

# YES, BUT I CAN'T FORGIVE MYSELF

BRAD PRICE





# introduction





**“I WAS PARTIALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR SENDING YOU  
TO VIETNAM”**

# WHY CAN'T WE FORGIVE OURSELVES?

How often have you heard, “Jesus has covered all your sins. You are forgiven!” and thought, “Yes, but I can’t forgive myself.” It is as if we have two separate selves, one that knows we are forgiven by Jesus, and another that feels separated by our own failure to forgive ourselves. Is there a limit to the gospel? In this session, we will look at the connection between faith, trauma, and moral injury and how the gospel is still the answer to finding peace and self-forgiveness.





# THE GOALS

**01**

Define moral injury and trauma and discover how they influence self-forgiveness

**02**

Explore paths to resolution and healing



# MORAL INJURY

“Moral injury is a wound in the soul, an inner conflict based on a moral evaluation of having inflicted or witnessed harm... Moral injury can result not only from active behavior, such as torturing or killing, but also from witnessing a close friend be slain... it can also involve feeling betrayed by persons in authority”

Brock & Lettini, *Soul Repair*



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# TRAUMA

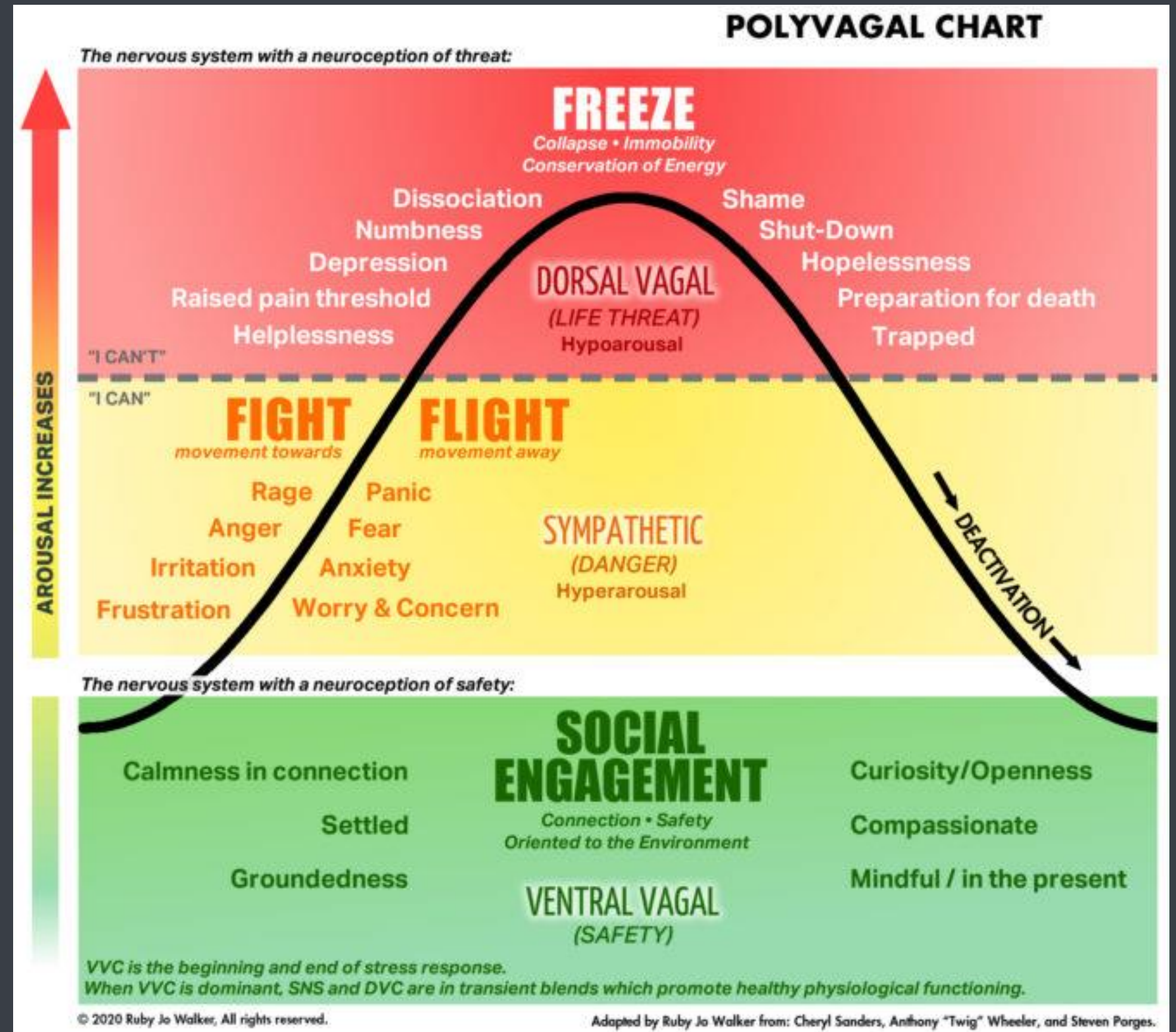
“Individual trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual’s functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.” (SAMHSA)



