

- **Content Questions**

- ◊ From this section, what is your impression about how rare Combat Trauma/PTSD is?
- ◊ Does this section give you the idea that Combat Trauma/PTSD is a disorder that can be cured quickly and easily? Does it indicate that a person just needs to have more courage or strength or faith, and they'll soon turn out just fine?

- **Follow-up Questions**

- ◊ Were you surprised to read any of the facts in this section? Which ones? Why did that surprise you?
- ◊ What do you think it means when it says that PTSD is a wound of the soul, and a wound of the identity?
- ◊ Can you think of some of your friends who may have Combat Trauma?

- **Application Questions**

- ◊ What do you think you should do about your friends that you think might be suffering from Combat Trauma or PTSD?

What causes PTSD?

- **Opening Questions**

- ◊ When you experience injustice, or when you are attacked and harmed by someone unexpectedly, how do you normally respond? How about when you encounter some kind of a natural disaster or have an accident, and it's really no one's fault?

- **Content Questions**

- ◊ As you read through the various things listed in this section that can cause PTSD, which of these events or factors do you feel may have contributed to your current experience of Combat Trauma/PTSD?

- **Follow-up Questions**

- ◊ Why do you think that PTSD can become especially severe or long-lasting when the trauma comes from an intentional human act?
- ◊ Do you think everyone will react the same way to a traumatic situation? Why or why not?

- **Application Questions**

- ◊ Knowing that multiple traumatic events can lead to PTSD, and taking into consideration what you've experienced in the past, what can you do to prepare yourself for future traumatic events?

A God-designed defense mechanism / Getting stuck in crisis-alert mode.

- **Opening Questions**

- ◊ Why do you think God would make us with a special response pathway that kicks in only when we are in great danger?

- **Content Questions**

- ◊ The coverage of this issue in the manual might have been too complex for most people. What would you say is the main way this defense mechanism works? Can anyone summarize it in just a couple of sentences?
 - ◊ How does this defense mechanism keep us safe?
 - *[Note to leader – you may want to spend some time clarifying some of the words or concepts in this section.]*
 - ◊ Would some of you like to share where you put your X on the two lines in this section?
 - ◊ Have some of you asked the question that is asked here: “Why can’t I move on?” Tell us about that – why do you think you haven’t been able to move on?

- **Follow-up Questions**

- ◊ When you were experiencing one of your past traumatic events, can any of you think back and remember some of these processes happening to you?
 - ◊ Do you have any ideas about what may help you get “un-stuck” from the “crisis-alert mode” and move on?
 - ◊ Have you ever thought that your current Combat Trauma condition proves that you are weak, defective or a coward? Since you have now learned the physiological and spiritual basis of your condition, how has that changed your opinion of yourself?

PTSD Symptoms

- **Content Questions**

- ◊ If you haven’t done it already, read over the list of symptoms and check the ones that you are currently experiencing. Are there any words or concepts that you would like to ask about?
 - ◊ How would you summarize each of the three categories of symptoms?

- **Follow-up Questions**

- ◊ As you look at all of the boxes you checked, if you could pick three symptoms that were the hardest for you to endure, what would they be?
 - ◊ Does the number of boxes you checked make you feel hopeless, or hopeful?
 - ◊ Is it helpful to be able to see the symptoms you are dealing with displayed on the paper there in front of you – and to notice that many others are dealing with the same symptoms?

- **Application Questions**

- ◊ What could you begin to do right away to help lessen the influence of these symptoms on you? *[Note: they may not yet have any ideas – except to pray and keep coming to these group meetings. But that’s OK. Just let them know that the main purpose of the manual and of the group meetings is to give them specific, practical things they can do to bring about their healing. So be sure to keep coming back each week!]*

But where was God?

- **Opening Questions**
 - ◊ When you were experiencing your traumatic situation, did you find yourself asking that question? Did you come up with any answers?
- **Content Questions**
 - ◊ If you *did* ask that question, what does this section say about how good or bad it is to feel that way?
 - ◊ What other famous, godly person asked a question similar to that? [*Jesus Christ.*]
 - ◊ Why *does* God allow bad things to happen in this world – since He's so good and powerful? What does His love have to do with it?
 - ◊ In the analogy about the chicks and the mongoose, why do you think so many people run to the mongoose rather than to the mother hen?
- **Follow-up Questions**
 - ◊ To what extent has your traumatic experience separated you from God? Did God move away, or did you?
 - ◊ Would some of you like to share where you put your X on the line in this section? Could you tell us why you put it there?
 - ◊ Do you agree or disagree with the statement in this section: "Your condition is due to the sinful actions of evil men – not God."?
- **Application Questions**
 - ◊ In which direction are you running right now – toward God or away from Him? If away, do you think that is a good idea? What will it take to get you to change your direction?



BRIDGE 2: CONNECTING ... WITH THE HEALER

CROSSING THE RIVER OF SEPARATION FROM YOUR CREATOR

Objectives:

- To help them understand that God is the most important element in their healing environment.
- To give them a practical way of beginning a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- To help them with the issue of "Assurance of Salvation" after they have received Christ as their Savior.

Discussion Questions:

The Healer

- **Opening Questions**
 - ◊ How important do you think God is in your healing process?
- **Content Questions**
 - ◊ Why did Kamanga feel so proud and confident? What role was God playing in his life at that time? Do you think Kamanga's pride and self-confidence were well-founded?
 - ◊ What had he forgotten about?
 - ◊ Did Dr. Mbere feel that he could get Kamanga all fixed up? How did the doctor say Kamanga was going to be healed?
- **Follow-up Questions**
 - ◊ What are some of the similarities between how we are healed physically and how we are healed psychologically and spiritually?

- ◇ On a scale of one-to-ten, where one is very little and ten is very closely, how close would you say you are currently lining your life up with God's principles of healing (psychologically and spiritually)?

- **Application Questions**

- ◇ What do you need to do to better line your life up with God's healing principles?

would you like to know God personally?

- **Opening Questions**

- ◇ Do you think it's possible for someone to actually know God personally? Why do you think that?

