

Dealing With Dirt and Hurt: When to Call in the Cavalry

Tough times happen. This world isn't a cozy comforter. It's more of a wet blanket that wants to wrap around you when you feel lost, defeated, rejected and discouraged.

The world provides liquid spirits, drugs, fantasy women and images to soothe, but these only drag us down a path of destruction.

The Bible warns us in John 16:33, "In this world you will have trouble" (NIV). So it should be no surprise when we feel like we've been sucker-punched in the gut with problems. Unfortunately, we are all damaged goods, bringing past dirt and hurt to our lives and relationships, which can snowball in our minds and make matters worse.

How do we deal with the dirt and hurt?

Life offers a series of challenging events, like experiencing betrayal by a loved one, losing a job, financial woes or the death of a close friend or family member. These are the obvious ones we need to be prepared for, but what about the daily issues we struggle with?

- Anger outbursts
- Emotional avalanches
- Relationship confusion
- Communication gaffes
- Frustrating situations
- Compulsive behaviors
- Intense mental anguish

The first step is to have a relationship with Jesus. Knowing and following Him will be the foundation for dealing with dirt and hurt. Then add a supportive group of men you can talk

with. Lean on God with honest prayer because He listens and loves you more than we can imagine.

There are times and situations in relationships when you need to call in the cavalry, raise the white flag, give in and ask for professional help. Counseling or therapy should be the norm, not rare. We all have baggage that can impact our decisions, emotions and behaviors. A good licensed counselor is like a good mechanic who pops open the hood to your life and does some rewiring.

Unfortunately, men self-protect. We don't want our problems aired out in front of others. We strive to protect our public image, but our image lies about what's really going on deeper down. Our pride and fear result in pretending there's nothing wrong. Too often, guys view getting counseling as a weakness, instead of being courageous.

Stop being resourceful and trying to apply a MacGyver fix. There's no duct tape for your character. The longer you stay with the self-protecting image, the less real help you'll get while your character defects get worse.

The humble choice to accelerate your growth is to forget about your image and get counseling from a professional who doesn't care about your image.

When should you get professional help? Here is the spectrum I use to guide men:

- **Scrape:** If you have an emotional flesh wound, start by searching our site for teaching and then apply what you learn.
- **Cut:** If you have a deeper issue, perhaps a recurring problem or habit, then use our site for guidance, but you may need to turn to other men who can listen and carry the burden with you.
- **Deep Cut:** This is a lingering problem, perhaps a fracture in the relationship and you're not sure it's

repairable. When you have a deep cut, you would go to the emergency room, right? The same goes with a deep cut in your social, emotional and spiritual health. Time to get help immediately.

- **Big Bleeder:** This is serious trauma with lives on the line. Perhaps it's marital trouble, dealing with divorce or dangerous behaviors that are risking your livelihood. There's no time to waste. Find therapy fast.

There's a great example of this in the story about Naaman in 2 Kings 5. Naaman was at the apex of his career. He was a highly regarded commander and valiant soldier, and he had money. But he also had to hide his spots from leprosy. So he did what any rich commander would do: He ordered healing immediately and paid generously for it.

Elisha told him what to do. But Naaman's pride didn't want healing by washing in the dirty Jordan River seven times. Naaman's servants slapped him with the humbling obvious, telling Naaman if he wanted to be healed, he would have to obey. Eventually Naaman did as he was told and received healing.

Here's what we learn from Naaman to deal with the dirt and hurt:

1. Ask for help.
2. Expose your hurt.
3. Put your pride on the shelf. Healing requires humility and faith (1 Pet. 5:6).
4. Be open to, and seek, the truth.
5. Do the work. Knowledge demands action; otherwise it's just like an unopened book sitting in your library.

The secret to change is doing something you don't want to do in order to get the result you need.

Kenny Luck, founder of Every Man Ministries and the men's pastor at Saddleback Church, provides biblically oriented teaching and leadership for men and pastors seeking relevant, timely material that battle cultural, worldly concepts threatening men and God's men. Follow Kenny and Every Man Ministries now on Facebook, Twitter (@everyMM) and YouTube.

For the original article, visit .