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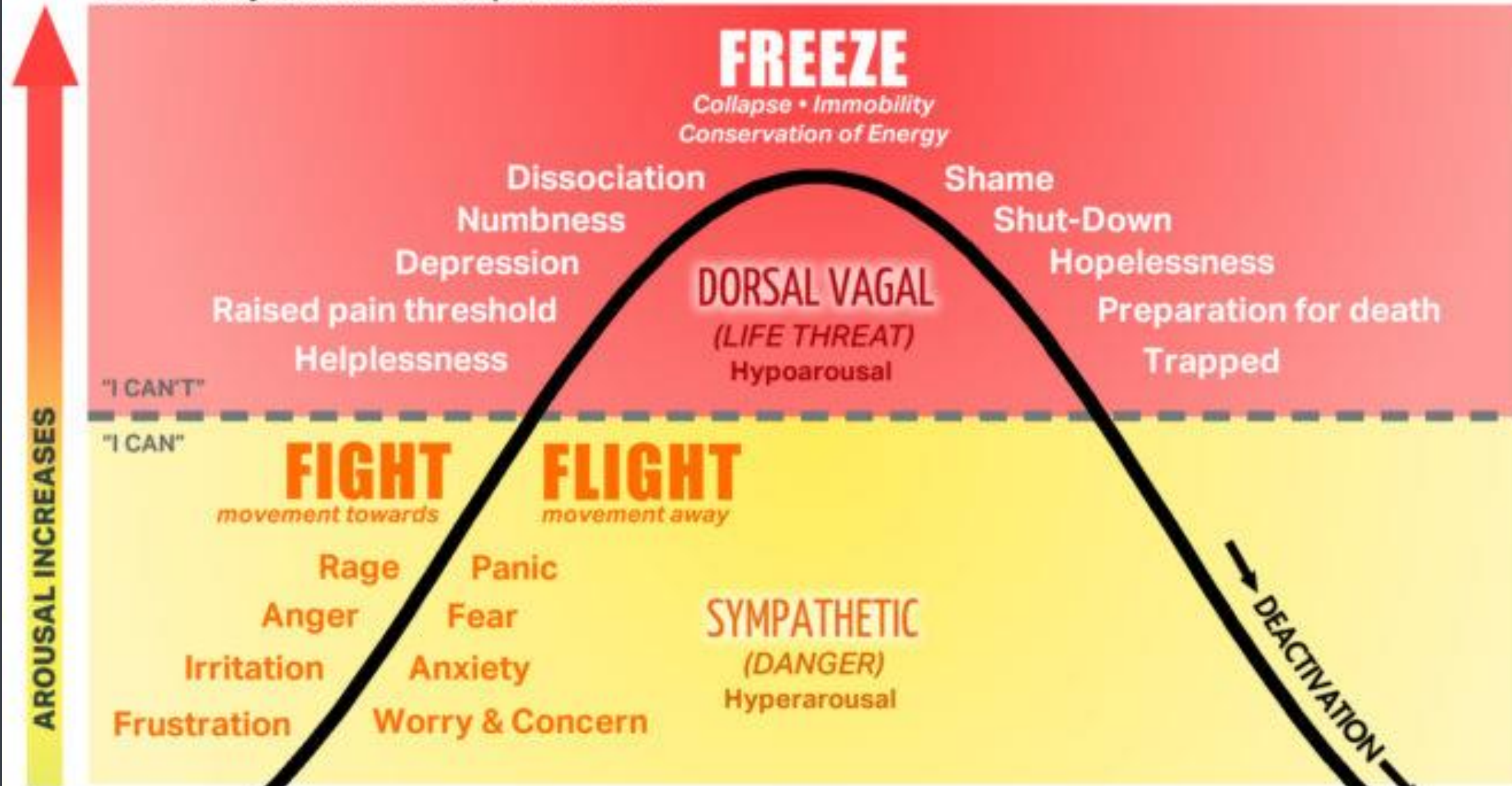
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# POLYVAGAL CHART

