

A letter to a young woman beginning to remember the pain of the past.

Dear S,

Why do you feel so sad all the time? The sad part of you has been there all along. You just found ways to keep it down and numb. It's what we all do when our heart hurts. And yours is so sweet and sensitive that it is easily hurt. Many people go years and years pushing down the pain - some go decades - some go their entire life. They don't want to face the pain - it not only hurts, but messes up their lives at times (like starting to cry at work - or in a restaurant like me).

- It can be embarrassing if we cry.
- It can destroy relationships if our pain comes out in flashes of anger and rage.
- It can cause us to miss important events or words or people around us because we're so focused on the pain inside. And on and on.

So why face such pain? Because whenever we bury a hurt, we always bury it alive! It doesn't die when we push it down; it stays there festering and comes out at all the awkward times. Usually when our guard is down - maybe we're tired or stressed or lots of things happen in our lives and we can't control them all.

But we have to face it sometime. If not - if we keep avoiding the root of the pain - where it's lodged down deep inside - it will just keep forcing its way to the surface and it gets harder and harder to push down and control. I counsel a lot of people in their 40's who say to me: *"I don't know what's happening to me. I'm crying all the time. I'm barking at my children. I'm miserable - and I can't stop it anymore! HELP!!!"* The pain just caught up to them and they feel helpless.

That's where little S. is found (actually, there are probably many little S's inside - each with their own hurt and pain - but I'll just talk about one for now).

You see, when you were younger (maybe 4 or 5), something happened that really hurt you. What does a little girl do when hurt very deeply? She doesn't have all the experience and maturity to know what to do - all she knows is it feels really bad and she wants it to STOP! Depending on many things - including your type of personality - this little girl chooses a way to try and stop the pain.

- She may run away and try to hide
- She may rebel and do bad things
- She may yell at the one hurting her
- She may give in and let it happen and keep on happening

But, whatever she does, it sticks with her. The next time a hurt like this happens again, this little girl tries the same strategy to survive or fix the problem or make it stop.

That little girl - let's say she learns that she can make life less painful by giving in and becoming for her parents what they keep insisting her to be - freezes at that age inside of you. So YOU keep getting older and growing up, but Little S. stays 4 or 5 years old. I am 50 and have found over 12 kids inside of me - all ages. God has been healing them - sometimes many at a time. He is AMAZING!

This Little S. holds all the pain from the original wounds - she holds onto it so you, the Adult S., don't have to feel that pain. Isn't that wonderful! She sacrifices herself so you can grow up and live life without that constant pain. She keeps it for you - hidden.

But she does something more. She also takes over inside when you encounter a hurt from someone doing something like that original hurt. So, say you're now 24, and someone wounds you deeply. And it's like what happened way back when you were 4 years old. All of the hurt and pain from the little S. now wells up inside again. It feels horrible, sad, whatever. Because at that moment you are no longer 24 - you are 4 again.

Haven't you ever seen 2 people arguing in an angry way? You look at them and want to say "*Grow up! You're acting like children!*" Well, **they are children right then!** That's why they're acting like it. You might be watching two 12-year old boys (emotionally speaking) doing everything they can to win.

When a church in Washington told me I was a horrible pastor and needed to leave, I felt like a 5-year old sitting in front of my daddy getting yelled at all over again. And I wanted to act like a 5-year old at that moment - not a mature man of 44.

As a 24 year old, you have experienced many hurts many times during your life. You, the adult, KNOW that even though it's painful, you will survive. You are mature, you know Jesus - you will make it through. But for the 4-year old Little S. - **it's the first time all over again!** She is feeling all the same pain and hurt she felt the very first time she was wounded way back then. And, for a 4-year old, it can be overwhelming. That is why I so want to help that Little S. - she is hurting and doesn't know what to do to stop it.

By the way, I find it easier to do this as if there is actually a little girl (or boy) standing right here in front of me. That may sound weird, but it's easier to understand that way.

I'll give you an example. I've gone all the way through college and seminary (3 years). I've taken hundreds, probably thousands of tests. I've passed every one - usually with an "A." And yet, every time I have to take a test I feel PANIC! Now, to the adult Mike, this makes no sense - I **know** I can pass tests - I always do. But to the little Mike - the one whose father would yell at him and tell him he was stupid if I didn't get the grade he thought I should get - it is a fearful experience. "*What happens if I don't do well? Will someone hurt me?*"

For Little Mike, it is the first test **all over again** - all the worry, fear, insecurity. For Adult Mike it's just another in a long line of tests. The stronger Little Mike is at that time, the more fear I feel. The stronger Adult Mike is, the less fear I feel.

So, why are you feeling lots of sadness right now? I don't know all the reasons. But there is one I do know - because it's happened with many others with wounded kids inside who spend some time with me. The Little S. has met someone who understands and cares and loves her! I know she's there. She knows I know she's there. And so she's coming out more, wanting to connect with me, hoping she can find help and healing and peace. God told me long, long ago - "*Mike, I will bring you my most wounded children - because you are safe!*" And they've come - you've come.

That is why it does not hurt me or make me sad when you write about your sadness. I mean, it does hurt me because I care for you and don't want you to hurt. But I know it's the only way you will be healed - and that makes me happy! Maybe it's like a doctor who has to give us a shot or something painful, but

he knows it is for our best and will cure us. Seeing someone cry because of pain isn't fun, but knowing you will see them healed is wonderful.

So, be patient. And be encouraged. Your Daddy loves you so much. And He's sticking with you through all the healing and freedom you will receive. Someday soon you will be free of the sadness because Little S. will be free and rejoicing! I look forward to that day with you!

Resting in our Daddy's arms,
Baba Mike