

The Joy of the Lord is my Strength!

Neh. 8: 10



**walking with
the wounded**

Kanaan Ministries

Amanda Buys' Spiritual Covering

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In 1998 Dr Jim Friesen came to Cape Town and taught from a small booklet called:

“Living from the Heart Jesus gave you”

A few years later I taught at a ladies conference and made a short summary from his booklet which I used as notes for my message.

The ladies requested a copy of these notes and we then packaged it as this booklet called “The Joy of the Lord is my Strength” – the title of the message which I taught at the conference.

If you would like to get more of Dr Frieson’s teachings, please go to <http://www.lifemodel.org>.

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THE JOY OF THE LORD IS MY STRENGTH! (Neh 8: 10)



Introduction

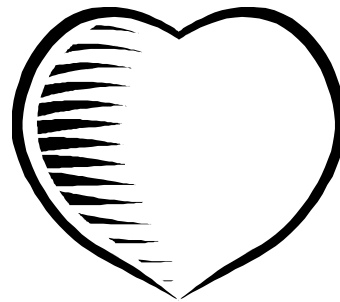
Prov 4: 23:

“Keep and guard your heart with all vigilance and above all that you guard, for out of it flow the springs of life.”

Note: The heart is not the emotions – it is not simply doing what our feelings tell us.

The heart is:

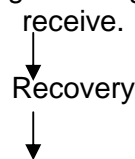
- Your eyes for seeing spiritual reality. (Ecc 11: 9)
- Where understanding resides.
- The origin of spiritual discernment.
- An inner directive.



Trauma falls into **two** distinct categories:

“LOVE VACUUM”

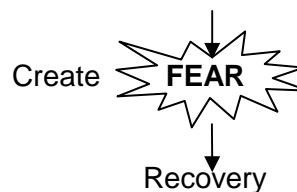
The absence of good things we all need to receive.



- Requires sustained loving relationships
- Developing trust
- Takes time and a loving family

“BAD THINGS”

Bad things that should never happen.



“bad events” need to be revisited and the fear deactivated.

NB!! If the treatment does not fit the particular wound, recovery will not take place.

Pain from the past cannot stay in the past, until it receives healing. We dare not try to “forget about pain/forget about the past”, or it will block us from connecting to God and to His family. We may try to disconnect in small ways at first, e.g. we may intentionally stay very busy so we don’t have to get in touch with feelings. However, being too busy means we lose friends. Eventually we end up completely isolated if we avoid working on our pain. Only when we **face the pain** will we be successful at putting it in the past, so that we can be more effective in getting closer to others.

The world fractures us in many ways throughout our lives, and we are not able to avoid traumas of which leave long lasting scars. We are all broken; we face **woundedness, dividedness, isolation, and oppression**. Particularly in childhood, traumas can have long-lasting effects.



Study after study finds the same compelling conclusion: about a third of us have been physically or sexually abused, and many more suffer from the absences of good things that are necessary for emotional maturation. **School failure, depression, anxiety, poor self-esteem, chronic physical illness, violence,** and **disturbing sexual urges** are common after effects of traumas – most of which go untreated. Woundedness, dividedness, isolation and oppression result. Broken people will continue to suffer throughout their lives, if they receive no attention to the effects of the early abuse.

The Power of Joy

The world is a fracturing place, and each of us is fragmented to some degree by the world's assaults. God created us with minds that automatically seek to be whole, and the quest for wholeness is wonderfully boosted by **joy** during early childhood.



In a child's **first two years**, the desire to experience joy in loving relationships becomes the most powerful force in life, e.g. look into the sparkling eyes of a little child running toward a parent, arms stretched out in unrestrained joy, you can recognize that an incredible power comes from the joy of "being with the beloved".

Since **joy** is the **strongest force** in life when we are young, it is joy that compels children to overcome the fracturing, so that they can reunify. Their life makes sense because they are looking forward to moments when they can re-connect to joy – being with their beloved. Throughout life, we all long to get joy into every relationship. Without joy in loving relationships, there will be insufficient power to reach wholeness.

