



MAN to MAN

**Helping Fathers Relate to Sons
and Sons Relate to Fathers**

Dr. Earl R. Henslin

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Visit: <http://DrHenslin.com> to learn more about Dr. Earl Henslin.

FOREWORD by Dr. Charles Stanley

The book of Proverbs promises many good things to the son who heeds his father's wisdom and obeys his father's instructions. The father-son relationship is the most defining relationship in a boy's life. Yet it is one of the most neglected and misunderstood in our world today.

In his book *Man to Man*, Dr. Earl R. Henslin reminds fathers of the awesome responsibility we have in the nurturing of our sons. He helps men face the wounds that sons bear because of the father's failure and neglect. He shows us the impact this wound has upon a man's life, in his family, and on our society. And he offers us biblical principles for forgiveness, healing, and hope.

Men need one another. Sons need a connection to their fathers. Not just for discipline, provision, or guidance. Our sons need an emotional and spiritual bond in which they share their father's heart and soul. But that's not always possible with a father and son. Still, the need can be met. Other men can step in and be there for that boy. They can be there throughout a man's life. That's the benefit and joy of the Body of Christ. We are family willing to share burdens and care for one another.

Dr. Henslin teaches us how to build bridges of healing between fathers and sons, and man to man. Friendship between men is not easy. Fellowship in church is even tougher. But in these pages I found help for any man who is willing to seek growth.

God used this book in my life. It opened a door in my heart for God to work his wonderful grace. After reading *Man to Man*, I called Dr. Henslin and asked him to send a copy to my son Andy.

Being father to my children is one of the most important and sacred jobs God gave me. I learned along the way that children spell love: T-I-M-E. That time is precious, and all too short. The wise father will listen to his children, communicate his unconditional acceptance, impart his values, and model his faith in God.

Listen, we don't need more coaches to motivate our kids, we need more fathers to love them. We don't need men who are challenged, we need men who are changed! God will use this book to change men's hearts. Willing fathers will be helped, and wounded sons will be healed.

Charles Stanley

PUBLISHER'S PREFACE

for the Revised Edition

The revised edition of *Man to Man* has a number of significant improvements. The entire text of the book was revised to improve the readability of the material. The author, Dr. Earl R. Henslin, wanted the book to be accessible to more readers.

At the end of each chapter, Dr. Henslin has added a section titled *A Closer Look*. It is an opportunity for readers to focus on the key ideas and principles developed in the chapter. At the chapter's end there is also an opportunity for *Personal Reflection*. Dr. Henslin has provided questions that will help readers apply the material to their lives.

In the revised edition, Dr. Henslin has added an appendix to provide more information and resources for readers who would like to further pursue this topic or expand their journey toward recovery. The appendix begins with *A Word on Brain Chemistry*. This insightful addition helps readers understand that some problems exist because of imbalances within the neurobiology of a person's brain. Therapy and counseling may prove ineffective for some until they receive appropriate medical treatment.

Suggestions for Group Study and Support provides practical insight about organizing and conducting a small group meeting. Dr. Henslin answers some common questions and concerns about a small group. He has provided a *Suggested Meeting Format*, and added an important section titled *Guidelines for Sharing* to keep the meetings safe and nurturing.

An appendix for *Recovery Resources* is also included. It lists a number of organizations and groups that provide twelve-step recovery support for a number of problems. A *Suggested Reading List* offers written resources and recommended reading for specific needs.

May these pages provide you a pathway toward healing or improving your own father-son relationships. May you begin a new journey toward recovery, wholeness, and hope. And may you understand that your healing journey is never a solitary road. Your constant companion is also your Creator—the perfect Father.

The Publisher

DEDICATION

For Ben:

I respect and admire the man you are becoming. I am sorry where I have failed you, and I pray that you may find a community of deeply feeling and spiritually committed Christian men to support and be with you on your journey through life. May God richly bless and guide you as you grow in your relationship with the heavenly Father and in relationship with men here on earth. May he richly bless you as you develop the great gifts and abilities he has given you.

