



## Steve: “Just” Be with Jesus Case Study from Live Ministry Series (LMS) Commentary

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**Session summary:** In this 2007 session, Steve starts with recalling/reentering the memory for a previous Immanuel session in which the Lord healed a childhood near-drowning trauma, and then takes time for deliberate appreciation. As he reconnects with the memory and names specific things he appreciates, Steve moves spontaneously from *remembering* a past connection with the Lord to a new, living, interactive connection with the Lord *in the present*. I coach Steve to focus on Jesus and ask Him for guidance regarding the session, including where to start and what to work on, and the Lord initiates a beautiful interaction where Steve receives restoration as he sits in the Lord’s lap. The remainder of the session consists of my repeatedly asking whether we should shift the focus to working on unresolved trauma, with Jesus responding by repeatedly inviting Steve to “just” sit in His lap and receive restoration.

**4-year follow-up – lasting positive change:** As Steve describes at length in the four-year follow-up interview, he has observed persistent positive changes that seem to be results of the Lord’s work in this session. He has maintained much better balance between work and restoration in his life, and he regularly spends time perceiving the Lord’s presence and connecting with the Lord. In the follow-up interview, Steve reports that fruit from the earlier session that addressed his near-drowning trauma also clearly remains. He reports that anxiety/terror regarding conflict with authority has continued to be completely resolved during the seven and a half years since the earlier session.

*Additional healing during the follow-up interview:* Finally, Steve received additional healing during the follow-up interview. After re-entering the memory for the part of the 2007 session where he was sitting in the Lord’s lap, and then re-establishing an interactive connection as his perception of the Lord’s presence and connection with the Lord became living in the present (52:33 and following), Steve asked, “Lord, what do You want to do today?” (time on tape 56:44). After what had happened in the 2007 session, I was expecting that he would spend some more time just sitting in the Lord’s lap, or that the Lord would speak words of encouragement and/or instruction. But the Lord surprised me again. In 2007, when I repeatedly tried to direct the session towards working on the traumatic splinter that I perceived to be lingering in the horse trough memory, the Lord surprised me by very deliberately choosing to *not* do this. And in the follow-up interview, when I had completely let go of trying to find and resolve the splinter, the Lord leads Steve right to it.

In response to Steve’s question, Jesus took him back to the horse tank trauma, specifically taking him to the part of the memory where he was in the water (56:58 and following). And even though Steve had never been able to think about being in the horse trough without feeling tension, anxiety, and fear, when he went there *with Jesus* he felt peaceful and calm (57:09 and following). In fact, Steve reports that he can clearly perceive the Lord’s presence, standing right beside him as he is in the horse trough, and that he is actually *enjoying* playing in the water (57:58 and following).

**Discussion/commentary:**

**A. The Lord's agenda includes more than emotional healing:** As Charlotte and I were developing the Immanuel approach, we noticed an interesting phenomena as people began to connect with Jesus and follow His lead *from the very beginning of each session*: The Lord expanded the agenda, and the "Immanuel approach to emotional healing" became just *one part* of the larger "Immanuel Approach to Life." Resolving trauma removes blockages that hinder connection with the Lord, and the Lord also wants to relieve our suffering, so sometimes Jesus' agenda for the day *is* to resolve trauma. But sometimes Jesus' agenda is to build capacity; sometimes Jesus' agenda is to build maturity skills by teaching, modeling, and helping the person practice; sometimes Jesus' agenda is to address other issues important to optimal living, such as the balance between work and restoration; sometimes Jesus' agenda is to spend time with us, as a friend and companion, just because He likes being in relationship with us; and sometimes His agenda is other stuff that we have never even thought about addressing in an emotional healing session.