The nervous system with a neuroception of threat:



The nervous system with a neuroception of safety:

## PARASYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM DORSAL VAGAL COMPLEX

### Increases

Fuel storage & insulin activity • Immobilization behavior (with fear)  
Endorphins that help numb and raise the pain threshold  
Conservation of metabolic resources

### Decreases

Heart Rate • Blood Pressure • Temperature • Muscle Tone  
Facial Expressions & Eye Contact • Depth of Breath • Social Behavior  
Attunement to Human Voice • Sexual Responses • Immune Response

## SYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

### Increases

Blood Pressure • Heart Rate • Fuel Availability • Adrenaline  
Oxygen Circulation to Vital Organs • Blood Clotting • Pupil Size  
Dilation of Bronchi • Defensive Responses

### Decreases

Fuel Storage • Insulin Activity • Digestion • Salivation  
Relational Ability • Immune Response

## PARASYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM VENTRAL VAGAL COMPLEX

### Increases

Digestion • Intestinal Motility • Resistance to Infection  
Immune Response • Rest and Recuperation • Health & Vitality  
Circulation to non-vital organs (skin, extremities)  
Oxytocin (neuromodulator involved in social bonds that allows immobility without fear) • Ability to Relate and Connect  
Movement in eyes and head turning • Prosody in voice • Breath

### Decreases

Defensive Responses

VVC is the beginning and end of stress response.

When VVC is dominant, SNS and DVC are in transient blends which promote healthy physiological functioning.