I love you,

Dad

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Visit: <http://DrHenslin.com> for more information.

CHAPTER 1

The Wound All Men Bear

There's a saying in the South: "No man is a man until his father tells him he is." It means that someday when you're 30 or 40, grown up, this man—whom you respect and love and want to love you—puts his arms around you and says, "You know, you're a man now, and you don't have to do crazy things and get into fist fights and all that to defend the honor of men. You don't have to prove anything. You're a man, and I love you."¹

Actor Burt Reynolds opened his heart in this interview and revealed more about his relationship with his father:

We never hugged, we never kissed, we never said, "I love you." No, we never cried.

So what happened was that I was desperately looking for someone who'd say, "You're grown up, and I approve of and love you, and you don't have to do these things anymore." I was lost inside. I couldn't connect. I was incomplete. I didn't know then what I needed to know.²

Reynolds expressed the feelings of separation and woundedness that most men suffer in relationship with their fathers. Most men, no matter what age, hunger for approval and love from other men. They hunger for a strong emotional bond with their fathers. Without that bond and love and approval, they are wounded—torn at the heart.

This father-son wound causes men to do crazy things. Many men deny their physical pain. They may refuse to see a doctor for the injury to their backs or the sharp pain in their chests. Many men take foolish risks or participate in daring pastimes. They may race motorcycles, skydive, bungee-jump off bridges, or snowboard or ski in unmarked slopes. Many men live life close to the edge. They may work themselves to death. They push beyond fatigue, ignore exhaustion, rely on adrenaline, and abuse their bodies.

Men compensate for their inner wound, but they damage themselves and those around them. Our society and its families suffer desperate problems as men seek to address the wound in their relationships with their fathers. The father-son wound is the root that brings forth a man's most troubling issues. The key to a man's masculine maturity lies first in his relationship with his father and second in his relationships with other men.

The All-Important Relationship

God created a fundamental need within all boys (and girls too) to have an emotional connection with their fathers. Beginning with Adam and Eve, scripture records the importance of family. The father-son relationship had great meaning and importance to God. He identified himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—three generations of fathers.

The important father-son connection is found throughout the Bible. Jacob lied, manipulated, and deceived to gain his father's blessing (Genesis 27:1-29). God cautioned Eli about his weak and broken relationship with his two sons. God warned Eli that his failure would bring serious consequences (1 Samuel 2:22-36). Absalom, David's exiled son, faced death rather than live with his father's rejection (2 Samuel 14:28-33). Solomon praised his father's instruction throughout the book of Proverbs (Proverbs 4:1-4).

A boy's developing personality needs a relationship with his father. A boy needs an emotional and physical connection. An infant boy needs to feel his father's strong arms. This gives him physical security and emotional warmth. A toddler needs his father's empathy and quick response to bumps and bruises. This fosters a sense of comfort and safety. A boy needs his father's encouragement to take risks and ride a bike. This nurtures learning and courage. A boy needs his father's presence when he falls off that bike. This instills trust and the confidence to try again.

An adolescent boy needs a father who deeply loves the boy's mother. This models the character of a husband. A boy needs a father who has an intimate relationship with God. This demonstrates the spiritual reality from within the father's heart. A young man needs

a father who offers emotion and physical support without demanding anything in return. This frees the son to pursue his own direction and become the man God desires. And when a boy becomes a man, he needs a father who accepts him, loves him, and relates to him as a man.

Every boy needs a father. A God-given space for a father awaits filling. A mother can never fill the void. She can only meet the need a boy has for a mother. The father-son relationship is God's intended source for these needs. This man-to-man connection builds the foundation on which a boy develops and matures into manhood.

The father is the one who models what it means to feel and express emotions. He models spiritual maturity and leadership. He models how to survive and provide for a family. He models values like integrity, purity, compassion, and obedience to God.

God never intended fathers to do this job alone. He works through families and through the community of God's people. The father-son relationship is the foundation and starting point. For a boy to develop his full masculine potential, he needs the input of a variety of other men. The making of a man takes a lifetime and a company of men throughout that lifetime.

