



Ian: “I’m not enough”

Case Study from Live Ministry Series (LMS) Commentary

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Session summary: In this 2012 session, Ian starts with recalling and reentering a positive memory with Jesus (enjoying a worship service together with his two youngest daughters, and perceiving Jesus’ presence with him in this context). Ian spontaneously experiences intense appreciation as he recalls and reenters this memory, and then moves smoothly from positive memory recall and appreciation to reestablishing a living, interactive connection with Jesus. Once the interactive connection with Jesus is in place we ask Him for guidance regarding where to go with the session. The Lord directs Ian to focus on doubts/insecurities he had been struggling with regarding his ability to use the Immanuel approach in his own professional work, and Ian eventually identifies negative thoughts along the lines of “I won’t do it right,” “I’ll screw it up,” and “I’m inadequate/I’m not enough.” Ian is still able to perceive the Lord’s presence and is still experiencing an interactive connection, so Dr. Lehman coaches him to keep focusing on Jesus and ask for more guidance. Quickly after this request, Ian reports that a six year old memory comes forward, in which his father is hovering over him with a stern, critical expression. It turns out that Ian’s father is supervising six-year-old Ian as he does remedial homework, required by his teacher because he had not been “coloring within the lines” in his classroom at school. Strikingly, Ian realizes that the negative thoughts and emotions in the childhood memory exactly match the doubts and insecurities he had been experiencing regarding whether or not he could adequately facilitate Immanuel approach sessions.

Initially Ian is not able to perceive the Lord’s presence in the childhood memory, even after an explicit invitation; but then brief, simple troubleshooting helps Ian realize that Jesus is standing right beside him. It turns out that Jesus had been standing there the whole time, but Ian had been so focused on his father and the negative content that he hadn’t noticed Jesus. Jesus then initiates several beautiful, healing interactions with Ian, including putting His arm around Ian’s shoulders, reassuring Ian, and correcting his conclusions regarding the meaning of the experience. Ian reports, “I’m getting the sense that the Lord knows, and knew, that I [interpreted the meaning of this experience to be that I am bad or inadequate because I can’t color in the lines]. And He’s saying, ‘No, that’s not it....coloring outside the lines doesn’t mean that you’re bad.’” Jesus also took Ian to a second memory with similar themes, and initiated similar healing interactions in that context. By the end of the session, “I won’t do it right,” “I’ll screw it up,” “I’m inadequate,” and “I’m not enough” no longer feel true – neither in the memory, regarding his school work, nor in the present, regarding his ability to use the Immanuel approach in the context of his professional work.

4 Month Follow-up – lasting positive changes: During the four months following the session Ian observed a number of lasting changes. Every time Ian went back to the childhood memories from the session, he perceived Jesus’ presence, he felt connected to the Lord, and the negative thoughts continued to feel not true. Ian was able to perceive the Lord’s presence with him through the Immanuel approach seminar he did a couple weeks after the session, and he did not have any trouble with the negative thoughts (“I won’t do it right, I’ll mess it up, I’m not enough,”

etc) or the negative emotions of feeling inadequate or insecure. These negative thoughts and emotions no longer bothered him when he used the Immanuel approach with his clients. And Ian also noticed persistent increased compassion for, and connection with, his father following the session.

Furthermore, in the follow-up interview Dr. Lehman coaches Ian to try using one of the memories from the original session as the context for connecting with Jesus, and Ian has another powerful, beautiful experience of feeling the Lord's tangible presence. Ian reports experiencing a physical sensation of pressure on his shoulders, that wasn't there before going back to the memory, "...and it completely matches the image of the Lord having His arm around my shoulders, at the table, amongst the crayons and coloring sheets....There's a literal feeling of pressure, on my shoulders, and I can feel it, right now."

Discussion/commentary:

Sometimes emotional healing can be quiet and gentle: Some people assume that emotional healing has to be dramatic and emotionally intense. However, Ian's session is strikingly quiet and gentle. He reports feeling "uncomfortable" at one point, as he is remembering his father supervising his coloring homework, but there are no waves of painfully intense anxiety, no episodes of deep sadness with dramatic sobbing, and no displays of any other dramatic, intense negative emotions. And even though this session is so *not* dramatic or emotionally intense, Ian still receives beautiful healing with lasting fruit.

Simple troubleshooting: This session provides an excellent example of simple troubleshooting (time on tape 15:34 to 17:15). When Ian invited the Lord to be with him in the first childhood memory that came forward, he was initially unable to perceive the Lord's presence. Ian was intensely focused on his father's stern, critical presence, and did not feel any connection with the Lord or even perceive His presence. At this point we tried the simplest of all troubleshooting tools – we asked the Lord for guidance regarding what was hindering Ian from perceiving His presence and experiencing an interactive connection, and asked the Lord for help regarding whatever was in the way. Immediately following this prayer, Ian's perspective broadened, and he became aware of Jesus standing right beside him in the memory. Once he became able to perceive the Lord's presence, Ian realized that Jesus had been there the whole time, but that his narrow, intense focus on his father had prevented him from seeing Jesus. In this session, simply asking the Lord for guidance and help quickly revealed and resolved the problem that had been preventing Ian from perceiving Jesus' presence and experiencing an interactive connection.

An interactive connection with the Lord or healing of the underlying trauma – what is producing the fruit?: As already mentioned, in the follow-up interview Ian reports that he presented his seminar on the Immanuel approach without any trouble from the negative thoughts or emotions, and also that he is facilitating Immanuel approach sessions with his patients without any trouble from the negative thoughts or emotions. But none of this surprised me, since this is the kind of fruit that people usually describe whenever I do a follow-up interview. What did surprise me was that Ian attributed these dramatic positive results to the fact that he experienced both a vivid perception of the Lord's presence and a strong interactive connection throughout the experience of presenting the seminar and during each of the sessions he has facilitated. I would have assumed that his freedom from the triggered negative thoughts and emotions that had previously bothered him in similar situations was due to resolving the

traumatic memories that had been the underlying source for the negative thoughts and emotions. But Ian's point is a good one, since a strong interactive connection with the Lord in the present can prevent traumatic memories from being stirred up, even in situations that would otherwise trigger them. To really evaluate whether or not there are still splinters from the memories we worked on, or whether other traumatic memories constitute another, separate source of the "I won't do it right, I'll mess it up, I'm not enough, etc" negative thoughts and emotions, Ian would have to observe whether or not this negative content gets stirred up in situations that would have previously triggered him, but in which he is *not* experiencing a strong interactive connection with Jesus. *What a wonderful diagnostic problem!* How cool is it that Ian has been perceiving the Lord's presence and experiencing a strong interactive connection with Jesus so consistently that it is interfering with my efforts to clarify the status of any lingering traumatic memories and triggers regarding these particular issues.