



COUNSELLING PEOPLE WITH PAINFUL PASTS

(Adapted and expanded from *Putting Your Past in Its Place* by Steve Viars.)

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(student)

Two wrong views of the past:

1. A person's past *determines* how he or she acts in the present.
2. Since a person's past does not determine the present, it is *irrelevant* to *biblical* counselling.

Biblical thinking:

- 1) A person's past does not determine his or her present behaviour.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

Romans 6:13-14, 17-18

Comment: Christ can change any person, regardless of his or her past.

Key point:

The past does not exist.

The consequences of the past exist. The counselee's thoughts about the past exist. The counselee's behaviours and attitudes in regard to the past exist. The past itself, however, does not exist.

Comment:

Understanding this moves a person from being the *victim* of her unchangeable past to *responsible* for dealing with her present thoughts and actions regarding the past.

Jay Adams:

Some persons focus on the past. So long as they do, change will not be possible, since no one can change the past. It is not the past that needs to be dealt with; actually the past no longer exists. It is not his past that needs changing; it is the counselee himself as he now is who

must change Just as those who focus on the future (which does not exist) in worry do not change, so too those who expend their energies and concern upon the past (which does not exist) find that they are unable to make the required adjustments. (The Christian Counselor's Manual, 172-3)

On brooding:

When one broods over past problems ... he allows that which is gone and has no existence (except in his mind) to make him miserable today. (Adams, The Christian Counselor's Manual, 372)

2) The past is influential, but not determinative:

Six ways a person's past might influence his present thinking and behaviour:

1. The types of sin one is tempted to do.

1 Peter 4:3-4. For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries. In all this, they are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excess of dissipation, and they malign you.

Pre-conversion relationships, entertainment, and worship habits can influence which sins a believer is tempted by in the present.

2. Long-term sin habits.

Jer 13:23. Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Then you also can do good who are accustomed to doing evil.

3. Bitterness toward people.

Heb 12:15. See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled.

4. Bitterness toward God.

Job 30:26-27a. When I expected good, then evil came; when I waited for light, then darkness came. I am seething within and cannot relax.

Job 3:20. Why is light given to him who suffers, and life to the bitter of soul?

Job 7:20 Have I sinned? What have I done to You, O watcher of men? Why have You set me as Your target, so that I am a burden to myself?

5. Disruptive consequences of bad decisions in the past.

Scripture teaches the cumulative nature of life. (Steve Viars, Putting Your Past in Its Place, 38)

Gal 6:7. Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.

Prov 1:30-31. They would not accept my counsel, they spurned all my reproof. So they shall eat of the fruit of their own way ...

Example: Marrying an unbeliever will have long-term disruptive consequences for a believer.

6. The consequences of unconfessed sin.

2 Cor 12:21. I am afraid that when I come again my God may humiliate me before you, and I may mourn over many of those who have sinned in the past and not repented of the impurity, immorality and sensuality which they have practiced.

Prov 28:13. He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion.

Ps 32:3-4. When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer.

Counselling People with Painful Pasts

Three questions that outline our counselling:

- What is your problem?
- What does *God* say about your problem?
- What does God say *to do* about your problem?

➤ **What is your problem?**

Steve Viars:

Many people make the mistake of thinking about their past as if it were a large, mysterious entity that cannot be understood, classified, or properly addressed. (Putting Your Past in Its Place, 64)

The need to break the past into distinct categories:

The counselor must break the counselee's past into simple, distinct categories that can be addressed biblically.

➤ **What does *God* say about your problem?**

Categorising the past with three questions (Viars, 64-65):

1. Was it a situation in which you **suffered**?
 - because someone sinned against you
 - because of a painful trial
2. Was it a situation in which you **sinned**?
3. How did you **respond** to the situation, rightly or wrongly?

Those questions divide a person's past into four possible categories (Viars, 65-66):

- The innocent, suffering past when the person responded well.
- The innocent, suffering past when the person responded poorly.
- The guilty, sinning past when the person responded well.
- The guilty, sinning past when the person responded poorly.

Observation:

These four categories allow the counselor to address the events and attitudes of the person's past that are still influencing him in the present.

The four categories of a painful past (summarised):

- 1) The innocent past when the person responded well.

The innocent past is comprised of the times when you suffered because someone sinned against you or because of trials you faced as a result of living in a sin-cursed world. (Viars, Putting Your Past in Its Place, 66)

Illustration—the man born blind in John 9:3:

Examples of "innocent" suffering (Note: no sinner is truly innocent):

- A drunk driver killed the counselee's child.
- A gang of thieves broke into the counselee's home, robbed, and abused her.
- The counselee was diagnosed with cancer.
- Someone at work slandered the counselee, causing him to be unjustly disciplined.
- He or she was sexually abused as a child.
- A husband became unjustly angry, attacking his wife with harsh, insulting words.

