



Bruce: Loss of Parents, Sibling Conflict, Daughter's Illness **Case Study from Live Ministry Series (LMS) Commentary**

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Session summary: In this 2010 session, Bruce starts with recalling/reentering memories for recent positive experiences with Jesus during the week after his parents' deaths, and deliberately stirs up appreciation for the Lord's care in these experiences. Bruce moves smoothly from positive memory recall and deliberate appreciation to reestablishing an interactive connection with Jesus, and once this is in place we ask the Lord for guidance regarding where to go with the session. The Lord helps Bruce connect with pain and anger around his daughter's recent bout with a particularly nasty flu bug, and Bruce experiences beautiful resolution of his pain and anger when the Lord reveals His own love and concern for Bruce's daughter. The Lord then directs Bruce to focus on recent tensions with his siblings, and this leads to a series of childhood memories in which Bruce and his siblings experienced painful tensions with their mother. Bruce receives more beautiful healing as he engages with Jesus' living presence in the context of these memories, and then Jesus shows Bruce how He was with him and his mother at her death bed.

2 year follow-up – lasting positive changes: As Bruce demonstrates and describes at length in the follow-up interview, he can still perceive Jesus in the memories we worked with during the session, he has observed positive changes that seem to be results of the Lord's work in this session, and these positive changes have remained. He has continued to feel peace in the memories of his daughter being sick, he has felt less anxiety and more compassion in relating to his siblings, he has observed lasting resolution of pain and bitterness with respect to his mother, and he perceives that the Lord's work in the session strongly contributed to healthy grieving regarding the loss of his parents.

Discussion/commentary:

Why is God allowing my daughter to suffer like this?: This session provides an example of a powerful, beautiful phenomena I have observed repeatedly with Immanuel approach sessions. When Bruce thinks about caring for his five year old daughter as she suffers for many days with a particularly nasty flu bug, he struggles with a common, understandable question – something along the lines of, “Why is God letting her suffer like this? Why doesn't He just heal her?” My observation is that as suffering becomes increasingly intense and prolonged, we struggle to hold onto the truth that God both loves us and is with us. “How can this be true? How can God be with me and love me, and still allow this suffering to continue even as I ask and ask and ask for healing/deliverance/relief?” As we all know, this is one of the toughest questions in this history of Christianity. My experience with this question is that the books and sermons, with explanations regarding free will, building our faith, sharing in the suffering of Christ, etc, are satisfying when we are talking about *someone else's suffering*, or when we are talking about our own suffering that is *long past and fully resolved*. But when we are in the middle of our own suffering, or thinking about past suffering that is not yet resolved, we have a hard time holding onto the truth about God's presence and goodness.

However, I have experienced and observed one exception. When we let Jesus be *with* us in the place of suffering, and engage with Him directly regarding our suffering (and any tough questions associated with it), we consistently end up actually feeling satisfied with His answer. Sometimes the person has needed to yell at the Lord for 30 minutes, expressing intense rage and confusion before being able to receive His answer. And many times the Lord's answer has been something along the lines of, "Your brain is not able to understand why the Father and I allow this, but I am with you, and because of who I am, that is enough." But when the Immanuel approach recipients have been able to let Jesus be *with* them, and have truly been able to engage with Him directly regarding their struggle, they have always been satisfied with His response. For example, when Bruce invited the Lord to be with him in a recent memory of caring for his daughter while she suffered miserably with the flu, he perceived an image of the Lord holding his daughter, it felt true that the Lord loves his daughter even more than he does, and he came to a place of peace where he was able to trust his daughter to the Lord's care. And Bruce insisted that he felt satisfied with this response from the Lord.

This has been the only intervention that has ever felt truly satisfying to me when I have been suffering intensely and struggling to hold onto the truth about God's presence and love, and this has been the only intervention that I have ever observed to be truly satisfying to others in response to this tough question. Furthermore, every person who has been able to perceive the Lord's presence and who has been willing to cooperate with this intervention has been satisfied with the Lord's response and come to a place of peace.