

In Spite Of My Issues

Mark 5:25-28 And a certain woman, which had an issue ...

- She was separated and alone, day after day, month after month, year after year, with no physical contact from another human being.
- Her very presence caused some who knew her condition to recoil in order to avoid their own contamination.
- For twelve years, life hemorrhaged from her body, leaving her weak and unclean in the eyes of her family and community.
- She was alone and cut off, hearing not only the whispers of her neighbors but also the screams of her own self-condemnation.
- She had invested the little money she had in one false hope after another to rid herself of her plague, to no avail. There was not a counselor or doctor who did not know her and try to sell her on their remedy for her situation. She still got worse ... and poorer!
- With the walls of her condition closing in on her, she finally realized that she could no longer live with this issue in her life. She had to act, alone if necessary. She had to do something, drastic if need be.
- When we first see her in the Bible, she is weakly walking, sometimes crawling, pushing in desperation through the suffocating crowd to get to her one last, best hope ... Jesus. Look closely at this woman as she presses through the mob. Take a good look at the suffering face she is trying so desperately to conceal from those around who would reject her and her quest. And when you get close enough to discern her features, you will find that she looks just like ... YOU!
- All of us have secret issues that hinder us, secret struggles that keep us barren and hidden. These issues ... fear, guilt, shame, hurt, failure ... drain the abundant life from us.
- Regardless of the specific issue, all of us experience limitations in our walk in the kingdom of God. And just like it was with this woman's issue, there is only one answer, only one way to deal with our issues ... we must reach out to Jesus.
- What exactly is an issue? An issue is a condition, an attitude, or a circumstance that robs us of the abundant life that Jesus has secured for us. Issues are those private, secret things of our past and present that show us to hinder, block, trouble, hold hostage, abort and even destroy our dreams, hopes and desires. Issues are the challenges, problems, and crises that attach themselves to us to block our success, victory and effectiveness in the kingdom of God.

- Issues show up without invitation. They are like a flat tire on a car – frustrating, time-consuming and costly.
- The word “ISSUE” has become a popular term in modern psychology. Before we may have talked about “besetting sins” but now we say that someone has “unresolved issues.” But while we point accusing fingers at someone else, we overlook the fact that we are lugging around the heavy baggage of our own issues.

What do issues look like and how do they affect my life?

1. Issues are secret.

Issues are those uniquely personal things that we try to push out of our way. But on our own, we do not have the strength or intellect to do this, so we hide these problems from everyone and pray that no one will discover the secret wounds and imperfections that make us vulnerable.

Luke 12:2 (Msg) You can't keep your true self hidden forever; before long you'll be exposed. You can't hide behind a religious mask forever; sooner or later the mask will slip and your true face will be known.

2. Issues cause separation.

Just like this woman, our issues keep us separated from God and from people. We try to keep them to ourselves and may even try to hide them under a façade. Issues make us fear relationships, ministry, and intimacy with God and others. We are frightened that we may appear vulnerable.

Isaiah 59:2 (CEV) Your sins are the roadblock between you and your God. That's why he doesn't answer your prayers or let you see his face.

3. Issues always flow from a source.

The Greek word for “issues” is “rhusis” which means “a flowing.” Issues in our lives such as fear, anger and bitterness flow from a source in our past experience or belief system. Until we deal with the source of these issues, they will continue to flow throughout our lives; when this happens, we go through the same frustrating patterns of behavior over and over.

Romans 7:21-24 (Msg) It happens so regularly that it's predictable. The moment I decide to do good, sin is there to trip me up. I truly delight in God's commands, but it's pretty obvious that not all of me joins in that delight. Parts of me covertly rebel, and just when I least expect it, they take charge. I've tried everything and nothing helps. I'm at the end of my rope. Is there no one who can do anything for me? Isn't that the real question?

4. Issues result in character traits that limit us.

Not everything that happens in our lives is an issue, nor do we have to make an issue out of everything. Circumstances don't become issues until they appear repeatedly in our lives. It's the difference between a flat tire and refusing to safely maintain your vehicle.