2) The innocent past when the person responded poorly.

Often being sinned against catches us off guard. We usually aren't prepared for mistreatment, injustice, or abuse Too frequently our response to such treatment displeases God We are not responsible for what initially happened, but we should not have responded the way we did. (Viars, 66)

Examples:

- A drunk driver killed the person's child, and she has responded with bitterness and anger toward God.
- A person was sexually abused as a child, but never reported it to the appropriate authorities.
- Having been unjustly disciplined at work because of a slanderous accusation by a fellow employee, the person does his best to get even with the employee and also exhibits a resentful attitude toward his boss.
- A woman's husband gets unjustly angry at her, and she responds with bitterness, by withholding sex, and by focusing on the children.

3) The guilty past when a person responded well.

The guilty past is made up of those occasions initiated by your own wrongdoing Thankfully in some cases we allow the Holy Spirit to quickly convict us of what we have done. Although our initial word or deed violated Scripture, our subsequent steps [i.e., repenting and asking forgiveness] brought us closer to God and the party we offended. (Viars, 67)

Examples:

- A man spoke harshly to his wife, but quickly asked forgiveness.
- A young man stole money from his parents as a teenager, but confessed it and made restitution.
- A husband committed adultery or was looking at pornography, but he confessed it to his spouse and implemented the appropriate changes to avoid doing it again.

4) The guilty past when a person responded poorly.

Examples:

- A woman was a rebellious teen, and she has continued to blame her parents for her sinful actions.
- A man's angry outbursts have caused long-term dissension in his family or his church, but he prefers to live with ugly tension rather than to admit his wrongdoing.
- A woman feels that she has not been a good wife and mother, and she gradually sinks into depression, rather than pursuing active change.

Note:

In complicated situations, different aspects of the counselee's past will fall into each of those four categories. However, this four-point framework allows you to sift, sort, analyse, and address the counselee's past in a simple, helpful manner.

The four categories of the painful past (expanded):

- What does God say *to do* about your problem?

1) The innocent past when the person responded well.

The counselor's responses:

1. Ask questions to determine if the counselee did, in fact, handle the situation rightly.

Six questions the counselor can ask to determine "innocence" (Viars, 147-8):

1. *Did you return evil for evil?*
2. *Did you develop bitterness toward God?*
3. *Did you develop an unbiblical view of people?*

Examples:

- A woman who, after being abused as a child, nurtures a hatred for men.
- A pastor who refuses to build close friendships with church members after having been betrayed in a previous church.
- Fear of *all* members of another race after you have experienced an injustice or crime at the hands of *one* person of that race.

4. *Have you developed an unbiblical view of yourself?*

Inferiority judgments:

I'm nobody. I'm worthless. Nobody—including God—could ever love me because I have been sexually abused.

Ed Welch:

Sometimes the experience of being unclean from our own sin and being unclean from the sin of others is hard to distinguish. They are, however, very different. (Depression: A Stubborn Darkness, 187)

Point:

In many cases when a person has been severely sinned against especially with some form of sexual sin, you will have to help the counselee overcome his or her feelings of false guilt: *I am guilty or unclean because of what the sinning person did to me.*

God does not hold us guilty for evil done against us.

5. *Should you confront the person who sinned against you, and if so, have you done it?*

Examples:

- sexual abuse (Has it been reported to the parents and/or police?)
- other sin (following Matt 18:15-17)

6. *If you confronted the person who sinned against you and he asked forgiveness, have you granted it?*

Luke 17:3-4

Observation:

These six questions might reveal the fact that the person has not been as innocent as he or she thinks.

2. Commend the counselee for depending on God's grace.
3. Identify the key truths, practices, or attitudes that helped him respond correctly. Do this so that the counselee can consciously keep those right responses rolling

and so that he will know how to respond rightly to similar situations in the future.

Note:

Most often the person has responded rightly because he has been thinking rightly about *God*.

Illustration—Joseph in Gen 50:20.

2) The innocent past when the person responded poorly.

Biblical illustration: Naomi:

Naomi was not responsible for the deaths, in rapid succession, of her husband and her two sons. Understandably, she struggled to respond rightly, believing that God had treated her bitterly.