When people get their joy properly connected to feelings that have been damaged by a fracturing world, they will sense new power and aliveness in all their relationships. Particularly for those who are in recovery, it is essential to be in authentic, joy-producing relationships, and to build the strength of their joy.

Recovering from traumas is always going to be difficult. If a person in recovery has not been empowered by joy, it may not be possible to face the hurt that will need to be faced. If the person is in this position, the first part of recovery is to build a bigger "joy-bucket" – that means to build a life that is empowered by more life-giving relationships.



What is joy?



Joy is a **shared experience**. It is the delightful feeling that comes from knowing someone is glad to see me. It means: "I'm glad to be alive because somebody is glad that I am alive. Somebody **knows** me and **loves** me right now, and it is a delight to be together."

The joy goes back-and-forth between receiver and giver. Joy begins when someone is glad to see me, which stirs up the same feeling in me.

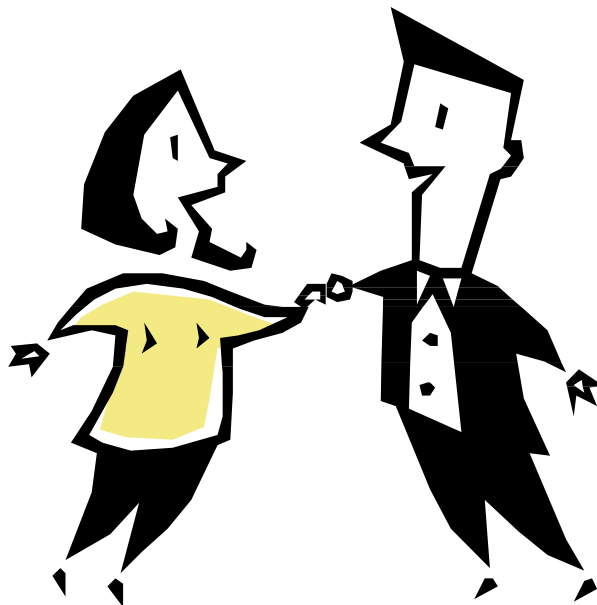
Joy also comes from being in the presence of God, who knows everything about me, and is so overjoyed that I am alive!

His delight in me gives me joy.

Building joy includes getting closer to God and getting closer to people.

Tips for Building Joy:

- Before you fall asleep at night, make every attempt to get back to joy from whatever feelings you may be stuck in.
- Use touch whenever appropriate: hold hands, link arms, give hugs, stay connected while walking and sitting.
- Give little surprises that will cause their eyes to light up, and let your eyes light up too! The joy builds as the glances go back and forth.



Maturity

Maturity is about reaching one's potential. That means developing internal resources and using them in a community.

Children are born completely dependant, with resources undeveloped. In order to reach their potential, they need to start off with nurturing parents, and gradually, maturity becomes a self-directed endeavour. Each child will need to know how to get back to joy and to live there, and not get stuck in difficult feelings. Children who do not learn to get back to joy will live in their hurts, and therefore, have difficulty discovering the true characteristics of their hearts. Sticking with young ones through periods of upset and getting them to joy, is the first resource to be developed.



Helping children find the way from difficult feelings to joy, puts joy in charge of all the feelings. The area of the **brain** that is the “**joy area**” is also the “**executive control area**”, and that is how God created each of us. When joy is in charge, children are free to discover their heart's characteristics, which means they will be on the path of discovering God-given identities.

Bonding



Becoming mature requires bonds between people – they are the foundation upon which maturity is built. Bonds are the connections that energize us, motivate our actions and establish our identities. There are **two** essentially different and incompatible **types of bonds**:

- one based on **fear**
- the other on **love**.