Romans 14:23 (Msg) *But if you're not sure, if you notice that you are acting in ways inconsistent with what you believe—some days trying to impose your opinions on others, other days just trying to please them—then you know that you're out of line. If the way you live isn't consistent with what you believe, then it's wrong.*

5. Issues trigger strong emotions.

The strongest emotion people with issues experience is fear – usually the fear of rejection if their issue is exposed. This can be accompanied by shame, guilt, anger, frustration, hopelessness and despair. On the other hand, our issues can trigger the emotional issues of other people, making honest relationships almost impossible.

Proverbs 29:25 (Msg) *The fear of human opinion disables; trusting in God protects you from that.*

6. Issues result in bondage.

As we carry our issues with us year after year, we begin to adapt our lives to them. The woman with the issue of blood had limited her entire existence to the secret issue that plagued her. A chain is only as strong as its weakest link, and our lives are only as effective as the issues we have resolved. Too often, we walk through life in a spiritual paranoia, allowing our issues to direct our paths.

1 John 4:18 (Msg) *There is no room in love for fear. Well-formed love banishes fear. Since fear is crippling, a fearful life—fear of death, fear of judgment—is one not yet fully formed in love.*

7. Issues often become excuses.

Many talented people headed for greatness instead find themselves detoured onto side roads full of doubts and hurts. And, because the issues are allowed to grow unchecked, these people begin to think of themselves as victims. This pushes them further away from their potential.

Ephesians 4:22 (Msg) *Since, then, we do not have the excuse of ignorance, everything—and I do mean everything—connected with that old way of life has to go. It's rotten through and through. Get rid of it! And then take on an entirely new way of life—a God-fashioned life, a life renewed from the inside and working itself into your conduct as God accurately reproduces his character in you.*

8. Issues are part of the enemy's strategy.

Frequently, our issues are used by hell to defeat us. Unchecked, they bind our present and our future with the ropes of the past. They scream sickening reminders of our defilement and unworthiness. They keep us cowering in the dark, away from God.

2 Corinthians 2:11 (KJV) *Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.*

- It is not enough just to know that we all have issues; that knowledge alone is enough to depress us and become another issue itself. We must understand that we can be FREE of the issues that plague us.

John 8:36 (Msg) *So if the Son sets you free, you are free through and through.*

- We must also understand that, until our deliverance comes, the kingdom of God goes on IN SPITE OF OUR ISSUES. Even with our limitations and imperfections, we are somehow still useful to God.

2 Corinthians 12:9 *And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*

How can I find healing for my issues?

- Mark chapter five gives us three principles to follow if we are to find healing and wholeness for our issues:
- EXHAUST
We must come to the point where our resources are exhausted and we realize that we cannot heal ourselves. We often deal with the symptoms, but rarely with the roots of our issues. That's because no issue has ever been settled by touching man – we must touch Jesus!

If a man went to the hospital with an arrow in his chest, the doctor doesn't just give him painkillers and send him to a seminar to learn how to manage life with an arrow in his chest! The only way to bring lasting healing is to turn him over to a skilled surgeon. Jesus is that physician, because only He can remove the roots of our issues.

- EXPOSE
Our issues must be brought out into the light in order to be healed; they will never miraculously vanish on their own. In fact, they may be pushed under or denied, but they will always reappear until we bring them to Jesus.

Remember how your mother told you that some cuts only heal if they are left uncovered and exposed to fresh air. That's like our spiritual wounds. Exposure – the thing we fear the most – is what heals us. It's not exposure to others (the woman's neighbors couldn't heal her!), but being honest before God that matters.

- EXPECT

The woman with the issue of blood risked everything on her faith in the ability of Jesus to restore her. This requires total trust. Issues that have been surrendered to the Lord will bring Him glory. After all, if we could handle our own issues, who would get the credit? We would! But this woman was desperate enough to REACH out to Jesus – ARE YOU?

Prior to her miracle, Jesus never talked to her or even touched her (He was busy with a crowd) – but her faith was so strong in Him that just the fringe of His garment was enough. It wasn't dramatic or impressive, it was quiet and simple – BUT IT WORKED!

How much of Jesus is "enough" to heal your issue? REACH!