Ruth 1:20-21

Six ways to help the innocent sufferer who has or is responding poorly:

1. Teach the counselee to face his suffering honestly.

Viars:

Time will not heal all wounds. Facing our suffering honestly will. (Putting Your Past in Its Place, 105)

Recognize that pain and suffering are an inescapable part of this life. (106)

1 Peter 4:12. Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you.

Viars:

In our culture, we are taught a myriad of ways to ignore or deny the pain that comes from grinding affliction. (102)

Examples:

- chemical avoidance (alcohol, anti-depressants)
- relationship avoidance (pursuing relief in dating or immoral relationships)
- busyness avoidance (burying yourself in your work)

- entertainment avoidance (losing yourself in the mind-numbing world of tv, internet, or other entertainment)
- prosperity teaching (not admitting that a calamity, such as cancer, has happened)

The dangers of prosperity teaching:

D.A. Carson:

One of the major causes of devastating grief and confusion among Christians is that our expectations are false. We do not give the subject of evil and suffering the thought it deserves until we ourselves are confronted with tragedy. If by that point our beliefs ... are largely out of step with the God who has disclosed himself in the Bible, then the pain from the personal tragedy may be multiplied many times over. (How Long, O Lord, 11)

Point:

It takes theological preparation to handle calamity well.

2. Teach the person to face his suffering hopefully.

1 Cor 10:13. No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

Ps 73:26. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

3. Teach the person about God.

Innocent sufferers especially need to be taught about God's sovereignty, wisdom, justice, goodness, and compassion.

What we need, then, is the cultivation of this personal knowledge of God, for it will sustain us when every other pillar crumbles. (Carson, How Long, O Lord, 113)

- ❖ God's sovereignty and wisdom.

These were the two attributes of God that eventually helped Job come to grips with his innocent suffering.

Job 42:1-3. *Then Job answered the LORD and said, "I know that You can do all things, and that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted. 'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?' "Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know." (Ecc 7:14; Lam 3:37-38; see also the GSM notes on *Counselling from the Book of Job*)*

Carson on sovereignty:

To abandon belief in the omnipotence of God may "solve" the problem of evil, but the cost is enormous: the resulting god is incapable of helping us. He may be able to give quite a bit of sympathy, and even groan along with us; but he clearly cannot help us—not now, and not in the future. He is already doing the best he can, poor chap, but he has reached the end of his resources. (How Long, O Lord, 30)

❖ God's justice.

Ecclesiastes 12:14. *God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil. (see also Ecc 3:16-17)*

Note:

God is eternal, so He doesn't always work on our time schedules. But although the millstones of God's justice may at times grind slowly, they always grind exceedingly fine.

2 Thessalonians 1:6-7. *For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire ...*

1 Peter 2:23. *... while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously.*

You should encourage innocent sufferers to imitate Christ in trusting God to deal with those who have done evil against them.

God's ultimate plan for injustice:

God will remove all injustice and calamity when Christ's redemptive work is fully applied in heaven.

Rev 21:4. *He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.*

Rev 22:3. *There will no longer be any curse.*

Col 3:2. *Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.*

Jesus' example of looking ahead:

Heb 12:2-3. ... *who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame Consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*

Transition: Besides God's sovereignty, wisdom, and justice, innocent sufferers also need to be taught about God's *goodness*.

❖ God's goodness.

The counselee's problem:

My creed may tell me I am a miserable sinner, that I deserve hell, that all that I enjoy in life is a gracious gift from God, that I am in no position to expect to escape suffering. But when it comes right down to it, I simply feel my own suffering is unfair. (Carson, How Long, O Lord, 46)

Spurgeon on God's goodness:

We must never tolerate an instant's unbelief as to the goodness of the Lord; whatever else may be questioned, this is absolutely certain, that Jehovah is good. (quoted in A. W. Pink, The Attributes of God, 77)

Ps 119:68, 71. *You are good and do good It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes.*

Theology always involves a three-step progression.

1. *You are good ...*

A biblical truth statement about God.

2. *You ... do good.*

What is true about God applied generally.

3. *It is good for me that I was afflicted ...*

What is true about God applied personally: God is doing good to me right now, even in my affliction.

❖ God's compassion:

Job 36:5. Behold, God is mighty but does not despise any; He is mighty in strength of understanding.

Lamentations 3:18-24. So I say, "My strength has perished, and so has my hope from the LORD." Remember my affliction and my wandering, the wormwood and bitterness. Surely my soul remembers and is bowed down within me. This I recall to my mind, therefore I have hope. The LORD'S lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I have hope in Him."