Fear bonds are formed around **avoiding negative feelings** and **pain**, e.g. **rejection, fear, shame, humiliation, abandonment, guilt**, even **physical pain**. **Love bonds** are formed around **desire, joy**, and **seeking to be with people** who are important to us. They motivate people to live in **truth, closeness, joy, peace, perseverance, kindness** and **authentic giving**.

Motivation

The fear bonds and love bonds we experience during our formative years determine the way that we **motivate** ourselves. When we use **fear**, we threaten ourselves with what will happen if we do not get to work on time, do not lose weight, do not save money, or if we make our spouse mad. We think about the things that could go wrong. We **worry**. We feel **guilty**. We run from **shame**. We **blame** others. We become **emotionally paralysed**. We operate way under potential.

Love bonds motivate us to remain **faithful** under pressure, help others to be all that they were created to be, be willing to endure pain in order to be close to those we love, and to tell the truth even when it hurts.

Recovery

Recovery is about exceeding one's current potential, and reaching one's God-intended destiny.

Eph 2: 10: *"10 For we are God's [own] handiwork (His workmanship), recreated in Christ Jesus, [born anew] that we may do those good works which God predestined (planned beforehand) for us [taking paths which He prepared ahead of time], that we should walk in them [living the good life which He prearranged and made ready for us to live]."*

Our destiny has been prepared for us by God. Recovery is getting past the obstacles created by traumas, so that they will no longer block us from reaching the destiny that God has in mind for us.

Within each person is the natural desire to pursue maturity – to reach the upper limits of one's potential. As spiritual beings, there is a deep longing within each of us to exceed what we could do on our own, to be everything that God intends.

Recovery is facing and **embracing** all the pain in our lives, so that we will gain **maximum growth**. It takes other people's loving involvement to develop internal resources (maturity), and it takes God to bring something good out of maturity (redemption), so that we have something extraordinary to give to others.

The Brain and Trauma

Traumas require people to create **protective mechanisms** within themselves that will help them avoid future traumas. It happens without thinking because our brains come equipped to handle traumas. God designed the brain to develop enough strength to rebound from traumas. **Good early bonding** and a **safe living environment** will develop a young person's brain so that the correct brain structures become activated and properly aligned. If there is enough strengthening during early years, brains automatically become regulated by **joy**.



Being human and wanting joy is inseparable. **We are creatures of joy!** Joy is relational. Our Creator made us with brains that want to operate with joy in charge, and that requires us to have lives with relationships that lead us to joy.

Joy becomes the foundation for all the other emotions. The other feelings need to be connected to joy in order for trauma's effects to be overcome. Getting each feeling connected to joy, and setting up joy, as the normal state of life is no small task. Traumas within the **first three years** can interrupt setting up the joy structure, and later traumas can set up new barriers to joy. Joy is intended to be gradually built up to high levels, over time, so that it can become powerful enough to sustain high levels of negative feelings. It is essential for joy to be strong enough to withstand the intensity of trauma-related feelings. Strong feelings, including trauma-related feelings, need to be worked through to a **resting point**. If strength does not develop, the negatively powered feelings will not get to a resting point, and there will not be a resolution. Until joy is strong enough, and connected to the other feelings, the trauma-related feelings will dominate, and fear will prevail. If there is resolution, the brain goes back to joy. Without resolution, a person ends up getting stuck in fear.

The goal of recovery is to build joy that is powerful enough, so the other feelings can connect to it and come to a resting place.

Joy Camp

The **first three months** of life are devoted to establishing “**Joy Camp**” as the base of operations. The baby feels joy from being close to the mother when she nurses, rocks, etc. her



child. This joyful state is the root of all human development. Living in **Joy Camp** is the basis for understanding mother-love, belonging, peace, security and all our treasured experiences. No matter how far we may roam in our lifetime, Joy Camp is where we wish we were each night as we fall asleep. After the first three months, the baby has developed a clear enough picture in its mind what the mother feels about him. From now on joy becomes very interactive. The main joy structures in the brain begin their serious growth spurt.



Growing up in Joy!