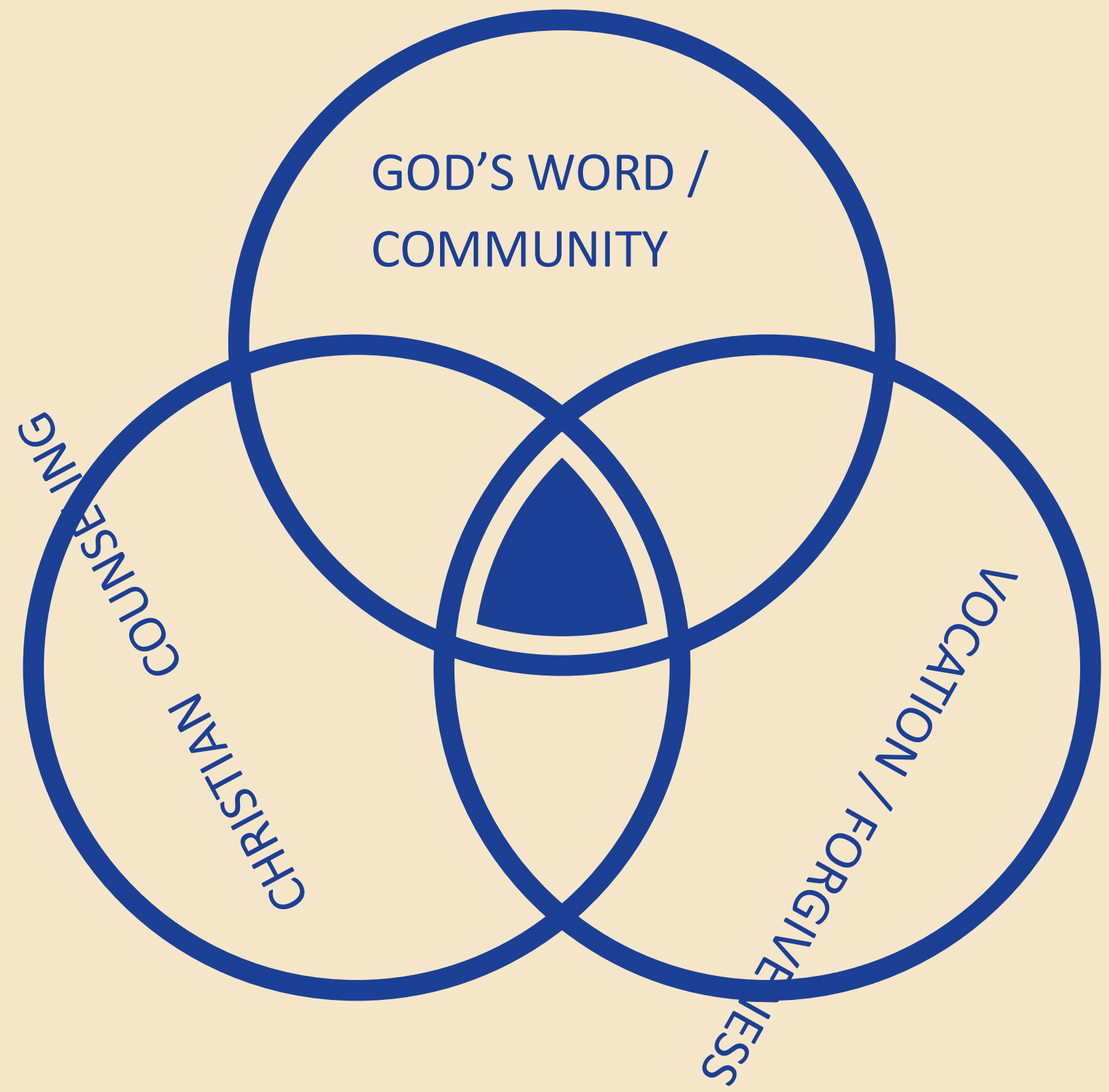
# TWO SELVES



HEALING

&

RESOLUTION



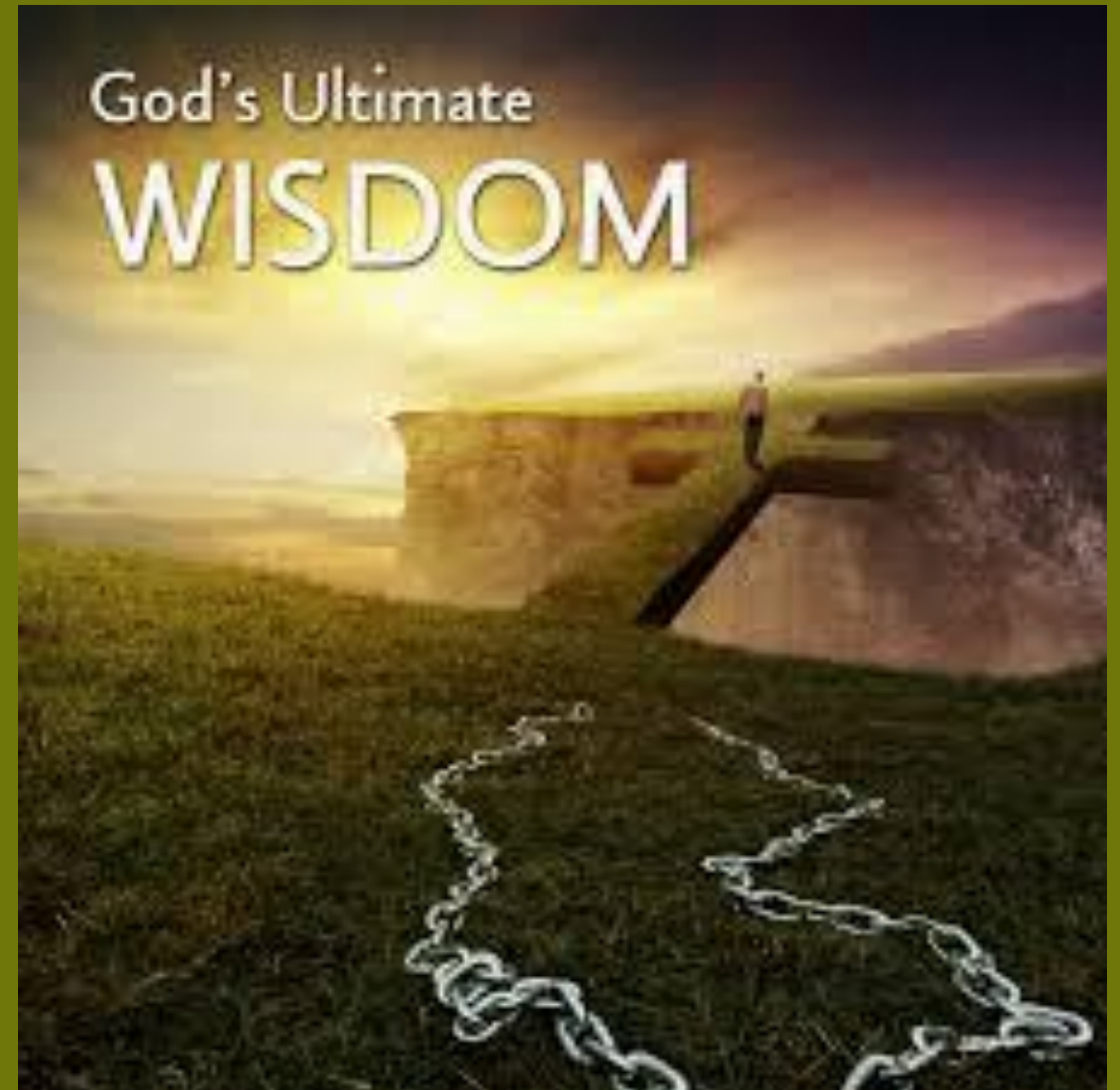
# MOVING TOWARD FORGIVENESS



WHAT CAN YOU KNOW?



LAMENT



# WHAT CAN YOU KNOW?

- God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged. *(Hebrews 6:18)*
- Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. *(Philippians 4:4-7)*

# WHAT CAN YOU KNOW?

Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him. The Lord said to Satan, “The Lord rebuke you, Satan! The Lord, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?”

Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel. The angel said to those who were standing before him, “Take off his filthy clothes.”

Then he said to Joshua, “See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put fine garments on you.”

Then I said, “Put a clean turban on his head.” So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him, while the angel of the Lord stood by. *(Zechariah 3:1-5)*

# GOD'S GIFT OF LAMENT



We are encouraged by God to bring our pain into the open, to name every single thing and person lost, and to leave it all in front of our heavenly Father, daring him to make wrong right - accusing him if necessary.

# GOD'S GIFT OF LAMENT

Scripture gives a different approach to trauma - a gospel-centered and Christ-centered approach. Laments make healing God's work. Lamenting does not ask you to change your attitude. It simply calls on you to cry out in all your pain and brokenness to God.



