

Abundant Attachment with God and Others

By Mary Lambrecht, M.S. LMFT

Family-of-origin attachment wounds can influence significant present-day relationships. Sometimes, a child's emotions are not "mirrored" by her parent. A lack of mirroring would include a parent not empathizing with or minimizing their child's anger or sorrow, not celebrating with the child when she is happy, or not coming alongside the child in any emotional vulnerability. On an extreme level, a parent's lack of mirroring can become abusive. If a child's sadness or distress is met with threats, contempt or mocking; i.e. "stop crying or I'll give you something to cry about", or with physical or sexual abuse, the attachment wound is deeper. One result of a lack of mirroring, is that it can erode the child's sense of trust in others' being emotionally "there" for her. The child doubts the validity of her emotions and will also doubt her general sense of self-worth.

An adult who has suffered attachment wounds as a child can more easily misinterpret and generalize others' words, thoughts and motives. For example, an "edgy" tone of voice from a spouse can be quickly personalized: "it's my fault he's mad...his anger is all about me." Coping skills around emotional connections for the attachment-wounded adult are often developed. This adult might disengage from feeling their own or others' feelings, or on the other extreme, become very anxious when emotions enter a relationship. Sometimes humor, sabotage, or contempt is used as a way to manage the discomfort of an emotional connection from another.

Perhaps part of the reason attachment wounds are so hurtful is because they cut to the core of what Christ desires for us in our emotional connectedness to Him. Jesus reassures us in John, chapter 10 that He is the door, and when we enter His door we are met with *abundant* life (vs. 9 & 10). Jesus emphasizes that He *knows* us (vs. 14), He *calls us by name* (vs. 3), He *goes before us* (vs. 4), and we *will never perish* (vs. 28).

The first step in the healing of attachment wounds is to ask Jesus for the boldness to attach to Him. He promises that when you enter His door you will find Him, the Great Shepherd (John 10:2). Next, ask Him to be the door into related childhood memories of attachment pain. He desires to bring abundant wholeness to what was previously destroyed (John 10:10). Finally, ask Him to separate past attachment wounds from our experiences with present-day relationships. We can then begin to view our own emotional vulnerability and others' emotional vulnerability from a perspective of acceptance and trust.

Jesus promised that "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you" (John 14:18). Rather than Christ being emotionally disengaged from us, He laid down His life for us (John 15:13). This is the very heart and core of "mirroring." He then sent the Holy Spirit who will "guide you into all truth" (John 16:13). If we

have felt “orphaned” from attachment wounds, come to Jesus. He promises safe pasture even in the midst of emotional vulnerability.

*Compliments of Practical Family Living, Inc.
P.O. Box 1676, Appleton, WI 54912 (920) 720-8920*

You are permitted and encouraged to reproduce and distribute our articles in any format provided that you credit the author, no modifications are made, you do not charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction, and you include Practical Family Living's web-site address (<http://www.pfl.org>) on the copied resource. Quotations from any article are also permitted with credit to the author and citing the web-site. Any use of other materials on this web-site, including reproduction, modification, distribution or republication, without the prior written consent of Practical Family Living, Inc., is strictly prohibited.