The Father-Son Relationship Is Flawed

The father-son relationship is the most significant relationship in a man's life. But it is not perfect. There are no perfect fathers and no perfect sons. Fathers make mistakes—sons suffer wounds. The important families noted in the Bible bear these father-son wounds. Adam had the first two sons, still one murdered the other. Abraham fathered Ishmael with Hagar, and then sent them away. Isaac blessed Jacob and thus wounded Esau. Jacob showed love for his son Joseph, yet his beautiful gift stirred jealousy among his other sons. King David's sons, Amnon and Absalom, were wounded in heart—neither healed. The father of the prodigal loved both his sons, yet each suffered in their relationship with him.

Few fathers would intentionally wound their sons. Most fathers do their best to care for their families and love their sons. They work hard to provide for their families. They deserve honor and respect for their personal sacrifices. But many fathers believe that material provision communicates love. It does not—it demonstrates responsibility. Love requires physical and emotion expression. Sons are thankful for fathers who provide, but they yearn for fathers who express affection.

Most fathers have no idea that they need to provide for spiritual and emotional needs in addition to the material ones. An emotional and spiritual bond with their sons is difficult. They experienced no such bond with their own fathers. Despite the fathers' best intentions and heartfelt motives, their sons are wounded and do not feel their love.

I lead workshops with men across the country. Many men in their 70s and 80s express lasting grief about their relationships with their fathers. They lived their lives without knowing if their fathers truly loved or cared about them. Most men today, whatever their age, suffer the same wound. They limp along with no sure knowledge of their fathers' love.

When a Son Doesn't Feel Loved

A son cannot feel secure in his father's love unless his father expresses love through words and actions. A father may think that the gift of a car says "I love you." A father may think he expresses love when he bails his son out of trouble. Or a father may think that financial help means love. But none of these sincere expressions can make a son feel loved.

Consider the story of IBM founder Tom Watson and his son Tom Watson, Jr. In his book *Father, Son, and Co.*, Tom Watson, Jr. chronicles the rise of IBM. From a company that made time-clock punch cards, IBM became a world leader in computer development. But Tom Jr. also tells another story. He describes a son who hungered to hear his father say, "I love you. You're doing a great job."

Tom Watson, Jr. grew up with every social, financial, and educational advantage. His father was a role model of integrity, honesty, and charity. He was fiercely loyal to his wife and children. He employed a male secretary to remove the potential for or accusation of unfaithfulness to his wife. Still, Tom Jr. had to share his father with the demands of an influential company with explosive growth. His father traveled the country to market products and to meet people of influence and power. His father scrambled to generate business in periods of decline. He worked hard to avoid employee layoffs. There are not enough hours in the day for a man to build an empire like IBM and be available for his kids. So the connection that suffered was between father and son.

As a young man, Tom Jr. was a playboy and spoiled rich kid. World War II gave wings to his love of flying—something his father hated. He became a pilot in the U.S. Army and was an aide and pilot for General Bradley. Tom's hard-driving, demanding ways cost him the rapport and respect of his flight crew. This changed young Tom Jr. from a spoiled, egocentric, rich kid into a leader. He began to affirm his men and respond to their emotional needs. They, in turn, became loyal and supportive to him. Far away from his father, Tom Jr. discovered what it took to be a leader.

Tom struggled with his postwar plans. He could stay in the service, or work with his father and one day lead IBM. Tom discussed his concerns with General Bradley. He wondered if he had the ability to follow in his father's footsteps. The general was confident that Tom could do the job, and he said that he could not imagine Tom doing anything else. This was the assurance Tom needed to go back home and work with his father.

As I read the story, I could almost hear the voice of the little boy inside Tom Jr. crying out for the love, approval, and acceptance of his father. He needed to know that the man he respected and admired above all others truly believed in him. Every son needs to feel this kind of love from his father. Every man needs to feel this kind of love deep within his soul.

