

Chapter 1

BUILDING STRONG CONNECTIONS

It was a Sunday night in December 1997. Randy Clark, an international healing revivalist, had sent his trainer, Fred Grewe, to Bethel Church. Fred's desire was to train individuals on how to pray for attendees at the upcoming revival meeting. It was the height of winter in Redding, California. Bethel's congregation, well dressed for the cold, bundled themselves in coats, gloves, and hats. Fred stood at the pulpit overlooking the eager crowd.

Amongst those members were a few hungry, soon-to-be-influential inner healing ministers. They, however, did not realize it just yet. All Dawna and Teresa knew at that time was that they were tired of praying for people whose conditions did not improve. To learn more, Dawna and Teresa attended Fred's packed prayer servant training. If there was an answer, they were determined to find it.

As Fred spoke, he unveiled powerful inner healing tools. One such technique was Pablo Bottari's Ten Steps. This tool, originally used in the deliverance of new converts, would eventually be adapted to become a major pillar of the Sozo Ministry called the Four Doors.

Over the next two years, Dawna and Teresa continued to hone their skills. As they added tools, they began to notice their results improving. People were starting to get well and remain whole. Eventually, Beni Johnson, Bethel's prayer pastor, saw the ministry's fruit and gave her approval for Sozo to move forward under Dawna and Teresa's leadership.

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Fast-forward 20 years. Dawna and Teresa's ministry has spread throughout the United States and the world. Establishing strong connections between individuals and the Godhead because of its ability to detect lies and exchange them for truth, Sozo has brought breakthrough to thousands.



Building strong connections is the foundation of Sozo. Everything taught—tools, techniques, and exercises—is aimed at connecting individuals to each member of the Godhead. This is because many Christians do not seem to easily access and relate to all three Persons of God. Many seem to only know Jesus on a surface level.

The Bible says God is One Being made up of three Persons: Father God, Jesus, and Holy Spirit. Throughout Scripture, we see each member of the Godhead providing specific needs. Whereas Father God tends to provide protection, provision, and identity, Jesus offers companionship and communication. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit provides comfort and instruction.

We have found that living a powerful life as Christians is directly linked to how well we steward our relationships with the Godhead. Empowered people are those who bring their needs before the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Those who connect to Father God receive identity and purpose. Those who communicate with Jesus receive companionship. Those who partner with the Holy Spirit receive instruction and comfort. This model closely mirrors the relationships within the human family. Healthy mothers, fathers, siblings, and friends each contribute to a person's physical, emotional, and spiritual growth. (The Father Ladder, a tool that explores this concept, will be discussed later.)

We believe that those who fail to pursue Father God, Jesus, and Holy Spirit individually reduce their impact on the world because they fail to access this relationship that provides identity, purpose, relationship, and comfort.

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Most, if not all, Christians are comfortable with Jesus. However, their level of relationship with Him may need some improvement. Many Christians, especially in Western nations, lack deep relationships with Jesus, Holy Spirit, or Father God. This is because religion, rather than relationship, takes the place of importance.

This is one reason why we believe the Church often sits on the sidelines of today's culture. Whether from fear or inconvenience, many Christians fail to pursue a personal relationship with God. Without a passion for and a close companionship with the Godhead, their ability to influence others is decreased. Like the covered lamp in Jesus's parable, they are unable to function as designed:

You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven (Matthew 5:13-16).

An important purpose of our lives is to bring light and influence others. When we reduce our ability to give light, we diminish our capacity to shape nations.

The world benefits when Christians become healthy. When they build a strong connection with God, believers are empowered to live the way Jesus demonstrated. They know who they are and what they were born for, and they realize that they have an unbreakable connection that will not fail them in moments of testing.



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We have found that in order to build connections with each member of the Godhead, we must identify the hindrances that have damaged our ability to trust God. Usually the issue involves partnering with a lie, wound, or ungodly mindset. Doing this opens doors to ungodly behaviors and possible demonic oppression.

Lies tend to be the most common hindrance to a person's connection with God. Because of childhood hurts, traumas, and other negative experiences, a person may develop false conclusions about people and God. For instance, children who experience divorce often blame themselves for their parents' separation. This, obviously, is not the truth, and the assumption must be renounced for the person to break free from the power of this belief.

No matter how ridiculous a lie or false belief sounds, a person may partner with it if it helps him rationalize his situation. Often lies are so ingrained that it takes partnership with the Holy Spirit to reveal their presence. This is why Paul urges believers to renew their minds:

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect (Romans 12:2).

Until our minds are renewed, we struggle with mentalities that are in opposition to God. Sozo sessions confront this opposition by replacing lies with God's truth.

To better understand the process of Sozo sessions, here is a typical opening conversation:

(Sozo minister and client enter room and sit.)

Sozo minister: "How are you doing today?"

Client: "Fine."

Sozo minister: "What is it you would like prayer for?"

Client: "I'd like to have a stronger connection with the Holy Spirit."

Sozo minister: "Is there any reason in particular?"

