

Jacob's Well**Lesson Title:** Mental Health—Trauma

Key Concept: Brokenness is the reason for many mental health struggles that we were not created to deal with. Trauma hinders our ability to be healthy, but God can restore us and make us whole.

**Scriptures:**

Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes.
(Ephesians 4:23 *New Living Translation*)

May God himself, the God who makes everything holy and whole, make you holy and whole, put you together—spirit, soul, and body.
(1 Thessalonians 5:23 *The Message*)

Context Scriptures: Genesis 40:15; Exodus 15:26; Jeremiah 17:14; Psalms 56:8; John 10:10; Romans 12:2; Romans 8:28; Ephesians 4:22–24

**Lesson Thoughts:**

Trauma is the long-term emotional and mental consequences from a single event or ongoing events that distressed or overwhelmed us. It's what happened, but it's also how those experiences affected us, and how we still respond because of those experiences. Trauma can have an impact on how we perceive the world, how we relate to others, how we see ourselves, and even how we see God. Sometimes trauma shows up in obvious ways, like flashbacks or intrusive thoughts. But often, it's more subtle: avoiding certain situations, struggling to trust, overreacting, or acting out of fear. The effects of trauma are personal and can look different for each person.

Joseph, after being betrayed by his brothers and unjustly thrown in prison, says, "I've done nothing to deserve being put in this hole" (Genesis 40:15). Like Joseph, we may not have deserved what happened to us. But if we don't deal

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with our trauma, it will impact how we live. Our trauma may not be our fault, but processing it and healing, with God's help, is our responsibility.

Trauma teaches us that we need to operate from a place of fear or self-protection to survive. Scripture instructs us to act according to the Word in order to receive blessings. When we let trauma define or control us, we risk contradicting who God has called us to be. We might justify unhealthy emotions as "just being the product of my environment," but God calls us to be better.

As we are dealing with trauma, which affects our minds, it can be difficult to move forward, but the Bible provides guidance. Ephesians calls us to throw off our old nature and be renewed in our minds. Romans urges us to be transformed by changing the way we think. In relation to trauma, this renewal and transformation includes letting God change our unhealthy mindsets and behaviors. Therapy can be a valuable part of this process, offering practical support in understanding and healing the effects of trauma.

God doesn't expect us to be perfect, but he does desire to make us whole. Confronting and addressing our trauma can be painful, but it will allow us to heal from the wounds that control us. Spiritual transformation and renewal, as well as therapy, can work together to bring healing. We can't change what happened to us, but we can allow God to restore us.

**Discussion Questions:**

- 1) Does taking responsibility for healing from something that wasn't your fault seem unfair to you? Why or why not?
- 2) How have you seen trauma, in your life or someone else's, cause unhealthy behavior?
- 3) How might dealing with trauma help us heal?
- 4) Why is it important for others that you deal with your trauma?
- 5) Share how God has healed you from past wounds or hurts.

Next Lesson: Boundaries

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Notes and Reflections

- 1) The phrase “generational trauma” refers to how trauma left undealt with can cause trauma for the next generation. This highlights the need to stop the cycle, because one person’s trauma has impact on others (usually negatively), whether that person intended it or not. Reflect on how what has happened to you in the past may be stopping you from being your healthiest self. Pray about what you would like to change or grow in, and seek help from a therapist if needed.

- 2) Think about what you would be like if you never experienced your past hurts. What would you have gained? What would you have lost without those experiences?

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Notes and Reflections, cont.