- **Content Questions and Follow-up Questions**

- ◇ [1. *God loves you . . .*] The Bible says that God loves you so much that He was willing to do *what* in order to give you eternal life? Would you be willing to allow your son to die for the sake of another? Why do you think that many, many people do not know God personally?
- ◇ [2. *Man is sinful and separated . . .*] What causes a person to be separated from God? Are there any people who are *not* separated from God? What do you think are the consequences of this separation – are there effects today, or does it only apply to eternity? The diagram shows a great gulf between God and man, with man trying to reach God. What are some ways that men try this? Are any of them successful?
- ◇ [3. *Jesus is God's only provision . . .*] According to Romans 5:8, how did God demonstrate His love toward us? Did He wait until we were perfect, godly people before doing this? Jesus claimed to be the Son of God – how do we know He actually was? [*His resurrection, and the number of people who witnessed it.*] What has changed in the diagram compared to the previous page? [*In all religions but Christianity, man is doing his best to try to reach out to God. One of the unique aspects of Christianity is that it is God doing His best to reach out to man.*] How many ways did Jesus say a person could come to the Father? [*Only through Him – John 14:6.*]
- ◇ [4. *We must individually receive Jesus Christ . . .*] Is it possible to have a relationship with God by being very, very good and doing a great number of generous things for others and for God? [*No, see Ephesians 2:8,9.*] In John 1:12, it says that we need to receive Christ *and* believe in Him. What's the difference? What do you think Jesus meant when He said we must be "born again"? Do you think it's possible for someone to believe in God when they haven't yet opened the door of their life to Jesus Christ? How does our "will" enter into this process?
- ◇ [Two Circles diagram.] Do you understand this diagram? How did each of you answer the two questions beneath the circles?
- ◇ When you receive Christ into your life, how do you know that He has actually answered your prayer and came in?
- ◇ What if you don't *feel* any different?
- ◇ What are some of the things that happen to you *immediately* upon asking Christ to be your Saviour? [*All five points that are listed under the Train diagram. Also, a few more are listed at the fourth bulleted point under "Conclusions."*]
- ◇ Can you now expect that your life will become easy and problem-free, with no more Combat Trauma symptoms? Why not?

- **Application Questions**

- ◇ Have you ever opened the door of your life and asked Jesus to come in and be your Saviour? If not, would you like to do that today?
- ◇ If you have previously asked Christ into your life as your Saviour, would you like to renew that commitment here today?



BRIDGE 3: FILLING . . . OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

CROSSING THE RIVER OF POWERLESSNESS

Objectives:

- To help them understand the ministry of the Holy Spirit in a believer's life.
- To help them understand how to be filled (controlled, powered, directed) by the Holy Spirit and thus connect to the great power source of the Christian life.
- To help them understand and apply the principle of "spiritual breathing" when they are convicted of sin in their lives.

Discussion Questions:

When you need strength beyond your own . . .

- **Opening Questions**
 - ❖ Have you ever felt like you just didn't have enough strength to make it through a day, or to even get out of bed? What did you do?
- **Content Questions**
 - ❖ In this story, what do you think was represented by the front-end loader (or mechanical shovel) that was out of petrol? *[The plans, hopes and desires of a Christian who is not filled with the Holy Spirit. Therefore, he is not connected to the power he needs to accomplish important things in his life.]*
 - ❖ What do you think the petrol supply truck represented? *[God, bringing the power, ability and guidance of the Holy Spirit.]*
- **Follow-up Questions**
 - ❖ So who – or what – was responsible for the rescue of those people from the collapsed building? *[It was a partnership between Mukunzi and the front-end loader that was now filled with petrol. While God is capable of doing anything He wants through miracles, He loves to partner with us as He accomplishes His will. He supplies the power and ability as we work to accomplish what needs to be done.]*
 - ❖ If the petrol supply truck had not come, is it likely that Mukunzi could have rescued Emma and Mariam? Without the help of the Holy Spirit, do you think it is likely that you will be able to recover from your Combat Trauma and go on to your place of healing?
- **Application Questions**
 - ❖ What do you think you should do about this?

Who is the Holy Spirit? / The Filling of the Holy Spirit

- **Opening Questions**
 - ❖ Short answer brain-storming time. In just a sentence or two, what are some of the things you already knew about the Holy Spirit before coming to this study?
- **Content Questions**
 - ❖ This section uses only a few sentences to present God as a "Trinity." This is an extremely deep and vast subject, but what is your understanding about what is meant by the "Trinity"?
 - ❖ As you read the list of things that the Holy Spirit desires to do for us, which are the most important to you, and why?
 - ❖ What are the two commands that God gives us in Ephesians 5:18 (the verse in the manual)?

- **Follow-up Questions**

- ✧ As you read the list of things that the Holy Spirit desires to do for us, which are the most important to you, and why?
- ✧ Do you understand the difference between being “indwelt” and being “filled” by the Holy Spirit? *[If not, go over the concepts again. To be “indwelt” is a “positional truth.” That means it is our unchanging position before God since the time we asked Christ into our life. He will always live inside us and never leave (Hebrews 13:5b). But to be “filled” is a “conditional truth.” That means that we are filled (controlled, guided, empowered) by God’s Spirit as long as certain conditions are met. It has to do with desire, obedience, yielding control to Him, etc.]*
- ✧ How is the controlling influence of alcohol similar to the controlling influence of the Holy Spirit in a person? How are the two different?

Three kinds of people . . .

- **Opening Questions**

- ✧ What do you think of the philosophy represented by the first circle: “I am the Captain of my own soul!” Is that a good principle to live by, or not? Is it even true? Can anybody really control their own life?

- **Content Questions**

- ✧ What do you see as the main problem in the life represented by the first circle?
- ✧ What do you see as the main problem in the life represented by the third circle?
- ✧ What do you think is the main advantage for someone who has Christ on the throne of their life?

- **Follow-up Questions**

- ✧ Which of these three circles represents a person who will most likely be able to experience healing from his or her Combat Trauma? Why do you think that?

- **Application Questions**

- ✧ As the questions in your manual ask, which circle would you say currently represents your life?
- ✧ Which circle would you *like* to have represent your life?
- ✧ What do you think you should do about this?

Five Steps to Filling . . .

- **Opening Questions**

- ✧ If you knew that you could do something that would bring the power and insight of the God of the universe right into you mind and body, what would you be willing to do? *[The good news is, God doesn’t place difficult and hard-to-accomplish tasks on us in order for this to happen. He makes it very easy for us!]*

- **Content Questions & Follow-up Questions**

- ✧ [1. Desire] What does the verse in your manual, Matthew 5:6, say is required in order for us to be filled? How did some of you answer that second question: What would that “desire” look or feel like in your life? Do you think a person could experience the filling of the Holy Spirit if he didn’t really want God leading him in his life?
- ✧ [2. Confess] What are some ways that people might “quench” the Holy Spirit in their lives? If a person refuses to admit and confess his sins before God, why would this keep the Holy Spirit from controlling and empowering him?
- ✧ [3. Yield] How did you answer the question – is “yielding” (or presenting or offering) yourself to God a passive or purposeful action? Does it just happen whether you want it to or not, or do you have to make a decision about it and actually *do* it? What do you think about

the idea of being a “slave to righteousness,” as talked about in the passage (Romans 6:16-18)? What do you think that means? Can you think of something you’ve done in the past that you thought was going to be fun and freeing and would make your life better, but you found out later that it put you into bondage?

- ◇ [4. Ask] Based on the verse talked about in this passage (Luke 11:9-13) how willing do you think God is to say “Yes!” to those who ask Him for the filling of the Holy Spirit? Why?
- ◇ [5. Thank Him in faith] In the verse used in this section (Mark 11:24), why is it important to understand that after we have prayed for something we should believe God has already answered that prayer?

- **Application Questions**

- ◇ After reading the prayer in the *Asking to be filled* section, do you feel it expresses the desire of your heart? If so, would you like to pray that prayer (or something similar) right now?

