

FOR LOVERS ONLY - WILT THOU BE MADE WHOLE?

² Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep [market] a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. ³ In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. ⁴ For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. ⁵ And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. ⁶ When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time [in that case], he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?

John 5:2-6

³⁷ Blessed [are] those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

Luke 12:37

I. There is no true serving apart from first receiving. (Matthew 10:8; I John 4:19)

[Mat 10:8 KJV] ⁸ Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

[1Jo 4:19 KJV] ¹⁹ We love him, because he first loved us.

- * Just as the earth serves the sun by receiving the sun's service so we serve God forever by allowing him to serve us.

II. Wilt thou be made whole? Four facts about receiving.

- A. Refusing to receive leaves us chronically empty, prone to addiction, intrusive thoughts, and codependency.
- B. Over-giving puts us in a position of control. Yet persistent over-giving paralyzes our ability to receive.
- C. We cannot stay emotionally healthy without learning how to receive.
- D. If your giving capacity is out of whack, your receiving capacity is probably jammed.

III. Five reasons why it is so hard to receive.

- A. Not receiving is usually a defense against intimacy.
 - * Receiving creates connection. By not receiving, we hold people at a distance and thereby defend our hearts.
- B. Receiving invites us to welcome a vulnerable part of ourselves. This can be frightening.
- C. Fear of strings attached.
 - * Sometimes receiving comes with strings attached.
- D. We often believe that it is selfish to receive.
- E. We often suffer from a self-imposed pressure to reciprocate.
 - * If someone gives to me, I am hyper-obligated to give them something equal in return.

IV. How to receive a gift.

- A. Sit with the gift, physically touch it and say thank you, I accept it.
- B. Expect an onslaught of denial. (I'm not good enough to accept this.)
- C. Expect an onslaught of anger. (They probably expect something from me now.)
- D. Expect an onslaught of bargaining. (I'll give them something back in return so I won't feel guilty)
- E. Expect an onslaught of depression. (They probably hate me for not writing a thank you note!)

V. Receiving the five components of love.

- A. I receive the gift of meaningful touch.
- B. I receive the gift of special spoken words of acceptance.
- C. I receive the act of someone valuing my intrinsic worth.
- D. I receive someone picturing a special future for me.
- E. I receive someone's commitment to stand by me until my dreams come true.