What babies begin to look for are **eyes** that are looking at them with joy. Joy means: **Someone is thrilled to see me!**

Joy is the emotion that babies will willingly seek on their own. Because they are motivated to have increasingly higher levels of joy, they will keep working toward joy even when things go wrong.

Climbing higher and higher levels of joy, babies literally build brain capacity. We are creatures of joy, so babies that do not see joy on their mother's faces, become full of fear. If they attach to a parent who is **afraid, angry** or **distressed** they learn to watch for **threats**. If they do not find eyes that are watching them with joy, they will not attach securely, or if there is no one there at all, they monitor the world for anything that could make them feel bad. They develop **fear bonds** and **fear based identities**. They live by avoidance because they have no hope of getting to joy from the fear in which they are stuck. They do not explore or even seek trails that lead back to joy. As they grow older, people who never receive this loving bond are always searching for someone or something to make them feel better – often **drugs, sex, power, abusive relationships** or **money**.



Those with little joy are often overwhelmed and unable to recover from upset feelings in a timely way. As adults, their personalities are **weaker** and the **brains** are **under-developed**. Weakness in the **joyful identity area** of the brain has been found in conditions like **anxiety, depression, attention deficit disorder** and **eating disorders**, and may lead to **personality disorders** such as narcissistic, histrionic, obsessive-compulsive, or borderline-disorders. People with these conditions suffer from an inability to maintain joy.

Getting back to Joy Camp

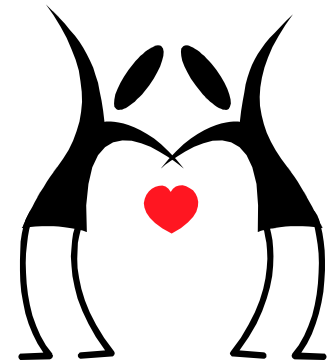
Infants must learn the **path** back to **Joy Camp** from all their other feelings. They must be guided from **shame** back to **joy**, as well as from **disgust, fear, sadness, disappointment, anger** and **humiliation**. Once the infant knows the path back, it will not be intimidated or deterred by feelings, and will not have to avoid or remain stuck in certain feelings. With **practice** the baby will find paths back to Joy Camp from everywhere – and from every bad thing that happens. The strength to feel feelings while knowing the path back to joy builds **hope, resilience** and **confidence**. Always returning to joy after hard feelings teaches **satisfaction**. This develops maturity – one’s potential – and brings joy to others. That is one’s destiny!



After the **age of three**, the brain structures should be so developed that the child can **self-regulate** his feelings. Traumas cause fractures, which are significant blockages to self-regulations. People need other people to recover from traumas, and thereby return to self-regulation.

God the Father, Creator and Architect of our brains – gave us instructions on how to help our systems recover from traumas. We are commanded to love one another, and to bear each other’s burdens.

Being faithful to His command to love is the heartbeat of the Christian community. Love will help us develop properly, and will help us to recover from traumas, so that we can get back on track, and continue to mature.



“Love Vacuum” Traumas – The Absence of Necessary Good Things.

The brain structures that are most seriously affected by Love-vacuum traumas are the places where emotions are handled. Since the **soul** is primarily devoted to emotions, we can call the result of “Love Vacuum” traumas, **fractures of the soul**.

“Love Vacuum” trauma recovery means that sustained love relationships must be available to overcome strong, negative feelings, so that the traumatized person can have a chance to express joy and mature. Developing trust and letting deep feelings emerge, are needed to develop strength, which takes time and real loving relationships.

Most people find it hard to acknowledge “Love Vacuum” traumas as the cause of their **pain, depression, or isolation**. These traumas are more likely to be remembered than “Bad Things” traumas, but are less likely to be given significance. Their importance is denied, leaving persons puzzled about why they feel so awful about themselves, why they are so afraid to trust, or why they feel the continual need to prove their worth.