How do I know He has filled me? / Spiritual Breathing

- **Content Questions**

- ◇ How do God’s **command** and His **promise** work together to let you know for sure that – if you followed the Five Steps and asked to be filled by His Spirit – you *are* now controlled, guided and empowered by Him?
- ◇ How is exhaling like confessing your sins?
- ◇ How is inhaling like asking the Holy Spirit to once again take the throne of your life?
- ◇ If you sin, and re-take the throne of your life, does this mean that you are not longer saved? If not, what *does* it mean?
- ◇ How often do you think you might have to “take a spiritual breath?”

- **Follow-up Questions**

- ◇ How do you think you will know when you have taken Christ off the throne of your life, and seated yourself there?
- ◇ Would someone like to share with the group how your life would look when you are *not* filled by the Holy Spirit, and how it would look when you *are*?

- **Application Questions**

- ◇ What are some things you can do to make sure that you are walking in the fullness of the Holy Spirit *most* of the time? *[Brainstorm. Some of the suggestions might be: spend some time reading God’s Word each day; ask the Holy Spirit to fill me first thing when I wake up every morning; ask a close, trusted friend to hold me accountable on this issue and let me know when he or she sees from my actions or attitudes that I may have re-taken the throne of my life, etc.]*



BRIDGE 4: FORGIVING . . . RECEIVED AND GIVEN

CROSSING THE RIVER OF ANGER AND REVENGE

Objectives:

- To emphasize that to do nothing about their anger will allow a “root of bitterness” to grow and negatively affect their lives.
- To help them understand the importance of seeking God’s forgiveness for their sins and how to go about it.
- To help them know for sure that God can forgive *any and all* sins.
- To show the distinction between “false guilt” and “real guilt” and help them assess the kind of guilt they may be feeling.

- To help them understand the importance of seeking forgiveness from others, and how to go about it.
- To help them understand the importance of forgiving those who have wounded them (physically, emotionally, spiritually) and how to go about it.

Discussion Questions:

The root of bitterness

- **Opening Questions**
 - ◇ As you think about the various injustices you have experienced in your life – those who have attacked and harmed you or your loved ones without cause – how strongly do you feel the need for some kind of revenge or retribution? Do you feel this urge is a positive or negative factor in our life?
- **Content Questions**
 - ◇ What injustices did Semogera experience?
 - ◇ How did this affect him when he grew to manhood?
- **Follow-up Questions**
 - ◇ Do feel that Semogera is justified in his desire for revenge against those who killed his parents, siblings and friends?
 - ◇ Do you think Semogera will ever come to the point when he gotten enough revenge that he no longer feels driven to find his parents' murderers, and can get on with a normal life? How?
- **Application Questions**
 - ◇ On a scale of one to ten, where one is "not at all" and ten is "exactly," how closely do you identify with the adult Semogera who is so driven for revenge? What do you plan to do about this?

Seeking forgiveness from God

- **Opening Questions**
 - ◇ How important do you feel it is that a person be "right with God" in terms of agreeing with Him as He convicts of sin, confessing that sin and keeping Christ on the throne of his life? How will this affect his or her ability to connect with God's power for healing?
- **Content Questions**
 - ◇ Can anyone explain the difference between "false guilt" and "real guilt"?
 - ◇ Did any of you check any of the boxes under the False Guilt section? Would you care to tell us a little about your experience that has led you to feel this way?
 - ◇ How does this section say your should deal with feelings of false guilt?
 - ◇ If you are feeling bad about the "real guilt" you are experiencing, why is this good news?
 - ◇ What are the two steps a person needs to take in order to have Jesus' sacrificial death apply to his or her sins?
 - ◇ If we confess our sins to God (which means to agree with Him that they were wrong), what does He promise to do? What will he do *besides* forgive us? [*Cleanse us from **all** unrighteousness.*]
 - ◇ What does it mean to "repent"?
 - ◇ Is it enough to only do one of these steps – can I confess and not repent, and expect the same outcome?
 - ◇ When would it also be necessary for us to make restitution (pay back) those we have sinned against?

- **Follow-up Questions**

- ❖ Why do you think people continue to hold on to feelings of false guilt?
- ❖ Is it possible that you may have done something so bad that you are beyond God's ability to forgive you? *[The answer is no. Psalm 103:2,3 – Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget none of His benefits; Who pardons **all** your iniquities, Who heals **all** your diseases; Isaiah 1:18 – Though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool.]*
- ❖ Who wants you to continue to feel oppressed by a load of unforgiven sin? *[Satan]* Are you going to let him get what he wants in this area? It's not doing you any good, it's not required by God – only Satan is enjoying it! *[OK, a little preaching there – but it's a good point to make!]*

- **Application Questions**

- ❖ What did you think of the "Memorial Project"? Have you done it yet? If not, do you think it would be meaningful for you to follow the instructions regarding this?
- ❖ Would you like to do this together as a group next week?

Seeking forgiveness from others

- **Opening Questions**

- ❖ If you have wronged someone in the past, how important do you think it is that you seek that person's forgiveness?
- ❖ Do you think it would be enough to simply confess it to God, promise not to do it again, and have no further contact with the person you hurt? Why or why not?

- **Content Questions**

- ❖ In the verses in this section (Matthew 5:23, 24), how important did Jesus feel it was that you seek reconciliation and forgiveness with those you have hurt in the past?
- ❖ How can you decide who you should seek forgiveness from? *[As the manual suggests, "Ask God to show you who you have hurt."]*
- ❖ Why is hurting another person like a "double sin"? *[See the next section: "Ask God to forgive you for the pain you caused."]*
- ❖ Why is it a good idea to pray for those you have hurt before you go see them?

- **Follow-up Questions**

- ❖ Would you find it difficult or hard to go to someone you have hurt to ask them for their forgiveness? What do you think makes this hard for most people?
- ❖ How do you think you would feel after having done it? How will it affect the person you have hurt?
- ❖ If you feel very anxious about going to someone to seek their forgiveness, what are some things you can do to give yourself courage to go through with it?
- ❖ What should you do if the person you have gone to becomes angry, and refuses to forgive you? *[Be kind and gracious – and leave. You've done all that you can do. As in every relationship, you can only control what happens on your side of it. You have no control over the other person's response. You can ask for their forgiveness and set the stage for reconciliation, but you can't make them be reconciled to you. Pray for that person – see how God might soften their heart by His love shown through you and others.]*
- ❖ What should you do if the person you have hurt lives far away, or you don't know where they live, or they have died?
- ❖ What's wrong with saying this to the person you sinned against: "If you feel that I have hurt you in some way, then I apologize."? Or what's wrong with saying, "I'm sorry I did what I did, but if you hadn't *first* done what *you* did, I wouldn't have responded as I did."

- **Application Questions**

- ❖ What are some practical things you can do to rebuild the trust of someone you have hurt?