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Client: “No, I’ve just never really gotten into it. My friends say they have a great relationship with the Holy Spirit, but I don’t.”

Sozo minister: “We can work on that. Why don’t you close your eyes? Just so it will be easier to focus.”

Client: “Okay.” (*Closes eyes*)

Sozo minister: “When you think about the Holy Spirit, what do you hear, feel, or see?”

Client: (*Tries to picture Holy Spirit*)

Sozo minister: “Are you seeing, sensing, or hearing anything?”

Client: “No.”

Sozo minister: “All right. Repeat after me: ‘I renounce the lie that I am unable to hear, see, or sense the Holy Spirit. I renounce the lie that He does not want to talk with me. I break off any blockages to You in Jesus’s name. Holy Spirit, would You reveal Yourself to me?’”

Client: (*Repeats prayer*)

Sozo minister: (*Waits until he or she feels client is ready*) “What do you hear, sense, or see?”



Notice how in this scenario the Sozo minister asked the client to close his eyes and relate how he connects with the Holy Spirit. This is a common practice in Sozo sessions. Ministers tend to work with a person’s pictures, feelings, thoughts, senses, or impressions. This is because God communicates uniquely with each individual. Some people see pictures more easily, while others more readily feel God’s presence. To respect each person’s way of sensing His presence, Sozo ministers give clients the freedom to encounter God through whichever method He chooses.

Sometimes clients are unable to hear, see, or sense anything. We have found this always to be the result of a lie, wound, or other hindrance from the enemy. When this occurs, we work with the client

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through prayer to discover the root of the problem. (The tools we use to help with this will be discussed at length in later chapters.)



As Sozo ministers, our job is never to judge how a person thinks, sees, or feels God. Our job is to take whatever information the client gives us and discover the presence of lies that hinder the development of a strong connection with the Lord. If he or she is willing to renounce ties with any lies, strongholds, and destructive patterns, ministers can work through forgiveness, renunciation, and other Sozo tools to remove each negative presence.

As seen in the example above, connecting to a member of the Godhead follows a simple process. By asking people how they sense, see, or hear God, Sozo ministers are able to discern which lies hinder that person's connection to the Lord.

For example, a person who sees the Holy Spirit as a mist or unclear substance might believe the lie that the Holy Spirit is unavailable. He or she may believe the Holy Spirit is only a spiritual substance and not a Person desiring an intimate relationship. The Bible is clear in its representation of the Holy Spirit as a real, living, and powerful Being.

One of the most powerful tools in Sozo, which we will go over later, is called the *Father Ladder*. By mapping out our emotional, physical, and spiritual needs, the Father Ladder helps to chart out which relationships of the Godhead need strengthening. For instance, if the need for comfort is not getting met, establishing a stronger relationship with the Holy Spirit will open the door to His fulfilling that need.

Working through the Father Ladder, Sozo ministers discover which human relationships the person needs to forgive, if any. This could be a mother, father, friend, or anyone else he has held offense against, including himself or herself. The reason Sozo ministers use forgiveness is that the release of offense frees people to receive God's blessing. This biblical principle found in Matthew 18 is used even in medical

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psychology (known as Forgiveness Therapy). When a person relinquishes his hate or judgment of another person, physical, emotional, and spiritual healing takes place.



Once again, the main goal for any successful Sozo session is to build a strong connection between an individual and each member of the Godhead. Because relationship with Father God, Jesus, and Holy Spirit gives us our true identity and provides protection, communication, and comfort, it is crucial that we establish a strong connection with each member so that we can weather life's storms.



At the end of each chapter, a series of activation questions are included. Partner with the Holy Spirit as you work through them. Write down what He says and walk through the activation process by yourself or with a group leader.

| Group Discussion Questions |

1. Out of the three members of the Godhead, is there a particular member to whom you feel closest?
2. If there were anything you could get out of having a personal relationship with Jesus, Father God, or Holy Spirit, what would it be?

| Activation |

1. Choose a member of the Godhead you wish to strengthen your relationship with: Father God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit. Ask whomever you choose if there is a lie you are believing about Him.

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2. Ask Father God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit where you learned this lie.
3. Ask Father God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit to show you where He was in that moment.
4. Ask Father God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit to reveal the truth of the situation.
5. Release forgiveness to anyone who taught you to partner with this specific lie.
6. Hand to God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit any demonic attachments or ungodly mindsets that grew from this event.
7. Ask God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit to replace the lie with His truth.

Conclusion

After working through the activation exercises and group discussions, reflect on what Father God, Jesus, or Holy Spirit revealed. Ponder His words. Thank Him for whatever breakthrough you experience.

| Suggested Materials |

Matthew 18:21-35

Johnson, Bill. *Face to Face with God: The Ultimate Quest to Experience His Presence*. Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2007. Print.

Vallotton, Jason. *The Supernatural Power of Forgiveness: Discover How to Escape Your Prison of Pain and Unlock a Life of Freedom*. Bloomington, MN: Chosen Books, 2011. Print.