A father communicates love by an emotional connection with his son. He forges a

bond with his son through concern about his child's feelings. He forges a bond through a simple hug to chase away tears. He forges an emotional bond through heartfelt recognition—even if it's praise for the scribbles of his three-year-old boy. He forges a bond by the value he places on his son's complaint of a playground injustice. And he forges a bond by participation in his son's experiences and activities. Without this emotional bond between father and son, a son will feel lost and unloved. And a disconnected son will do the crazy things Burt Reynolds mentioned.

Discovering the Wound

Most men never realize that they have suffered a wound in their relationship with their fathers. Or they discover this father-son wound later in life. Men in their early 20s have so much drive for sports or women or work that they are unaware of deep-seated feelings. Men remain unaware of their feelings because they are not expected to deal with them. Their feelings are not valued, probed, or challenged by other men. So they get away with ignoring their pain and confusion.

Most men will not deal with their woundedness until they are forced to. Often a life-shattering event triggers deep unresolved wounds: alcohol or drug abuse, emotional chaos at home, crazed kids, the threat of divorce, physical disability, career loss, etc. I didn't realize that something was amiss in my life until I reached my 30s. Over time I became aware of my own father-son wound.

Things began to change when I met Bill Henslin, a distant cousin. I met Bill after my move from Minnesota to Southern California. My great-uncle in Minnesota—also named Bill Henslin—told me to look him up. He said that I'd probably like him. Until that moment, I didn't know I had any relatives in Southern California. After I got settled, I followed up on my uncle's suggestion.

I parked in front of Bill's house and walked up to the door. My mouth was dry and my hands were cold and clammy. The excitement had me on edge. I didn't know what to expect. I was about to meet, face-to-face, a distant relative, the son of one of my

great-grandfather's brothers. This man had actually known my great-grandfather, Frank Henslin, who was born in 1852 (100 years before my birth). Bill was my link to previous generations. He could tell me some of the legacies of my family.

Before I was halfway to the house, the door opened. An older man stepped out and walked briskly toward me. The moment was both warm and wonderful. Here was an older man who looked forward to meeting me! He was straight and tall with a distinguished presence and good looks. His broad smile radiated a life and energy rarely seen in the men of my family. I was struck by the resemblance to my grandfather, who died when I was 18. He also resembled my great-uncle, who had always been kind to me.

He approached with his hand extended. Then with my hand in his, he searched my eyes and declared, "I can tell you are a Henslin. You must be a fine young man. I'm happy to meet you." He was a mixture of warmth, gentleness, and sincerity. I could feel his pleasure and joy in our meeting.

It may seem like an ordinary greeting. But to me it was a new experience. This man assumed the best about me from our first encounter. In those first moments, I felt more positive affirmation and genuine expression of caring and warmth than I had ever felt from most of the other men in my family.

I felt an "I love you" from Bill Henslin's greeting, and I felt it with a depth that I had never experienced before. Our meeting awakened an awareness within me. I felt a deep sadness and grief inside. My relationship with Bill gave birth to the realization: *I had missed out on something significant in my relationship with my father. And I have also missed this in my relationships with other men in my family.*

A few years later I heard Robert Bly speak. Bly is a poet and storyteller. He used to travel the country and speak about men, masculine needs, and the father-son wound. The observations he shared about men opened my eyes. Bly's words uncovered the depth of sadness and grief within me. My emptiness—my wound—was the result of my relationship with my father. This was a wound I had not only received from my father,

but also shared with him. I am sure my grandfather also bore that wound. This father-son pain had been passed on by men in my family for generations, perhaps centuries.

The men in my family are hard-working, good men. Still, most of them are disconnected from their feelings. That is the norm for upper Midwestern farm families like ours. We value hard work, and we bear whatever physical or emotional pain comes our way. It is considered noble to suffer in stoic silence. *Men do not feel*—that is our unspoken rule. For that reason, men in our family know little about emotional expression. Hearty laughter, a warm hug from strong arms, or a spontaneous “I love you” are rare from the men in my family.