With the significance of the trauma denied, they are at a loss to understand where their symptoms come from. They usually fall back to placing the blame on themselves (“I am defective.”) or on their Creator. (“God made me defective.”) When the truth is denied, we lose our way and are impaired in our life. When we honestly face “Love Vacuum” traumas, we open up new life-giving experiences in our relationships, and find them more satisfying!

Evaluating yourself

Did you experience the following good things while growing up? If not, you must accept and face the truth that you are a victim of “Love Vacuum” traumas, and that your emotions are damaged.



- Being cherished and celebrated by one's parents simply by virtue of one's existence.
- Having the experience of being a delight.
- Having a parent take the time to understand who you are – encouraging you to share who you are, what you think and what you feel.
- Receiving large amounts of non-sexual nurturing – laps to sit in, arms to hold, and a willingness to let you go when you have had enough.
- Being given age-appropriate limits. Having those limits enforced in ways that do not call your value into question.
- Being given adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical and dental care.
- Being taught how to do hard things – to problem solve, and to develop persistence.
- Being taught how to develop personal resources and talents.

“Bad Things” traumas - Bad Things that Happen

The brain is most seriously affected by “B”-traumas in the **memory area**, so it fits to call the result of this type of trauma **fractures of the mind**.

If the “bad events” have left unresolved feelings or thoughts, the person cannot get back to Joy Camp. This creates a fracture – a separation. Sometimes particularly bad events are mercifully forgotten, and amnesia protects the person from remembering that event. Amnesia is an automatic brain function – instant forgetting – that can be used protectively.

In order to be clear, here is what is meant by calling amnesia “automatic”. When a trauma reaches a high enough intensity level, it becomes overwhelming.

Before the person even knows what is happening, the trauma is **automatically** forgotten, a blank spot in memory appears, and the person has no idea that the trauma happened at all.

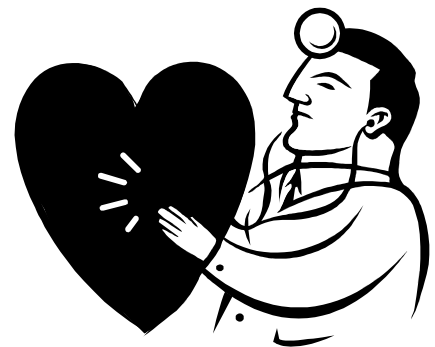
The person does not **choose** to forget the overwhelming episode – **it is automatically lost to memory before the person can choose to know what was happening**. Although amnesia temporarily wipes the memory away, it can be remembered later in life.

If wholeness is to be reached, the bad events need to be recovered and healed, so that the blank spots can be filled in. As is the case for “Love Vacuum” traumas, recovery from “Bad Things” traumas can take a long time, although good therapy sessions can speed up “bad event” healing.

A “Bad Things” trauma is harmful by its **presence**. Having been on the receiving end of any or the following experiences can create a “Bad Things” trauma. There is a range of severity in “Bad Things” traumas. It is important to remember that to discount “lesser” traumas is to avoid the truth and miss the healing. **Avoiding and ignoring wounds do not make them go away.**

- Physical abuse, including face slapping, hair pulling, shaking, punching, and tickling a child into hysteria.
- Any spanking which becomes violent, leaving marks or bruises or emotional scars.
- Sexual abuse including inappropriate touching, sexual kissing or hugging, intercourse, oral or anal sex, voyeurism, exhibitionism, or the sharing of the parent’s sexual experiences with a child.
- Verbal abuse of name-calling.
- Abandonment by parent.
- Torture or satanic ritual abuse.
- Witnessing someone else being abused.

Therapy can assist in uncovering “Bad Things” traumas, many which remain lost to the person’s conscious memory, well into adulthood. We have found that remembering and healing trauma is necessary, or the wound will continue to bring pain. It usually takes more than making a blanket prayer that the Lord will cover everything painful in a person’s past. It takes finding the wound, contacting the hurt feeling enough so that it can become connected to joy, and then praying that the Lord will bring full healing to the wound.