Forgiving those who have wounded you

- **Opening Questions**

- ❖ If you forgive someone who has wronged you, and don't seek vengeance, aren't you agreeing with them that what they did is OK? Won't they just keep doing that hurtful thing to others? *[By forgiving, we are not condoning the sin. We want God to deal with them directly, so we step out of the way to let Him work. When Jesus asked His Father to forgive those who were killing Him, He was in no way condoning murder and false conviction. He was showing the Father's love to them, which could eventually bring them to a place of righteousness and reconciliation to God. On the eternal scale, that is much more desirable than seeing them punished. We can forgive someone from our heart so that we no longer hold a grudge against them, but still allow for legal processes to bring about civil justice. Murderers should still pay for their crime.]*

- **Content Questions & Follow-up Questions**

- ❖ Have you ever heard of that saying, "Fight fire with fire"? Can you understand why people might agree with that philosophy? Why is it not a helpful path to take?
 - ❖ How does forgiving those who have wronged you benefit *you*? How does *not* forgiving them hurt you?
 - ❖ How is *not* forgiving like the poison ivy in the analogy?
 - ❖ How is forgiving those who have hurt you similar to how God likes to act toward those who have sinned against Him? Do you *really* want to be like God? Will this aspect of God's nature give you problems?
 - ❖ Would anyone care to share where you put your X on the line indicating how confident you are that God can give you a forgiving heart toward your attackers? Would you mind if we took a couple of minutes right now and prayed for you about that issue?
 - ❖ Who do you think will do a better job of seeking vengeance against those who have unjustly harmed you or your loved ones, you or God (Romans 12:19)? Have you come to a place yet where you are willing to let God take care of this matter with no help from you?

- **Application Questions**

- ❖ If you haven't done it yet, let's take time right now to work through those three steps to forgiving those who have wounded you.
 - ❖ If you have already done that exercise, please share your experience with us. Was it difficult? How did you feel afterwards? Is it something you will have to do several times – until your emotions can finally catch up with your will?



BRIDGE 5: BUILDING . . . A HOUSE OF HEALING

CROSSING THE RIVER OF SPIRITUAL POVERTY

Objectives:

- To provide practical input on how to build an environment that will give God optimal access to the Combat Trauma sufferer's body, mind and spirit for the purpose of healing.
- To help them understand the foundational truths about four key elements of the foundation of their house of healing: prayer, God's Word, the Christian community and Christian counseling, and how to be connected and engaged with each of them.

Discussion Questions:

Building a proper house

- **Opening Questions**

- ◊ Has anyone here ever been involved in construction of a house? If so, give us a two-minute course in how to do it – from beginning to end. *[When he is done, ask questions about the process and materials he mentioned, highlighting what the finished product would be like if we tried to build a house in a way other than he described –not using a good architect, using poor materials, following the procedures out of order, etc.]*

- **Content Questions**

- ◊ What were some of the foolish principles that Akili was using to build his house? Did any of them *seem* like a good idea, but really weren't?
- ◊ Akili was planning to build his house with branches, stones, holes and an umbrella. What does the manual propose that we build our houses of healing with? *[Note the four foundational elements of their "house of healing" at the end of this section: Prayer, God's Word, the Christian Community and Counseling.]*

- **Follow-up Questions**

- ◊ As you consider how you have been approaching your Combat Trauma to this point, do you think you are building a pretty good "house of healing," or are there some ways you know you need to improve your approach?

- **Application Questions**

- ◊ What changes do you plan to make within the next month?

1. Prayer: Vital communication with your divine commander

- **Opening Questions**

- ◊ As the opening question in this section asks, why do you think so few Christians spend much time in prayer?

- **Content Questions**

- ◊ How is prayer like the interaction between a husband and his wife?
- ◊ What are the three different ways that God may choose to answer our prayers?
- *[Note: if you have time, look up a few of the passages listed under each of the three ways God answers prayer.]*
- ◊ How can we increase the number of "Yes" answers to our prayers *[see Psalm 37:4 in manual – if the Lord is our delight, then our desires will automatically line up with His, and before we even make our request, our prayers will reflect His will.]*

- **Follow-up Questions**

- ◊ Do you feel that currently you are praying too much, too little, or just the right amount? If too little, what could you do to change that? If too much . . . can I have your autograph?? (You are a rare person indeed!)
- ◊ How do you think spending more time talking with God in prayer will help you with your Combat Trauma?
- ◊ What are two things that you have prayed about today? Look at the list of examples of prayers from the Bible. Were your two prayers similar to any of those there?
- ◊ Do you feel comfortable with the idea that you can pray to God about *anything* – that you can even express your doubts, anger, confusion and fears to Him?
- ◊ Why do you think it's always important to mix our requests with thanksgiving, as it says in Philippians 4:6?

- **Application Questions**

- ◊ Did you feel motivated to fill in the blanks in the “Personal Commitment” area of this section? If so, would you care to share what you wrote?
- ◊ Do you have any ideas how you will be able to hold yourself to this commitment? *[How about designating a “battle buddy” who will help hold you accountable?]*

The Word of God – your divine food and weapon

- **Opening Questions**

- ◊ Can anyone describe what happens to a body when it doesn't get proper nourishment?
- ◊ Have any of you had to go a long time without food, as part of your trauma experience? What was it like? How did it affect your energy, motivation, ambition, ability to do what you needed to do, etc.?

- **Content Questions**

- ◊ Let's look at each of the Scripture verses in this table that highlight some of the benefits of reading, studying and applying the Bible. *[If they have done this exercise ahead of time, ask them to share what they came up with. If not, do it together as a group now. When done . . .]* Do these all seem like good reasons to make it a regular habit to read your Bible daily? So what might keep you from this daily diet of God's food?

- **Follow-up Questions**

- ◊ How is God's word like bread and milk? *[Matthew 4:4; 1 Peter 2:2]*
- ◊ How would going without spiritual food for a long time be similar to going without physical food?
- ◊ How is God's word like a sword? *[Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12]* How can you use the Word of God like a weapon – and who would you use it against?
- ◊ In Psalm 119:9, 11 when David said that he had “hidden Your word in my heart,” what do you think he meant by that? *[Memorizing and meditating on it. Note: a person will only effectively remember 5% of what he hears, 15% of what he reads, 35% of what he studies, but 100% of what he memorizes. What does that tell you about the importance of using a variety of methods to take in the Word of God?]*

- **Application Questions**

- ◊ Did you feel motivated to fill in the blanks in the “Personal Commitment” area in this section? If so, would you care to share what you wrote?

The Christian Community – Divine Base Camp

- **Opening Questions**

- ◊ What do you think is meant by the term “The Church”? How important is it to you to be involved with a local church?
- ◊ What are some reasons why people don't want to go to church? What can we do to help eliminate some of those reasons?
- ◊ From those of you who have been in the military, tell us about Base Camp. What kinds of things happened there? What was *good* about it? How are each of these things similar to how a church is supposed to function?

- **Content Questions**

- ◊ How is the church like a physical body?
- ◊ Let's look at each of the Scripture verses in this table that describe what is supposed to happen at church. *[If they have done this exercise ahead of time, ask them to share what they came up with. If not, do it together as a group now. When done . . .]* If each of these things were happening at a church, would you be motivated to go there? What can you contribute to make sure that they *do* happen at your church?