This session with Steve provides an excellent example of Jesus expanding the agenda beyond just healing trauma. As described above, I start the session with coaching Steve to try the appreciation exercise that helps prepare our brain and mind to have a positive connection with Jesus. To do this, he thinks about a memory of a powerful emotional healing session in which the Lord healed a traumatic childhood experience of near drowning, and then spends some time talking about the specific things he appreciates regarding how Jesus cared for him in this situation. As Steve talks about his appreciation, the *memory* transitions into a "real time" perception of Jesus' presence, and a living, interactive connection with Him *in the present*. This was all as I expected, and I figured we would move on to working with traumatic memories, now that this initial connection had been established as the ideal foundation for such work. But the Lord had other plans. Each time I directed Steve to ask Jesus for guidance regarding what to do next, he reported something along the lines of "He wants me to just stay right here, sitting in His lap. He says I don't do this enough, and that I need to spend more time like this, letting Him restore me." Throughout the entire session, Jesus persisted in helping Steve improve the work/restoration balance in his life, even though *I* became anxious that we ought to be doing something "more important," and kept trying to redirect the session to working on traumatic memories.

**B. Is there any unresolved trauma in Steve's life?:** At one point in the follow-up interview (1:04:21), I mention that the Lord's choice to not work on trauma in the 2007 session might lead someone to conclude that there was no more unresolved trauma in Steve's life. It is interesting that Steve comments, "I might have agreed with them," since he had been doing so well since the 2007 session; however, the Lord initiating more healing work to address a splinter of unresolved trauma in the horse trough memory clearly indicates that all trauma had *not* been resolved. The Lord chose to focus on a different priority in the 2007 session, but this did not mean that all trauma had been resolved, or that the Lord did not want to do any more healing work in Steve's life for some other reason. It just meant that He chose to focus on something other than trauma work in the 2007 session.

Also, just for the record, my belief is that no living person has fully resolved every bit of trauma in his life, and that the Lord wants all of us to embrace emotional healing as an ongoing lifestyle.

**C. Was there a splinter in the horse trough memory?:** At one point in the session (10:32), Steve comments, "As I went back to that place, I was feeling really tense again....I was going back into

the water,...and as I went back in there, I could just feel myself getting really, really uptight again....” And as mentioned in the session and in the follow-up interview, this indicates to me that there was a splinter in the horse trough memory. In my assessment, this point would be even clearer if Steve had described (during the healing block of the follow-up interview) first feeling anxiety and tension when he returned to the horse tank, and then described resolution of the anxiety and tension as Jesus worked with him to resolve the splinter of unresolved trauma. That is, the lack of anxiety and tension when Steve returned to the point in the horse tank memory when he was actually in the water makes the point less clear. But my perception is still that there was a piece of unresolved trauma lingering in the horse trough memory. One additional data point that will eventually provide more clarity will be the follow-up regarding Steve’s fear of water. If his life-long fear of water resolves after the healing block in the follow-up interview, this would certainly support my hypothesis that there had, indeed, been a splinter of unresolved trauma.

***D. Healing without connecting to negative emotions?:*** My current understanding is that you need to have a traumatic memory file “open” in order to resolve it. That is, in order to work with the unresolved traumatic content, so that unfinished processing tasks can be completed, you need to have the file open so that you can work “inside” the memory file.<sup>1</sup> Previous to this follow up session with Steve, I would have said: “One of the best ways you can tell that a traumatic memory file is open and that you are inside the unresolved content is that any distorted interpretations associated with the trauma *feel* true and you *feel* the negative emotions associated with the traumatic memory. Or, to put this another way, I would have said that you can’t resolve a traumatic memory without at least briefly connecting with the distorted perceptions and feeling the negative emotions associate with the trauma.

However, as is clear from Steve’s comments about the follow-up interview healing, in this healing work Steve did not perceive any point at which he felt the anxiety, fear, and tension that he had always previously experienced when connected to the memory of being in the horse trough. My hypothesis at this time is that the key is the way in which he was able to perceive the Lord’s presence, right beside him, even as he went to the memory. That is, going to the memory *with* Jesus (as opposed to “going to the memory, feeling the negative emotions, and then connecting with Jesus”), allowed Jesus to bring shalom into the memory, and replace the previous anxiety and tension with peace, *without first needing to reconnect with the negative emotions.*

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<sup>1</sup>For a much more detailed discussion of this point, see the “Brain Science, Psychological Trauma, and the God Who is With Us” essays, especially Part IV.