Breaking the Power of Lies



Dividedness and woundedness keep people stuck when a person lives life on the basis of the lies that develop as a result of the traumas. Traumatic events often bring a **two-fold destructive legacy** in a person's life. There is a **wound** and there is a **lie**, and people struggle with both.

In order for you to live from your heart, you must live in **truth**, and the lies that are a part of your hurt will need to be broken.

When your life is spent living from your hurt, that means the lies are directing your life.

Examples of lies:

- You will never get better.
- God may help others but He will not help you.
- You are bad.
- You deserve to suffer for the rest of your life.
- You will never be safe.

The lies are tailored to each particular person and to each trauma, but they are all lies, and they keep people living from their hurts instead of their hearts.

The “you-will-never-get-better” lie becomes attached to traumas that are physically painful for hours and hours, and then periodically, the long-lasting traumas happen again. The pain seems virtually unstoppable, and there is nothing the person can do to keep it from happening again.

Those were powerful moments in the person's life, when that lie seemed true. The moment was absolutely overwhelming, which added to the lie that “you will never get better”. Breaking the lie is part of healing the wound.

Typically the particular trauma needs to be discovered and receive healing first, before the lie can be broken. This is important because if the wound remains unhealed, the lie can re-attach itself. After the traumatic event has been uncovered and healed, the lie will be exposed. Then it needs to be **identified** and **renounced**, and replaced with the truth.

2 Cor. 10: 4, 5: *“4 For the **weapons** of our warfare are not physical [weapons of flesh and blood], but they are mighty before God for the overthrow and destruction of strongholds, 5 [Inasmuch as we] refute **arguments** and **theories** and **reasonings** and **every proud and lofty thing** that sets itself up against the [true] knowledge of God; and we lead every thought and purpose away captive into the obedience of Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One),”*

Replace with **truth** from the Word:

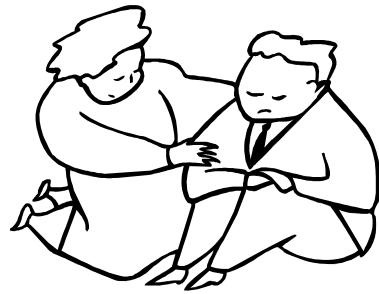
e.g.:

Philippians 4:13: *“ I have strength for all things in Christ Who empowers me [I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him Who infuses inner strength into me; I am self-sufficient in Christ's sufficiency].”*

Joh. 10: 10: *“ The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance (to the full, till it overflows).”*

Guidelines for Getting Unstuck in Recovery:

1. **Identify any “Love Vacuum” and “Bad Things”** traumas in your life, in order to clarify what resources you will need for healing. For example, **Love-vacuum** traumas require **caring people** to make up for the deficits you suffered as a child. **Bad things wounds** typically require some healing, and both types of traumas leaves **lies**, which need to be exposed, broken, and replaced with the truth.
2. **Identify specific emotions** that you get stuck in, or those that are the ones you work extra hard to avoid. Intentionally allow yourself to experience these and look for ways to get back to inner stability, primarily by receiving love and support from those close to you, and by using the lessons that maturity has taught you.
3. **Identify the lies** that were embedded with the wounds that may be unhealed in your life. Actively bring God's truth to break the power of the lie. To know the truth allows one to be set free to live in freedom.
4. Seek **prayer covering** from others for your healing. Pray that God would heal your wounds, identify lies, and replace them with His truth.



GET BACK TO JOY!!!



The Life Model: MATURITY

¹INDICATORS (page 1 of 5)

THE INFANT STAGE: BIRTH THROUGH AGE 3

(Newborns and toddlers are included here, up to the age where they can effectively say what their needs are.)

PRIMARY TASK to be completed during this stage: **Learning to receive.**

PRIMARY RESULTING PROBLEM in adult life when this task is not completed:
Weak or stormy relationships.