The lack of emotional connection between father and son is a tragic loss. These fathers love their sons. I know my father loved me. I know he cared. He worked hard, sacrificed for his family, and was a good provider. Still, he did not know how to help me feel loved. I know my father did not feel loved by his father. He received no affirmation from his father. I doubt that he ever felt the warm comfort of hug from his father. So, my father could not give what he had not received. He could not reach out to me with tender emotions. No one had ever reached out to him.

Most men have suffered the same wound as the men in my family. They have never known an emotional connection to their fathers. They don't know how it feels. And they don't know how their fathers feel about them. Fathers may feel that their sons are diligent students, good athletes, successful businessmen, or fine family men. But without expression, those feelings—pride, admiration, respect—are locked inside the fathers' hearts.

The Emptiness Within

Most fathers have good feelings about their sons. Most fathers respect their sons and are proud of their accomplishments. They just don't know how to share those feelings. So most men, as Burt Reynolds described, feel lost, disconnected, and incomplete. A deep sadness exists in place of their fathers' affirmation and affection.

Today, more and more men experience the emptiness of a lost father-son connection. Many more sons have less and less time with their fathers. And in many cases, the limited time sons have with fathers is not “quality time.” Robert Bly states, “The average father in the United States talks to his son less than 10 minutes a day. And that talk may be talk from a distance, such as ‘Is your room cleaned up?’ or ‘Are you on drugs?’”⁴

In agricultural times, sons experienced work with their fathers side by side. Direct expressions of love may have been rare. Still, they had the opportunity to be with their fathers for many hours a day. Maturing boys, over the past six or seven decades, rarely have such intimate, daily contact with their fathers.

Today, many fathers work in offices or factories. They may spend long hours commuting to work and home. Others have jobs that require traveling Monday through Friday. They struggle to fit the week’s yard work, family time, and household responsibilities into a weekend. Some work in other parts of the world for weeks or months at a time. Phone calls, e-mails, and packages replace personal contact. Still, other fathers must work more than one job to make ends meet. Under such circumstances, it is difficult for a father to have an intimate, emotional relationship with his son. Yet the son’s need for an emotional bond with his father remains the same. The lack of the father-son relationship creates a devastating wound.

The emotional loss that a man experiences moves him to do two things. He seeks to prove himself to his father. And he tries to fill the emptiness in his soul. This emotional drive is often the dominant force that moves him. It leads to dysfunction and threatens every aspect of his life.

Proving One’s Worth to Dad

Every boy yearns to be sought out by his father. When a boy lacks this emotional connection, he tries to cause his father to demonstrate his love for him. The boy tries to do something to create an emotional bond between them. Different boys try different behaviors. One boy may be an overachiever. He thinks, *If I do well in school or sports,*

Dad will think I'm special. Another boy may cause trouble at home or school to gain his father's attention. Regardless of behavior, the motivation is the same—to be emotionally connected or close to father.

I excelled in music and sports when I was young. In ninth grade, I played first trumpet in the senior band. By tenth grade, I played on the varsity basketball team. Every time I did well, I waited for that big hug from Dad. I waited for him to tell me that I did good. But the hug and the words never came.

I grew older and more depressed. Smiles were rare. I spent a lot of time alone. Isolation was easier. I could hide the hurt. Still, I wanted my father to recognize my pain. I wanted him to reach out to me. I needed an emotional connection from him to ease my discomfort. But my father was unable to respond, and his inability fueled my depression.

Every boy believes he can do something to make that emotional connection with his father. He believes that if he does the right thing, his father will approve of him. He believes he can earn his father's affection. But that's not true. The father, not the son, is the one who must build the emotional bridge between them. Still, the myth persists. Inside many adult men there is a little boy trying to prove himself to his dad.

For example, Tom Watson, Jr. struggled well into adulthood, to earn his father's approval. But no amount of performance can produce the emotional bond a son seeks. That connection begins when the father reaches out to his son. Many boys will never experience that connection. These boys must wait for adulthood to begin the process of healing. As adults, they may also attempt to make an emotional connection with their fathers (see Chapter 8).