- ❖ Those who struggle with Combat Trauma may tend to stay away from crowds – and church. But what are some of the reasons why it would be worth the effort to go? *[Note: the study lists a number of negative things staying away from Christian fellowship will do. Have them turn them around to positive statements about the good things that happen when one spends time with other Christians.]*
- ❖ What are some of the benefits Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 mentions that those who spend time with other Christians will enjoy?
- **Follow-up Questions**
 - ❖ As someone who struggles with Combat Trauma, do you find it difficult to go to church? Or, if you do go, do you get anxious when you're there? How are you able to continue going there if it makes you anxious?
 - ❖ Have any of you ever gone through a period when you had a difficult time going to church, or being in groups of people of any kind? Are any of you still struggling with that? Have you found some things that help you deal with the anxiety associated with this?
- **Application Questions**
 - ❖ Do you have the level of Christian fellowship that you need? If not, what do you plan to do about it? How can we help you?

Christian Counseling

- **Opening Questions**
 - ❖ Have any of you ever been involved in receiving some consistent counseling – either with a Christian counselor, a chaplain, a pastor, or with a non-Christian counselor? How was it? What did you like about it, and what did you dislike about it?
 - ❖ What do you think most people think about those who receive counseling? Is it a sign of weakness or wisdom? What do you think, and why?
- **Content Questions**
 - ❖ With regards to Combat Trauma and PTSD, what is one of the most important things that can happen during a counseling session? *[You're given a chance to bring up and talk about the suppressed, painful memories of your trauma and to process them in a safe place – which is a very important part of your healing.]*
- **Follow-up Questions**
 - ❖ If you can't find or afford a counselor, what can you do instead? *[Find a Christian friend who is a good listener and is prepared to hear the difficult things you need to share – perhaps another member of this group? Make sure that this person is able to keep confidential the things which you share.]*
 - ❖ In a way, is what you're experiencing here in these meetings a lot like what would normally happen in a counseling situation (assuming you are actually sharing some of your traumatic experiences with the rest of us)?
 - ❖ But in what ways would a trained counselor, chaplain or pastor who can talk with you one-to-one be even more beneficial than this group?
 - ❖ What would the benefits be of combining the two – attending a group like this *and* meeting a trained counselor, chaplain or pastor on a regular basis?
- **Application Questions**
 - ❖ If there is currently no one that you could say is really your “counselor,” what do you plan to do about that? Who could you approach about being your counselor?



BRIDGE 6: REMEMBERING . . . WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU**CROSSING THE RIVER OF PAINFUL MEMORIES****Objectives:**

- To help group members remember, journal and process the painful memories of their trauma.
- To help them understand that keeping these memories suppressed will do them more harm than good, so – as difficult as it might be – it's better to get them out and talk about them.
- **Note to the Facilitator.** *Let the group know that this will probably be one of the most difficult Bridges to cross – but it may be the most helpful of them all. You may want to consider breaking this chapter up into three sessions (or even more): the first to cover the opening story, the “Rules”, and writing “Part 1: My Life Before My Trauma.” The second session would have them write “Part 2: What Happened To Me During The Fighting.” The third would have them write “Part 3: My Life Since the Fighting.” It's up to you, but it might be more productive to have them do their writing while they are there with you in the group session. If they can't write, you could have them pair up with another group member and share their stories verbally – even including discussion between the two of them. If you'd rather they do their writing at home, and bring it in to share with the others, that's fine – whatever you and the Lord decide!*

Discussion Questions:

How small problems become big problems

- **Opening Questions**
 - ◇ Have you ever had an experience like Hamisi did – where you neglected a small problem and it eventually became a very big problem? Would you care to share it with the rest of the group?
 - ◇ What do you think this statement means: “You are only as sick as your secrets.”
 - ◇ You don't have to answer this out loud, but just think about it for a moment. Do you have some secrets related to your time of trauma that you've kept inside which are making you sicker and sicker?
- **Content Questions**
 - ◇ What was Hamisi's attitude toward his memories of combat? Was this helping him or hurting him? Why?
 - ◇ Why would most of us rather not think about our painful past than to bring it up and talk about it?
 - ◇ What are some of the emotional things that might happen to you as you process these memories. Nevertheless, what good will come out of it?
- **Follow-up Questions**
 - ◇ How could this desire to suppress memories be related to alcohol and drug abuse? What other behaviors do people engage in to try to distract themselves so they won't think about their painful memories?
- **Application Questions**
 - ◇ What are some of the things you do in order to avoid thinking about your traumatic memories which you need to stop doing? Which behaviors will you need to have help in overcoming?

Getting the secrets out

- **Opening Questions**
 - ◇ What do you think of the idea that your life is like a poem that God has written? Do you feel He has been a good writer or a bad writer so far?

- **Content Questions**

- ◊ God is not the author of evil, yet many evil things have happened to you in your life. How do those occurrences fit into God's poem?
- ◊ Go over the "Rules" one at a time as a group. If you come to any of them that you don't understand or have questions about, be sure to ask your group facilitator.

- **Follow-up Questions**

- ◊ Do you think you will be able to write your story? If not, would you be able to record it, or to simply tell it to one of your friends, a fellow group member or the group facilitator?

Writing Your story – Part 1: My Life Before My Trauma

- **Opening Questions**

- ◊ Would you consider yourself a good story-teller?
- ◊ What do you think makes a good story? A good story-teller?

- **Content Questions**

- ◊ Why do you think it's a good idea to start this exercise by first writing about how your life was before you experienced your trauma?
- ◊ Read over the suggestions regarding what you might include in this part of the story. Which ones do you think you'll use?

- **Special Exercise**

- *Let them start writing. Give them some idea of how much time they should plan on.*
- *When they are done, you could have a couple of them share what they wrote, or wait until the next session and have several share during the first part of the meeting. After they read, let the group members comment, ask questions, but most importantly, affirm the one who just shared. Part of the good therapy of this exercise is the writing, but reading what they wrote out loud adds to the experience's therapeutic nature.*

Writing Your story – Part 2: What Happened To Me During The Fighting

- **Opening Questions**

- ◊ Did you experience any difficulties writing Part 1? Do you think you gained anything from that exercise?
- ◊ How difficult do you think it will be for you to write Part 2? Are you still willing to do it anyway?

- **Content Questions**

- ◊ Why do you think it is important for you to get in touch with your feelings and emotions as you think through this second part of your story? *[See what Dr. Matsakis wrote in this section.]*

- **Special Exercise**

- ◊ Let's go over the "Rules" again before you start writing. If you get overwhelmed emotionally as you do this exercise, it's OK to take a break, go outside for a little while, etc. – but be sure to come back! Honestly, you may not want to, but you must remember that this is hard but *important work*.
- *Read the section to them about feelings and emotions, so they will be prepared and not startled by the feelings that may come out. Then let them begin writing.*
- *Again, when they are done, you could have a couple share what they wrote, or wait until next session.*

Writing Your story – Part 3: My Life Since The Fighting

- **Opening Questions**

- ◊ How did you do with Part 2? Was it as hard as you thought it was going to be, or harder?