PERSONAL TASKS	COMMUNITY AND FAMILY TASKS	WHEN THE TASKS FAIL
1. Lives in joy: Expands capacity for joy, learns that joy is one's normal state, and builds joy strength.	Parents delight in the infant's wonderful and unique existence.	Weak identity; fear and coldness dominate bonds with others.
2. Develops trust.	Parents build strong, loving, bonds with the infant – unconditional love.	Has difficulty bonding, which often leads to manipulative, self-centered isolated, or discontented personality.
3. Learns how to receive.	Gives care that matches the infant's needs, without the infant asking.	Is withdrawn, disengaged, self stimulating, and unresponsive.
4. Begins to organize self into a person through relationships.	Discovers the true characteristics of the infant's unique identity, through attention to the child's behaviour and character.	Has an inability to regulate emotions.
5. Learns how to return to joy from very unpleasant emotion.	Provides enough safety and companionship during difficulties, so the infant can return to joy from any other emotion.	Has uncontrollable emotional outbursts, excessive worry and depression.

¹ Taken from "Living from the Heart Jesus Gave you" – James G. Friesen, Ph.D; E. James Wilder, Ph.D; Anne M. Bierling, M.A.; Rick Koepcke, M.A.; Maribeth Poole, M.A.

The Life Model: MATURITY ²INDICATORS (page 2 of 5)

THE CHILD STAGE: AGE 4 THROUGH 12

(Age 12 is the earliest age this stage can be completed.)

PRIMARY TASK to be completed during this stage: **Taking care of self.**

PRIMARY RESULTING PROBLEM in adult life when this task is not completed.
 Not taking responsibility for self.

PERSONAL TASKS	COMMUNITY AND FAMILY TASKS	WHEN THE TASKS FAIL
1. Asks for what is needed – can say what one thinks and feels.	Teaches and allows child to articulate needs.	Continually contrives situations and manipulates people in desperate attempts to receive; poor self-care.
2. Learns what brings personal satisfaction.	Helps child to evaluate the consequences of own behaviours, and to identify what satisfies him or her.	Becomes addicted to food, drugs, sex, money, power, or possessions, because life lacks purpose.
3. Develops enough persistence to do hard things.	Challenges and encourages child to do difficult tasks the child does not feel like doing.	Experiences failure, remains stuck and undependable, is consumed with comfort and fantasy life.
4. Develops personal resources and talents.	Provides opportunities to develop the child's unique talents and interests.	Fills life with unproductive activities, despite God-given abilities.
5. Knows self and takes responsibility to make self understandable to others.	Guides in discovering the unique characteristics of the child's heart.	Fails to develop true identity; conforms to outside influences that misshape identity.
6. Understands how he or she fits into history as well as the "big picture" of what life is about.	Educates the child about the family history as well as the history of the family of God.	Feels disconnected from history and is unable to protect self from family lies or dysfunctions that are passed on.

² Taken from "Living from the Heart Jesus Gave you" – James G. Friesen, Ph.D; E. James Wilder, Ph.D; Anne M. Bierling, M.A.; Rick Koepcke, M.A.; Maribeth Poole, M.A.

The Life Model: MATURITY ³INDICATORS (page 3 of 5)

THE ADULT STAGE: AGE 13 TO BIRTH OF 1st CHILD

(Age 13 is about the earliest age at which adult-level tasks may be accomplished.)

PRIMARY TASK to be completed during this stage: **Taking care of two people simultaneously.**

PRIMARY RESULTING PROBLEM when this task is not completed:
 Lacks the capacity to be in mutually satisfying relationships.