In response to God, commit yourself to praise, not complaint (cf. Carson, *How Long, O Lord*, 70)

Habakkuk 3:17-19

Summary:

Counselees who have suffered innocently and responded poorly need to be taught about God: His sovereignty, wisdom, justice, goodness and compassion. (good resource: *Trusting God*, Jerry Bridges)

4. Teach the person to forgive the person who hurt him.

Ephesians 4:31-32. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

Hebrews 12:15. See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled.

If the counselee will never see the person again (thieves who broke into and ransacked the counselee's home), then he must express a genuine willingness to forgive or forgive "in his heart." However you chose to describe it, all defiling bitterness must be put off and replaced.

5. Teach the person to pray for those who hurt him.

Matthew 5:44-45. *But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.*

6. Teach the person to help other people going through trials.

2 Cor 1:3-4. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.*

Summary:

To handle a past situation in which a counselee suffered innocently, he must be taught ...

- to face his suffering honestly
- to be hopeful
- to think rightly about God's sovereignty, wisdom, justice, goodness, and compassion
- to pray for those who have hurt him
- to help others

3) The guilty past when the person has responded rightly.

Biblical examples:

Simon Peter:

Viars:

Jesus graciously allow[ed] Peter to affirm his love for His Savior three times, matching the number of times he had denied Him

Peter's denials were a significant lapse of faith. But by repenting and seeking restoration right away, he prevented his failure from sidetracking his life and ministry

Once his failure was behind him, he accepted Christ's forgiveness and moved on. Though he was guilty and responsible for his poor choices, he responded well. (Putting Your Past in Its Place, 74-75)

Paul:

1 Timothy 1:13-16

Rather than focus on his sin, Paul focused on God's mercy, grace, patience, and the fact that Christ came to deal with hopeless cases just like him (Romans 7:24-25a).

Five ways to help a counselee who has handled his guilty past correctly:

1. Commend the counselee for depending on God's grace and for asking God's forgiveness.
2. Make sure that the counselee has asked the forgiveness of all the people who were affected by his sin.
3. Ascertain if there are any lingering consequences of his sin that he needs help to deal with rightly.
4. Does restitution need to be made?
5. Ask the counselee, *What do you do when your sin comes to mind?*

4) The guilty past responded to poorly.

Six wrong responses to a guilty past:

1. Hiding sin.

Example:

David tried to cover his adultery, rather than repenting (2 Sam 11-12).

Note:

Hiding sin might include faking repentance when the person has no intention of forsaking a favourite sin.

Prov 28:13. He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion.

Num 32:23. You have sinned against the LORD, and be sure your sin will find you out.

2. Adding one sin to another.

Example:

David trying to cover his adultery by ordering Uriah's abandonment in battle.
(2 Sam 11-12)

3. Bizarre or self-destructive behaviour due to overwhelming guilt feelings.

Jack Winslow (head of a large British mental institution)

I could dismiss half my patients tomorrow if they could be assured of forgiveness. (quoted in Jay Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling*, 185)

Biblical example:

Judas hung himself due to his overwhelming sense of guilt (Matt 27:3-5).

4. Fear of what people might think of me because of my sinful past.

Prov 29:25. *The fear of man brings a snare, but he who trusts in the LORD will be exalted.*

Steve Viars:

After you have sinned and asked forgiveness from God and the appropriate people, you should not continue to look around to find out who knows about what you did. You should instead look up to the God who has gloriously forgiven you because of His all-sufficient grace. (Putting Your Past in Its Place, 188)

5. Refusal to accept the legitimate consequences of past sins.

Moses repeatedly asked God to allow him to enter Canaan in spite of his rebellion at Meribah (Num 20:12; Deut 3:25-26). Moses did this even though God had told him that he would not be allowed to lead the people into the promised land.

Deut 3:25-26. *"Let me, I pray, cross over and see the fair land that is beyond the Jordan, that good hill country and Lebanon." But the LORD was angry with me on your account, and would not listen to me; and the LORD said to me, "Enough! Speak to Me no more of this matter."*

6. Refusal to accept the full forgiveness of God or other people.

Joseph's brothers failed to understand Joseph's forgiveness, fearing that Joseph would take revenge by ordering their execution after their father died (Gen 50:15-19).

Observation:

A reluctance or refusal to accept the full forgiveness of God is a *major* problem for people who are trying to handle a guilty past. You will often have to help counselees who doubt God's forgiveness.