- ❖ What do you think you gained from writing out that part of the story?
- **Content Questions**
 - ❖ Read through the list of suggestions about the content of this part. Which ones do you think you would like to write about?
- **Special Exercise**
 - *Go over the "Rules" one more time if you think you need to – or just quickly highlight a few of the important ones. Be sure they understand that they should write both the good and the bad things that have happened since their trauma, and how they feel about it. Then let them start writing.*
 - *When done, have a couple share what they wrote or wait until next session.*

Inviting Jesus into your pain

- **Opening Questions**
 - ❖ What have you noticed about yourself and your anxiety level since you wrote those three parts of your story? Has it been a positive or negative experience for you?
- **Content Questions**
 - ❖ You have some very difficult and dark places hidden in your mind. What does Jesus want to do about those dark places? Do you think He'll have any trouble going into those dark places? Why or why not?
- **Special Exercise**
 - *Read through the section as a group, making sure that they understand how they are to go through this visualization exercise. Help them understand that this is not a once-in-a-lifetime exercise. It's something they should engage in periodically to allow the Lord to have greater access to every part of their life.*
 - *Be sure that you pray together as a group before doing this exercise.*
 - *You may want to have people go to different parts of the room or building you're in, or even go to different places outside, so they can be alone and concentrate.*
 - *This exercise is very good to use while on a retreat or somewhere away from home as a group.*
 - *After you've given the group members a sufficient period of time alone (30 to 60 minutes), bring them back together and have them share their experiences.,*



BRIDGE 7: GRIEVING . . . YOUR LOSS

CROSSING THE RIVER OF DARK SADNESS

Objectives:

- To help group members understand that grieving over what they lost in their traumatic combat experience is not only OK – it's *important*.
- To help them understand what the normal grief process looks like.
- To give them practical insights regarding how to grieve and how *not* to grieve.
- To give them practical insights regarding how to mourn.

Discussion Questions:**Denying Grief**

- **Opening Questions**

- ✧ Outside of your war-related experiences, what is something that you have grieved about in the past? Do you think you are still grieving over this?
- ✧ What are your thoughts about grieving? Is it important not to show emotion when suffering a loss? Does grieving show a lack of faith? Is openly mourning a loss considered un-manly or weak? Do you feel embarrassed if someone sees you crying because of a loss?

- **Content Questions**

- ✧ Did it seem like Sentwali might be suffering from Combat Trauma? Why do you think that?
- ✧ What did Grandfather Léon try to get Sentwali to do early in the story? *[To talk about his traumatic experiences.]*
- ✧ What was Sentwali afraid of? *[12th paragraph in this section – he was afraid that if he allowed himself to think too deeply about his friends who were killed, he wouldn't be able to stop his tears.]* Do some of you feel the same way about some of the losses you have experienced?
- ✧ So what did he do to keep from grieving? *[He denied how much it hurt him, tried not to think about his dead friends, the horror he saw, suppressed his memories.]* Is this something that some of you do?
- ✧ What did Grandfather Léon recommend that Sentwali should do? *[Learn how to grieve.]*

- **Follow-up Questions**

- ✧ Do you think Sentwali's practice of denying and suppressing his memories and grief was a good one? Why or why not?
- ✧ How was Sentwali like the old village tractor?
- ✧ When it comes to how you deal with your traumatic memories, are you more like Sentwali or more like Grandfather Léon? Why?

- **Application Questions**

- ✧ If you haven't already done this, can you decide on someone that you can talk about your traumatic losses with? Make a list, and begin praying and asking God to make it clear who you could talk with.

Understanding Grief – a “sacred sorrow”/The Purpose of Grief

- **Opening Questions**

- ✧ When something very bad has happened to you or to a loved one, and you feel grieved over it, what does it feel like to you? Can you describe your feelings?

- **Content Questions**

- ✧ What triggers grief? *[Loss – 3rd paragraph.]*
- ✧ Would anyone like to share what they wrote in the “Name your loss” exercise in this section?
- ✧ From the “When we grieve” list, which point hits you personally as a good reason why you should grieve? Why?

- **Follow-up Questions**

- ✧ Why do you think it's important to “name” your losses?
- ✧ How were you able to handle those losses? How did they affect you?
- ✧ Think back. Can you think of any ways that God helped you through that difficult time?
- ✧ Do you think you'll ever receive back what you lost, or be able to replace it? How does that make you feel? What do you think you should do about those feelings?

- ✧ Have you been experiencing any physical or psychological problems [*See list: "When we refuse to grieve"*] that may be linked back to your unwillingness to grieve over your losses?

How NOT TO Grieve/How TO Grieve

- **Opening Questions**

- ✧ What are some of the inappropriate ways you have seen people grieve over a loss in the past?

- **Content Questions & Follow-up Questions**

- ✧ If you haven't done so already, take a few minutes to go through the list of how we should *not* grieve, and check any that you might do. [*Afterwards . . .*] would anyone care to share their list with the group? Could you choose one or two that you checked and share an example of how you personally used that technique of inappropriate grieving?
- ✧ Look at the seven stages of grief that Elizabeth Kübler-Ross identified. [*Read them out loud.*] As you think back to your traumatic combat experiences, can you say which stage of grief you are currently in? [*They may identify with a couple of stages simultaneously – that's OK. Also, make sure they understand that people don't necessarily go through these stages in a nice, neat progression. Read the paragraph, "A few words about the process."*]
- ✧ What do you think might help you to progress on to the next stage?
- ✧ Read the verse in the manual (2 Corinthians 1:3,4). From this verse, can you see something beneficial that will come out of your time of affliction and grief? Can you think of anyone who has gone through a trauma similar to yours who is helping you now? Can you think of someone *you* could now help?

- **Application Questions**

- ✧ If you have an idea about what you might do to help yourself progress to the next stage of grief, how will you go about doing it? Who might be able to help you? When will you start?
- ✧ If you can think of anyone whom you might be able to help in the way you were helped (as in 2 Corinthians 1:3,4), can you make a plan to begin doing that soon?

How to have a good mourning

- **Opening Questions**

- ✧ What are some of the ways that you or your family would typically mourn over a loved-one who has died?

- **Content Questions**

- ✧ What's the difference between *grief* and *mourning*?
- ✧ Read Matthew 5:4 in your Bible. What does this verse say is necessary to receive comfort?
- ✧ According to Psalm 34:18 (in the manual), what can you expect from God because of the pain and trauma you experienced?
- ✧ What is it that we should have faith in? [*God.*] What can happen if we put our faith in our circumstances or in a particular desire? How can we avoid doing that?

- **Follow-up Questions**

- ✧ Can you think of anyone who can help you walk through your valley of grief, as mentioned in the "Don't try to go it alone" section?
- ✧ Some practical ways of dealing with the anger that often accompanies grief are listed in the "Do something with your anger" section. Can you think of any additional way?
- ✧ Can any of you identify with King David and how grieved he was? What were some of the elements of how he mourned? Do you think that David was anything less than "all-man"? If you mourned like the great warrior King David did, would you still feel embarrassed, weak and less manly?

