

What is Theophostic Prayer Ministry?

Theophostic Prayer Ministry ("TPM") was established by American Psychologist Ed Smith. The term "Theophostic" is derived from two Greek words: "Theo," meaning God, and "phos" or, "phoster," which is light or illumination. TPM functions as a three-way conversation, where the client shares his problems with a facilitator. The facilitator then presents the problem to the Lord, Who discloses to the client what He sees fit to reveal. The client again shares with the facilitator, and the process is repeated until the lies are exposed and total peace is received in respect of the memories that have surfaced.

To summarise the "Basic Principles" of TPM (Smith, 2004:28-32):

1. The present situation is rarely responsible for our present emotional pain.
2. Present feelings have their roots in first-time experience.
3. The historical lie-based woundedness must be resolved before permanent healing can be found.
4. As the negative emotions that are presently experienced match the exact emotions that were experienced in the original memory, they provide opportunities for the wounds of our lives to be exposed.
5. The three basic elements in the healing process should be identified:
 1. The present emotional pain.
 2. The original memory container.
 3. The original lies.
6. When someone believes a lie, which is the truth for that person, the consequences are the same.
7. If we suppress or deny the lies, we believe we cannot get free from them.
8. Only God's divine intervention can help us overcome the lie's debilitating grip.
9. No human being can free us through any human method (therapy, etc) from the lie's grip. Only the Truth of the Lord can set us free.
10. We have to receive the truth in the memory experience to know it experimentally, otherwise it remains logical truth. Only experimental truth can set us free to walk in maintaining free victory.
11. In times of crisis our experimental knowledge - beliefs we hold that we learned through experience - overrides our logical truth.
12. There is a difference between lie-based pain and sin-based pain. Sin-based pain should be dealt with by salvation through the cross of Jesus Christ. Lie-based pain can only be removed when the Truth replaces the lie.

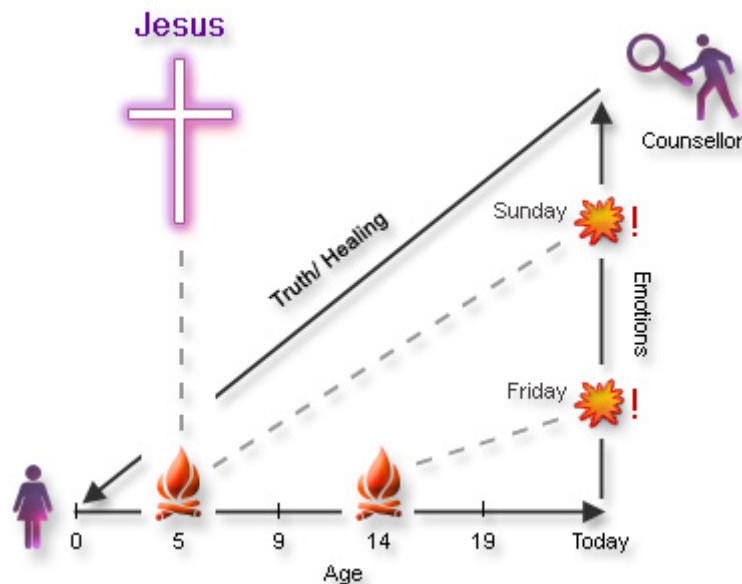
Some of the basic assumptions of Theophostic Prayer Ministry are illustrated in the following story:

"I remember one occasion when my son was about six years old. He and his friend were playing in our backyard. He knew that his friend had a fear of snakes, and had frightened him with rubber snakes in the past. At the moment I looked through the window, I saw my son throw a rubber snake towards his friend. The boy, who was about the same age, shouted at the top of his voice and jumped over a four-foot fence. How was it possible for a small kid to jump that high? He reacted on what he believed. From prior experience he should have known that my son was teasing him, and that the snake was only rubber. Nevertheless, he reacted as if it was real."

Theophostic Prayer Ministry assumes that a person's present behaviour and emotional experience are determined by what the person experimentally believes. A difference exists between believing cognitively and experimentally. Although the boy in the aforementioned story knew cognitively that the snake was rubber, his previous experience with snakes made him react as if it was real. No matter how often he sees the rubber snake, if it is thrown at him unexpectedly he reacts the same. He actually believes a lie! Applied to our belief-system, for example, it means that if I believe that God is in control of my life, I should never worry about what is happening about me. In a time of crisis, our reaction reveals what we really believe. Our behaviour shows our belief. As Ed Smith says:

"When the fire comes I am exposed, because whatever I truly believe will surface during the time of testing. If I know truth in my inner-most part (not just logically and cognitively), I will remain in peace. If I have lies, I will respond to the suffering from my lie-based thinking, and painful emotion will surface that matches my belief."

This can be explained schematically as follows:



The horizontal axis represents the age of the person, while the vertical axis is a representation of the emotions the person is experiencing at present. According to the illustration above, the lady had a traumatic experience at the age of five. She interpreted the event wrongly, and started to believe some lies about the event of her experience as a child. Say for instance as a five-year old she did her best to clean her bedroom, and expected to be credited for her effort. Instead, she was told that she was lazy and did not do her best. At that moment, she starts to believe that her best is not good enough. No matter how hard people may try to convince her otherwise, she will still believe that whatever she does is not good enough.

TPM handles the above problem in the following way. Firstly, Jesus Christ is invited to be in control of the therapy process. After the facilitator has established what the real emotion related to the problem is, he asks the Lord to reveal to the person the memory where the lie is contained. The emotion that is experienced presently matches the exact emotion that is experienced in the memory. Once Jesus Christ has revealed the truth and the lie has been exposed, the client experiences peace and calm in that memory.

Theophostic Prayer Ministry is a ministry of discerning the experiential lie-based thinking of a person, and the process of leading them to the place where they are able to receive a healing word through prayer. Lie-based thinking often dictates a Christian's life. The Christian who has a problem and has strong will-power and self-determination may perform at a higher level of "success" in combating the problem, but cannot call what he is doing genuine victory. Controlled behaviour is self-effort and nothing more than 'works' salvation. However, when lie-based thinking is replaced with truth, the Christian walks effortlessly in that area of life in maintenance-free victory.