The problem of doubting God's forgiveness

Viars:

Some Christians seem to believe that they need to repeatedly beat themselves up over past sins even after they have asked for God's forgiveness. It's almost as if they feel they must do some sort of penance to receive God's favor. (Putting Your Past in Its Place, 189)

Ed Welch:

Jane had an abortion ten years ago She still feels guilty about what she has done She knows the truth of the cross, but it doesn't seem to matter. It is as if her guilt is a resistant virus that is immune to the gospel.

Her anti-gospel is that life and forgiveness come through Christ plus not having an abortion.

Having violated her beliefs and standards, she "had to" be punished. She could not reverse the consequences of her abortion, so she decided that her self-imposed punishment would be grief, and it would be long and severe. Perhaps, after an unspecified period of suffering, she would allow herself to be forgiven.

... Multiple suicide attempts and daily reflection on her past actions were not judged to be enough. So she continued in her grief, hoping that one day she would wake up and find that her penance had finally satisfied God's justice. (Depression: A Stubborn Darkness, 191-2)

Comment:

Jane needs you to point out that *her* way of dealing with her guilt has not been working. She needs a better understanding and a better application of God's forgiveness in Christ.

She needs to become a three-step theologian: 1) God is gracious, 2) God graciously receives repentant sinners, 3) If I have repented from my sin, God graciously receives me.

The solution—the biblical doctrine of *justification*:

People who have a hard time accepting that God can (and has in Christ) completely forgiven them for their guilty pasts need to be taught the biblical doctrine of justification (resource: *The Cross Centered Life*, by CJ Mahaney)

Definition of justification:

Justification is an instantaneous legal act of God in which he (1) thinks of our sins as forgiven and Christ's righteousness as belonging to us, and (2) declares us to be righteous in his sight. (Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 723)

Some key texts:

- ❖ Romans 5:1. *Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ ...*
- ❖ Romans 8:1. *Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*
- ❖ John 3:18a. *He who believes in Him is not judged.*
- ❖ 1 John 4:17-18. *By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.*

CJ Mahaney:

*Don't buy the lie that cultivating condemnation and wallowing in your shame is somehow pleasing to God, or that constant low-grade guilt will somehow promote holiness and spiritual maturity. It's just the opposite! God is glorified when we believe with all our hearts that those who trust in Christ can never be condemned. (*The Cross Centred Life*, 39)*

James White:

*One who has been justified stands before God uncondemned and uncondemnable—not because of what he is in himself, but because of what Christ is in him. (*The God Who Justifies*, 98)*

What about the person who can't "forgive himself"?

The idea of "forgiving yourself" is not mentioned in the Bible and reflects two kinds of pride:

1. They have put the wrong person in the Judge's chair:

The Bible never so much as mentions the idea of forgiving yourself. Primarily this is because God is Judge—His forgiveness is what matters. People who talk about forgiving themselves are trying to take God's role upon themselves, and they need to acknowledge that if God forgives something, it is fully and completely forgiven.

2. *I can't believe I did that!:*

Jay Adams:

At times counselees complain over an inability to forgive themselves after having received forgiveness from God or others The real difficulty usually stems from the fact that the counselee feels guilty because he knows that, although the unfortunate act has been forgiven, he is still the kind of person who did it. (The Christian Counselor's Manual, 64, fn. 4)

This is really just an expression of pride. The counselee must face up to the fact that he did the evil deed. Admitting how sinful he is eradicates the false notion he has to forgive himself.

He needs to lose himself in the wonder of God's grace, not the wonder of his own sinfulness.

❖ Psalm 103:10-14.

Why does God forgive? Because He knows how He made you. He knows that He didn't design your spiritual and emotional frame to carry the burden called *guilt*.

❖ Psalm 32:1-5.

Summary:

Believers who struggle with doubting God's forgiveness need three things:

- They need to be taught about justification (Rom 5:1; 8:1)
- They need to be reminded that changed living also contributes to assurance. (2 Peter 1:10).
- They need to be given positive, Christ-honouring tasks to do in the church to keep them from brooding over their past failures (John 21:16).

Conclusion:

Jesus specialises in helping people with painful pasts:

❖ "Innocent" sufferers:

- the man born blind (John 9)

❖ Guilty sinners:

- the demoniac of the Gerasenes (Mark 5)
- the woman at the well (John 4)
- Paul the persecutor of Christians (1 Tim 1:13-16)

David's summary:

Psalm 25:6-7. Remember, O LORD, Your compassion and Your lovingkindnesses Do not remember the sins of my youth According to Your lovingkindness remember me

Psalm 32:1. How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered!

Summed up by Martin Luther:

*If I could believe that God was not angry with me, I would stand on my head for joy. (quoted in John Piper, *The Legacy of Sovereign Joy*, 84)*