- **Application Questions**

- ◊ Did you do what was suggested in the “Remember where God is” section, visualizing Jesus wrapping His arms around you and holding you tight? If not, take a few minutes right now to ask Him to enter your pain with you, and visualize Him embracing you.
- ◊ If you haven’t already, can you contact a friend who would be willing to help you through your grief process, as mentioned in the “Don’t try to go it alone” section?

Signs that your mourning is working

- **Content Questions**

- ◊ What were some of the “Why?” questions that you wrote down in this section?
- ◊ How were you able to change some of those questions into “How?” questions?
- ◊ What are some of the additional “How?” questions you came up with? *[This could be a good exercise for the group to do together – a brainstorming session.]*

- **Follow-up Questions**

- ◊ Why do you think the “How?” questions are healthier ones to ask than the “Why?” questions?
- ◊ Have you ever received many answers to your “Why?” questions?

- **Application Questions**

- ◊ What kind of a “Grief Memorial” could you make that would connect with the loss you suffered? When do you plan to make it?



BRIDGE 8: DEFENDING . . . YOURSELF SPIRITUALLY

CROSSING THE RIVER OF SPIRITUAL VULNERABILITY

Objectives:

- To help group members understand who their TRUE enemy is, and how to fight him in the spiritual realm.
- To help them understand the concept of “doorways and footholds” as areas of vulnerability that Satan will use to try to defeat them and to identify any doorways and footholds in their lives that they need to take care of.
- To help them understand and use the spiritual weapons that are available to them in their battle against Satan.

Discussion Questions:

Resistance = Victory

- **Opening Questions**

- ◊ What are some basic strategies of war that you are aware of? Can you relate them to our spiritual war with our ancient enemy, Satan?

- **Content Questions**

- ◊ As Satan tempted Ojo to steal Bonsu’s money, what were some of the persuasive arguments he used?
- ◊ What did Ojo do once he realized Satan’s temptation – how did he fight Satan?
- ◊ What is it that made Satan leave? *[Ojo’s intentional resistance to his temptations. You might look up James 4:7,8 in your Bible and share it with the group. It highlights the fact that if we simply resist the devil, he will flee from us. It is a foundational truth associated with this Bridge. You will see all four elements of James 4:7,8 in this story: 1. Commit yourself to God (Ojo was a Christian). 2. Resist the devil. 3. Draw near to God (his prayer after the*

confrontation). 4. Cleanse your hands (repent). Also, Ojo used Jesus' main tactic when He fought Satan in Matthew 4 – the Word of God was His weapon.]

❖ What did Ojo do right after Satan left him alone?

- **Follow-up Questions**

❖ Would you have fallen for any of Satan's persuasive arguments or suggestions in this story? Do you think anyone else would? How about someone whose decision-making abilities are weakened due to Combat Trauma, and whose needs are desperate?

- **Application Questions**

❖ The next time you sense that Satan is tempting you to sin, how could you react the way Ojo did?

Know your enemy

- **Opening Questions**

❖ If any of you here were (or are) in the military, what are some of the tactics you remember about the enemies you fought?

- **Content Questions**

❖ Look at each of the bulleted points in this section. Each of them correspond to an element in the opening story. Can you link each of these points with the part in the story they correspond to?

- **Follow-up Questions**

❖ Brain-storming time. What do you know about Satan? Any fact that you can think of – his origins, his tactics, his destination, what he's like – and we'll write them all down here *[on blackboard, white board, big piece of paper, or just on your notepad. After they have exhausted their ideas, if you can think of any others, add them to the list.]*

Satan's Primary Tactic – Doorways and Footholds

- **Opening Questions**

❖ This section talks about how Satan will often offer us “freedom” of some sort, but then it always turns out to be *bondage* instead. Can you think of some examples of this?

- **Content Questions & Follow-up Questions**

❖ Read Genesis 4:1-12 in your Bible to get the context of the truth found in verse 7. What does it say sin (Satan) is doing? What is the door that this verse is referring to? *[It refers to a person's will – 3rd paragraph in this section.]*

❖ Who else wants to come through the door of your will? *[Jesus – Revelation 3:20.]* Once Jesus has gone through that door, is it then shut and locked? *[Obviously not – we are continually peeking outside to see what the devil has to offer, and sometimes we let him in too. This is why the Holy Spirit and the unholy spirit are in a constant battle to be the one we listen to and obey.]*

❖ What other analogy is used to describe Satan's tactics? *[Footholds.]* How are footholds used in order to “conquer” a mountain or a cliff? How is this like Satan's method of trying to conquer us? *[He'll do it one small, inconspicuous step at a time, so as not to alert us to his activities.]*

❖ Spend a few moments (if you haven't already) and write down some of the doorways and footholds that Satan tends to use in order to tempt you to sin (you may want to consult what you wrote in the “Defending our areas of weakness” section). If anyone feels bold enough, perhaps they would be willing to share some of their areas of vulnerability?

❖ Now go through the list of “Possible Doorways and Footholds.” Circle the number of any items that you have engaged in or had contact with. *[Remind them that, just because they have experienced one of the occurrences listed, it doesn't necessarily mean they have opened a door – but they may have. It's something they need to ask God about.]*

- *Note: you may want to go over the list of Possible Doorways and Footholds as a group first to find out if anyone has questions about them.*
- ◇ Let's spend some time now privately going through the three steps listed under "Closing Doorways." *[Note: you may want to let them go outside or to some other area of the building you're in to give each person some privacy. If they have any actions to take listed in the second step (such as destroying offending objects) they will have to do that later and report back to the group about it. Another alternative would be to have them do this on their own at home, and then report back to the group next meeting. Depending on how close your group has become in the previous weeks, you might even consider doing it in a group. One individual would go to the center of the group, everyone else would lay hands on him and pray for him as he goes through the suggested prayer, specifically naming the doorways he has opened. Then it would be someone else's turn. This will greatly add to the group's unity and accountability. Also, remind everyone about the "Rule" of privacy and confidentiality.]*

Our Weapons - #1: Authority

- **Opening Questions**
 - ◇ What do you know about the importance of "superior weaponry" when it comes to warfare?
- **Content Questions**
 - ◇ What's the difference between "power" and "exousia"? *[By the way, it's pronounced "Eck-soo-SEE-uh.]*
 - ◇ Who has been given Christ's *exousia*? How and why were we given Christ's *exousia*?
- **Follow-up Questions**
 - ◇ How does our having Christ's *exousia* help us in our battle with Satan? How do we *use* Christ's *exousia*? *[Through the spoken word, just as Ojo did in the opening story when he commanded Satan to leave; just as Jesus did in Matthew 4 when He commanded Satan to leave. In each case, Satan had to obey, stop his actions, and leave – our *exousia* is greater than his because it comes from Christ.]*
 - ◇ If we are living in sin, occupying the throne of our life, and not willing to repent, do you think we can still count on our *exousia* being stronger than Satan's? *[No – our place of warring is "with Christ in the heavenly realms" (Ephesians 2:6). If we willingly disobey God, we quench His Spirit and voluntarily leave His "military war room." We are, of course, still saved, but we are trying to fight our war alone – and we're going to get hit hard. It's much better to keep our eternal, all-wise Commander-in-Chief on the war-throne of our life!]*