Filling the Emptiness Inside

A man will do almost anything to fill the ache and emptiness of the father-son wound. Some men resort to angry and destructive behaviors. Some bury their pain in a variety of addictions: work, alcohol, sex, food, or drugs. Some men immerse themselves in

religious activity. They serve on church boards and committees, but rarely touch people's hearts. Some men put all of their feeling and passion into their yards or homes. They accomplish great home improvement projects, but neglect the family. They maintain a meticulous yard, but overlook the nurture of their children.

Fortunate men try positive ways to fill the emptiness inside. Significant relationships with other men is helpful. For example, after I met Bill Henslin and embraced my sense of loss and grief, I realized that I had been seeking out substitute fathers for years. In my late teens, I discovered value in my relationships with men. I searched for male friends who could meet my needs and comfort my hurts. The little boy inside me was in touch with this need. The child within me, who had suffered the father-son wound, encouraged me to grow in a world of men. I realized that a trustworthy man was a valuable and precious gift.

I had begun to heal my father-son wound. I discovered deep relationships with other men in the absence of an emotional bridge with my father. It was the next best thing. I was fortunate to have discovered the same thing David found in his relationship with Jonathan. When David mourned the death of his friend Jonathan, he said: "I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother; you were very dear to me. Your love for me was wonderful, more wonderful than that of women" (2 Samuel 1:26).

In my writing I use a number of terms that may be unfamiliar to some readers. I also put my own spin on some common terms. In this revision edition, I have added a section titled *A Closer Look* at the end of each chapter. It is not a glossary, but an aid to help readers understand and focus on key principles developed in the book. *A Closer Look* contains terms, concepts, and ideas that I want no one to miss.

The strength of my personal experience comes from three important influences in my life. Like a strong rope with intertwined cords, three significant elements combine in my life. The first of those three cords is my personal, Christian faith and my confidence in the Bible as God's standard for life. The second is my professional education and clinical experience as a counselor. The third cord is my own personal recovery journey with the

Twelve Steps, which includes the support I have found within the recovery community.

The combination of these influences affects my use of language and my understanding of the terms chosen for *A Closer Look*. But more importantly, these three influences enrich my life and increase my ability to help others.

The Father-Son Connection (or “*Bridge*” or “*Bond*”)—An emotional and spiritual connection between a father and his son is a bond of feelings, values, and truth. A connected father is emotionally available to his son. He is in touch with his own feelings, and open and responsive to his son’s. A connected father can express the affection he feels and the value he places on his son. He can stay in touch with reality about himself and his child.

This connection also offers an unfailing “God on earth” type of spiritual assurance and security during the best and worst of times. The sure connection and presence of the earthly father teaches the sure presence and availability of the heavenly Father. It establishes a platform of security from which a son can venture into new territory and take risks.

The father-son connection is also the key to a man’s masculine maturity. A boy’s growth into manhood lies first in his relationship with his father and second in his relationships with other men.

The Father-Son Wound—Sons are wounded when the important bond between father and son is weak or nonexistent. A father’s absence, abandonment, or abuse are often to blame. Men can carry that wound throughout life.

This father-son wound causes men to do crazy things to compensate for their inner need. The father-son wound is the root that brings forth a man’s most troubling issues.

Heart—When I use the word *heart*, I am referring to an emotional and spiritual place within each person. It is the seat of a person’s emotions, affections, and personal reality

—their true self. It is where we are honest with ourselves—our heart of hearts. People often say, “In my heart, I know that....” What they mean is that in that truest place within themselves—where personal honesty and certainty exists—they know their own personal reality about what they feel, what they value, and what they believe is true.

The first two usages of the word *heart* in the Bible are quite interesting to me. They appear in the book of Genesis chapter six just before the great flood. And they are used together—just one verse apart. Verse 5: “*The LORD saw how great man’s wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.*” Verse 6: “*The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain.*” Scripture refers to the same place (the heart) within man and within God. But each was filled with a different content. Man’s heart was filled with evil—evil emotions, evil affections, and evil or corrupt reality. God’s heart was filled with pain—painful emotions about the state of man, painful affections about God’s relationship to man, and painful reality about what must happen to man.