PERSONAL TASKS	COMMUNITY AND FAMILY TASKS	WHEN THE TASKS FAIL
1. Cares for self and others simultaneously in mutually satisfying relationships.	Provides the chance to participate in group life.	Is self-centered, leaves other people dissatisfied and frustrated.
2. Remains stable in difficult situations, and knows how to return self and others to joy.	Affirms that the young adult will make it through difficult times.	Conforms to peer pressure, and participates in negative and destructive group activities.
3. Bonds with peers; develops group identity.	Provides positive environment and activities where peers have time to bond.	Is a loner, with tendencies to isolate; shows excessive self-importance.
4. Takes responsibility for how personal actions affect others, including protecting others from self.	Teaches young adults that their behaviours impact others and impact history.	Is controlling, harmful, blaming, and unprotective to others.
5. Contributes to the community; articulates "who we are", as part of belonging to the community.	Provides opportunities to be involved in important community tasks.	Does not become a life-giving contributor to the community, is self-absorbed and uses others - drains society.
6. Expresses the characteristics of his or her heart in a deepening personal style.	Holds the person accountable, while still accepting and affirming the aspects of his or her true self.	Is driven to "play roles", prove self to the world, get results, and seek approval.

³ Taken from "Living from the Heart Jesus Gave you" – James G. Friesen, Ph.D; E. James Wilder, Ph.D; Anne M. Bierling, M.A.; Rick Koepcke, M.A.; Maribeth Poole, M.A.

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THE PARENT STAGE: BIRTH OF 1st CHILD UNTIL YOUNGEST CHILD HAS BECOME AN ADULT

PRIMARY TASK to be completed during this stage: Sacrificially taking care of children.

PRIMARY RESULTING PROBLEM when this task is not accomplished: Distant or conflicted family relationships.

PERSONAL TASKS	COMMUNITY AND FAMILY TASKS	WHEN THE TASKS FAIL
1. Protects, serves, and enjoys one's family.	The community gives the opportunity for both parents to sacrificially contribute to their family.	Family members are (1) at risk, (2) deprived, and (3) feel worthless or unimportant.
2. Is devoted to taking care of children without expecting to be taken care of by the children in return.	The community promotes devoted parenting.	Children have to take care of parents, which is impossible, and often leads to (1) child abuse/neglect and/or (2) "parentified" children - this actually <i>blocks</i> their maturity instead of <i>facilitating</i> it.
3. Allows and provides spiritual parents and siblings for their children.	The community encourages relationships between children and extended spiritual family members.	Children are vulnerable to peer pressure, to cults, to any misfortune, and are less likely to succeed in life's goals. Parents get overwhelmed without extended family support.
4. Learns how to bring children through difficult times, and return to joy from other emotions.	The community supports parents by giving them encouragement, guidance, breaks, and opportunities to recharge.	Hopeless, depressed, disintegrating family units develop.

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THE **ELDER STAGE: BEGINNING** WHEN YOUNGEST CHILD HAS BECOME AN ADULT

PRIMARY TASK to be completed during this stage: **Sacrificially taking care of the community.**

PRIMARY RESULTING PROBLEM when this task is not accomplished: The overall maturity of the community declines.

PERSONAL TASKS	COMMUNITY AND FAMILY TASKS	WHEN THE TASKS FAIL
1. Establishes an accurate community identity, and acts like self in the midst of difficulty.	The community recognizes elders in the community.	There is meaninglessness, disorder, loss of direction, and disintegration of all social structures from government to family.
2. Prizes each community member, and enjoys the true self in each individual.	The community provides opportunities for elders to be involved with those in all of the other maturity stages.	Life-giving interactions diminish, along with life-giving interdependence, stunting the community's growth. Fragile, at-risk people fail to heal or survive.
3. Parents and matures the community.	The community creates a structure to help the elders do their job, which allows people at every stage of maturity to interact properly with those in other stages, and listen to the wisdom of maturity.	When elders do not lead, unqualified people do, resulting in immature interactions at every level of the community.
4. Gives life to those without a family through spiritual adoption.	Places a high value on being a spiritual family to those with no family.	When the "familyless" are not individually taken care of, poverty, violence, crisis, crime, and mental disorders increase.

⁵ Taken from "Living from the Heart Jesus Gave you" – James G. Friesen, Ph.D; E. James Wilder, Ph.D; Anne M. Bierling, M.A.; Rick Koepcke, M.A.; Maribeth Poole, M.A.