Our Weapons - #2: Our Spiritual Armor

- **Opening Questions**
 - ◇ In sports, why is a good defense as important as a good offense? Why is it also important in military battles? Why is it also important in spiritual battles?
- **Content Questions & Follow-up Questions**
 - ◇ Look at the list of six elements of our spiritual armor. What do you think it would be like if God didn't supply each of those six elements? (For instance, why would not having the Belt of Truth make us more vulnerable to the attacks of Satan?)
 - ◇ Why is the "Sword of the Spirit" a unique element? How do we use it offensively? How do we use it defensively?
- **Application Assignment**
 - Starting tomorrow morning during your prayer time or devotional time, prayerfully accept each of the six elements of your spiritual armor and put it on. Imagine yourself standing before God's throne as He hands them to you one at a time. Receive them from Him, and then put them on. You might pray along these lines, "Heavenly Father, I receive from your hands and wrap around my waist the Belt of Truth. Thank You, Jesus, that You *are* the

Truth. May I today believe only the truth, speak only the truth, and receive only the truth.”
And so on through each piece of your armor.

Our Weapons – #3: The Word of God

- **Opening Questions**
 - ◊ How do we humans normally get things done when something needs to be accomplished? For instance, if we build a house, what “tools” do we use? *[Examples: our muscles, shovels, hammers, saws, axes, etc.]*
- **Content Questions**
 - ◊ How are things accomplished in the spiritual realm? *[Through the spoken word. Have members of the group who have a Bible look up some of the examples of this listed in the workbook. In each case, ask, “How did this person use the spoken word to accomplish spiritual work?”]*
- **Follow-up Questions**
 - ◊ If Satan was trying to trick you into telling a lie, how would you defend yourself and defeat Him? *[Be sure the answer includes speaking directly to Satan, and quoting a verse of scripture that is about not telling lies, such as Leviticus 19:11]*
 - ◊ How did Ojo use the spoken word and the Word of God in his encounter with Satan in the opening story?
- **Application Project**
 - As a group, put together a “Spiritual Warfare Ammunition Bunker.” Think up a number of common temptations that Satan uses, and come up with a verse that would counter it and be used in spiritual warfare. Examples: Anger – Proverbs 16:32; Lying – Leviticus 19:11; Disrespect for authority – Ephesians 5:21; Alcohol – Proverbs 20:21; etc.



BRIDGE 9: SEEING . . . WHO YOU REALLY ARE

CROSSING THE RIVER OF SELF-HATRED

Objectives:

- To help them rebuild their shattered identity based on what God says about them, not based on what the world, the devil or their own negative self-perceptions say.

Discussion Questions:

Forgetting the truth

- **Opening Questions**
 - ◊ How has your war-related trauma experiences changed your opinion of yourself? Has your self-perception become more positive or more negative?
- **Content Questions**
 - ◊ What did Adama think about himself after his war experiences?
 - ◊ Was he correct? *[In terms of how Adama was currently living his life, yes – he was a drunk, disabled, etc. But that isn’t who he is. Proverbs 23:7 says, “As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.” What we think about ourselves will strongly shape how we act, how we see ourselves, and how others see us. That’s why it’s so important that we tell ourselves the truth.]*
- **Follow-up Questions**
 - ◊ What would you say to Adama to try to change his mind?

Combat Trauma and self-hatred

- **Opening Questions**

- ◇ “Self-hatred” is a very strong term. Do any of you think it applies to how you feel about yourself? If you could come up with a term that was more accurate and wasn't so strong, what would it be?

- **Content Questions & Follow-up Questions**

- ◇ What forces are at work that will fuel a combat veteran's fire of negative self-image and self-hatred?
- ◇ How will Satan use this self-hatred as a doorway or foothold to defeat someone who suffers from war-related trauma?
- ◇ The foundations of your negative self-perception are the lies of Satan. How does he tell you these lies? What means does he use?
- ◇ Spend a few minutes (if you haven't already) studying the “Self-perception Assessment.” *[Note: make sure each group member understands all of the terms.]* As the manual directs, place an X on each line indicating your current opinion of yourself. When you're done, share your results with the group and give them your general perception of how you have “scored” yourself. Do you feel good or bad about it? Do you think it needs to change? Do you think it can?

- **Follow-up Questions**

- ◇ When it comes to our self-perception, why *do* we listen to the lies of our enemy, while ignoring the truth which comes from the Word of God?

Deceptions #1 through #8 / Your TRUE Identity #1 through #8

Note: For each of these eight sections, follow the same general approach below. Spend some time before the group meeting thinking up one or two Follow-up Questions that you could use after each question in the study. For instance, relating to Ephesians 1:4 – “Even before He made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in His eyes.” Manual question: You were known, loved and chosen by God how long ago? The answer is, “Since even before He made the world.” A good Follow-up Question for that could be, “Since the God of the Universe knew and loved you even before He created the earth, how might that change your sense of self-respect?”

- **Content Questions & Follow-up Questions**

- ◇ How many of you struggle with some of those “Lies of the enemy” statements from time to time? What makes you feel that way?
- ◇ Read the verses in this section and then see if you can answer the question that is posed after each verse *[Or, let's answer them together as a group.]*

This Is Who I Am

Note: If you are able to, make copies of this proclamation listing the eight self-perception truths from this study, and give one to each group member. Encourage them to post it somewhere in their room or their home, keep it in their Bible, or any place where they will see it frequently and remind themselves of the truth about who they are.

- **Group Exercise**

- Have the group stand up and read the proclamation aloud. It might be even more meaningful if the group stood in a circle, with one hand holding the paper with the proclamation on it, the other hand on the shoulder of the person next to him or her.

- **Content Questions**

- ◇ Would each of you be willing to take the Self-Perception Assessment again in about a month, and see what differences God has brought about?

- **Follow-up Questions**

- ◇ After all we've learned in this chapter, is there still one or more of these eight areas that you are struggling with?

FINAL MEETING

Your final meeting should be a great time of celebration and honor. Plan on having a dinner, invite spouses and family members. Have each group member come up and say a few words about what they experienced during the time the group met, and then you should lead the group in prayer for that person.

It would also be appropriate to present each group member with a memento of some sort – a certificate, a medal, a coin, a small carving – something physical that will remind him or her of their time in this Combat Trauma Care Group, and of all God did during that time.

Your next job – if it hasn't already been accomplished – is to get them involved in some sort of service to others. A great idea would be to encourage them to lead a Combat Trauma Care Group, or to assist you in your next one. Don't let them stop growing now! Keep them motivated to continue seeking the Kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33)!



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