

What This Man Saw in the Spirit Reveals the Life-Altering Power of Your Words

There was a man who attended the same prophetic group I did when I was 13 and still coming to terms with my ability to see in the Spirit. We'll call him Chuck, since that's not his real name, and I don't think I actually know anyone named Chuck. So Chuck was a nice guy, but he was one of those people who always had something to say. Any time there was an opening for prayer requests, he had a list. Every time he prophesied, he did so at the top of his lungs. And whenever I entered into conversation with him it quickly distilled into a long description of his weekly woes. You all probably know a Chuck or two.

Despite the general liking I have for humanity as a whole, Chuck bothered me. I didn't hate him or anything, but I wouldn't have minded if he found another prophetic group. When I looked at Chuck in the Spirit, I saw cuts and scars all along his face. They were different lengths and depths each time I saw him. Sometimes there would be one long, deep cut from his nose down to his jaw, and he'd ask for prayer because his son was doing drugs again. Other times a thick, red scar would appear along his cheek, and he'd tell the story about his ex-wife for the third time. Sometimes there would be clusters of scratch marks spread all across his face, and he'd dissolve into tears talking about how life was just too overwhelming.

I used to say that when you see something in the Spirit, you understand it. This was never entirely true, because much of what I see is obscure and confusing. A truer statement is that "You recognize whatever you see in the Spirit." Though you may not fully understand it, there is a familiarity that comes

when you see. Perhaps this is because even though we spend most of our attention on the physical realm, we exist in the spirit realm every minute of every day.

One week, while doing my best to ignore the bleeding slice that cut across his left eye, I was inexplicably drawn to a spot at the center of his chest. Though he was thoroughly clothed, I could see through his shirt to a dark bruise at the center of his sternum. It was no bigger than a golf ball and had dark blue and green rings emanating from a navy-blue center. As soon as I saw the bruise, a picture flashed through my mind.

I saw a little boy, no older than 10, crying with his chin pressed to his chest. The boy's father was standing over him, veins popping and eyes bulging—livid.

He grabbed the boy's chin and jerked it up, shouting, "Look at me!"

The boy cringed and cried all the harder.

Taking his hand off the boy's face, the father yelled, "You stop it! You stop that crying," punctuating the last three words with hard, two-fingered pokes to the boy's chest. "Nobody wants to hear you blubber on all day. You stop that *now!*" he shouted, with one final jab at the same spot.

I was never as bothered by Chuck after that. I felt as if I should say something to him, like there was a way to break the words that his father had thumped into his chest, but I never did. I was only 13, but even then it made me sad to see what one man's words could do. I imagine that if Chuck knew what his Father in heaven had to say about him, things would be quite different.

Wounds are, sadly, something I see on people all the time. I see them almost every day. Whether it's from your boss being disappointed with a project you put your heart into, your wife

snapping at you because you forgot to pay the water bill or just another off-kilter look from that person you're trying to be friends with—we hurt each other. You can pretend it isn't there or that it didn't bother you, but you know if it did.

Not all wounds are the same, of course. Some fade away within hours; others heal into scars that never fully leave. And still others are not allowed to heal, festering into rotten gashes that corrupt muscle and bone. How these wounds affect you is, fortunately and unfortunately, entirely up to you. I've met people who have let one idle word drag them into a dark pit of unforgiveness, bitterness and self-pity, while others turn a past full of abuse and shame into a crown of glory by giving it over to the One who died to heal every hurt. {eoa}

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