I write about a father-son connection that builds a bridge between two hearts. It is a connection and disclosure of emotions, affections, and reality—truth. It is a father who expresses his feelings, reveals his values, and speaks his truth. But what if the father or another person’s heart is filled with evil, deception, wicked affections, misplaced values, cruel emotions? For this, scripture warns: “*Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life*” (Proverbs 4:23). And how do we guard our hearts? Boundaries.

One more important reason to understand and guard the heart is *hope*. Hope enters through the heart. The heart is hope’s door. The Apostle Paul prayed for the folks he had nurtured in faith. Among his prayer requests for the Ephesian church was this function of the heart. He said, “*I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you...*” (Ephesians 1:18). So when a father nurtures his son’s heart through an emotional and spiritual connection, he enables him to see and grasp hope. When a son’s heart is unattended or wounded, he is kept from hope’s light. His heart can easily grow dark—hopeless.

Soul—In the chapter, I refer to the soul as place where a son can experience profound injury from the father-wound. The soul is often described as a person’s mind, will, and emotions. In many ways, it is like the heart. In fact, the Old Testament scriptures often speaks of the heart and soul as if they are interchangeable. But the key distinction that makes the soul truly important and different is the component of human will—our volition and choice. The part of a son that chooses, decides his own way, can be wounded and warped. Abuse that penetrates the soul can bend it toward the will of another and a loss of freedom results. A son whose soul is wounded and overpowered will actually choose to continue in troubled and toxic relationships—not because he wants to, but because the part of him that chooses freely (his soul) has been bent and broken. It is bondage and imprisonment of the heart. The Apostle Paul said it this way: *“For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing”* (Romans 7:18-19).

1. When have you felt the deepest need for a father?
2. How have you meet the needs or filled the emptiness that exists be cause of your poor or broken relationship with your father?
3. What male relationships did you seek out in the absence of a connection with your father?
4. What is your greatest disappointment in your relationship with your father?
5. Take a few moments to honestly evaluate your relationship with your father. What comes to mind? Thank God for the times your father has been a gift to you. If you have never known your father, thank God—your heavenly Father—that he is the perfect parent.

NOTES:

About the Author



*Learn more about
Earl R. Henslin Psy.D.*

<http://DrHenslin.com>

Dr. Earl R. Henslin is a licensed marriage, family, and child therapist. His Brea, California practice through Henslin and Associates focuses on marriage, family, and child counseling, and he conducts training sessions and seminars for professionals such as pastors, physicians, and therapists who work in these areas. He holds the doctor of clinical psychology degree from Rosemead Graduate School of Biola University, where he is a part-time instructor. He is a member of the California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists and the Christian Association of Psychological Studies. Dr. Henslin is one the founders of Overcomers Outreach, a nonprofit ministry that assists local churches in establishing twelve-step support groups. Dr. Henslin networks closely with the Amen Clinic of Behavioral Medicine. He and his staff do assessments and evaluations for SPECT Brain Imaging Scans and follow-up care.

Henslin and Associates provides outpatient treatment and networks with different inpatient treatment facilities for the treatment of adults concerned with codependency, incest, alcoholism, drug addiction, eating disorders, sexual addiction, men's issues, and other issues of dysfunctional families. A nationally acclaimed speaker, Dr. Henslin

conducts seminars on these issues for churches, Christian Organizations, counseling centers, and businesses.

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Other Books by Dr. Earl R. Henslin:

Forgiven and Free: Learn How Bible Heros with Feet of Clay Are Models for Your Recovery

Man to Man: Helping Fathers Relate to Sons and Sons Relate to Fathers

The Cliff's Edge: 10 Principles to Restore Hope and Rebuild Family

Intervention: 7 Life Saving Steps

Inside A Cutter's Mind: Understanding and Helping Those Who Self-Injure

(co-author: Jerusha Clark and Dr. Earl Henslin)

Secrets of Your Family Tree

(co-author: Dave Carder, Dr. Earl Henslin, Dr. John Townsend, Dr. Henry Cloud,

Alice Brawand, M.A.)