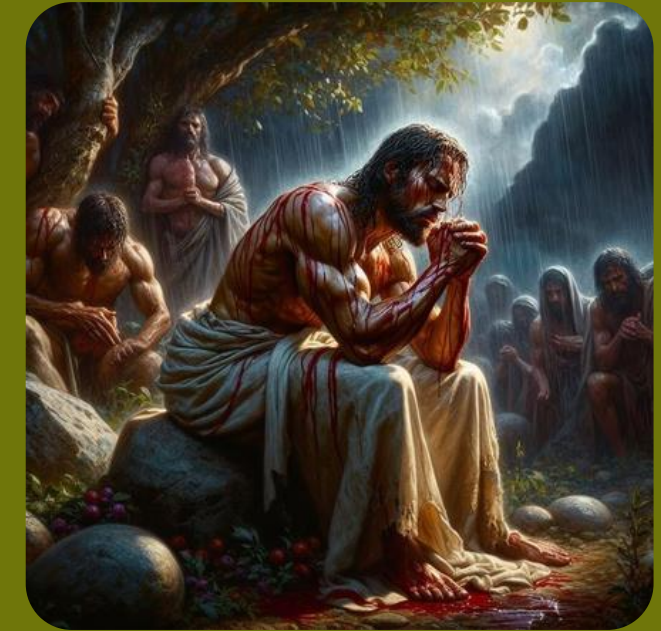
# FIVE PARTS OF LAMENT



Address



Complaint



Request



Trust



Praise

# GOD'S GIFT OF LAMENT | PSALM 4

1 Answer me when I call, God, who vindicates me. You freed me from affliction; be gracious to me and hear my prayer.

2 How long, exalted men, will my honor be insulted? How long will you love what is worthless and pursue a lie?

3 Know that the Lord has set apart the faithful for Himself; the Lord will hear when I call to Him.

# GOD'S GIFT OF LAMENT | PSALM 4

4 Be angry and do not sin; on your bed, reflect in your heart and be still.

5 Offer sacrifices in righteousness and trust in the Lord.

6 Many are saying, "Who can show us anything good?" Look on us with favor, Lord.

7 You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and new wine abound.

8 I will both lie down and sleep in peace, for You alone, Lord, make me live in safety.

# GOD'S GIFT OF LAMENT | HOMEWORK

## Write your own lament

- Identify the Lord as the person you are addressing and request his presence
- Detail how your problem is affecting you, the pain it is causing, and request his help
- Verbalize your trust in the Lord and share your hope that he will come to your aid
- Request his deliverance and intervention in your problem
- Offer your praise to him for his many blessings and faithfulness

# MOVING TOWARD FORGIVENESS



**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**



**SELF CARE**



**GOD'S AGENTS OF WRATH**



**“POUR OUT YOUR HEART WITH  
PEN AND PAPER”**

# GOD'S PROMISES TO YOU

**I am victorious** – “No, ..., we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.” (*Romans 8:37*)

**I am valuable** – “While we were still sinners Christ died for us, the righteous for the unrighteous.” (*Romans 5:8*)

**I am not alone** – “Don't be afraid, those who are with us are more than those who are with them.” (*2 Kings 6:16*)





# GOD'S PROMISES TO YOU

**I am strong, hopeful, and capable** – “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” (*Isaiah 41:10*)

**I am blessed** – Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. (*John 20:29*)



## **GOD'S PROMISES TO YOU**

**I am redeemed, restored, and clothed in grace – “The Lord rebuke you, Satan! The Lord, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire? See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put rich garments on you.”** *(Zechariah 3:2–4)*

# SUMMARY

- **Moral injury is a spiritual injury needing spiritual care.**
- **The gospel works to bridge the gap, mending what feels unmendable, healing what seems to be unhealable. Focus on his promises for you.**
- **It takes time. Give yourself grace. Your experience was no small thing. God is in it for the long game.**

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[Info@LutheranMilitary.org](mailto:Info@LutheranMilitary.org)

PO Box 483

New Ulm, MN 56073



## Resources

*The Bible and Moral Injury; Reading Scripture Alongside War's Unseen Wounds* by Brad E Kelle

*Deep as the Sea; Letters to Survivors of Trauma* by Timothy C Bourman

*Military Moral Injury and Spiritual Care* by Nancy Ramsey & Carrie Doehring

*Soul Repair* by Rita Brock & Gabriella Lettini

*Christians Can Be Soldiers* by Martin Luther, edited by Paul Strawn

*And She Was a Christian; Why do Believers Commit Suicide* by Peter Preus

*The Body Keeps the Score; Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma* by Bessel Van Der Kolk, MD

[Moral Injury; The US Dept of Veteran Services, Center for PTSD](#)

The Holy Bible, NIV 1984

'VIETNAM WAR U.S. ARMY HELICOPTER' PHOTOGRAPHIC PRINT - NICK UT | ALLPOSTERS.COM

TWO SELVES