

Touching Lives One Couple at a Time
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Him to heal them. Ultimately, we learned how to care for one another's HEARTS.

Our first day of counseling at Haven of Hope just happened to be on our 24th wedding anniversary, but with the hope that we found at HOH, we plan to have many more wedding anniversaries to celebrate!" —Brian & Theresa

"We had no idea what to expect when we reached out to Haven of Hope. We were struggling to communicate without hurting each other in the process. Haven of Hope helped us identify our emotional pains and cycle of destruction that we

didn't know existed. Haven of Hope helped us learn how to take our damaged hearts to Jesus in prayer to help us heal the wounds. Through this process we were able to learn how to understand, accept, and care about each other's heart and emotional needs." —Tim & Brittany



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Register on line at www.havenofhopes.com
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Email: melissa@havenofhopes.com www.havenofhopes.com
Changes to this retreat due to Covid will be posted on the website.

Because of generous donors, Haven of Hope Ministry is able to offer hurting couples an opportunity to experience true healing.

Couples are able to receive compassionate care through our *free* counseling services.

We don't know who will be next. But we need to be ready! Your gift today will help us reach these hurting couples.

Can we count on your support today?

Giving is easy, just text "Give" to 616-208-3976, visit our website: www.havenofhopes.com, or return your gift in the enclosed envelope.

WINTER 2020

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Merry Christmas!

from Haven of Hope Ministry

God gave the greatest gift of all when He gave Jesus.

HAVEN OF HOPE MINISTRIES

9811 THOMPSON RD,
LAKE ODESSA, MI
48849
616-693-2925

OUR MINISTRY GOALS

- Helping couples define their core emotional issues.
- Teaching couples how to care for each other's hearts.
- Discovering how to keep a person's heart open to love.
- Understanding cycles that lock a relationship.
- Experiencing healing for destructive emotional wounds.
- Applying truth to the heart through inner healing.

Haven of Hope is a faith-based, non-profit ministry committed to helping those who are hurting from their life experiences of the past and the present. We believe that there is life-changing help for the wounded hearts and broken relationships of those who are led into putting their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. This miracle is only possible through His power. We are but instruments to help lead the hurting to Him, the "Healer of the Hurting."

Make a one-time or recurring donation at our website
www.havenofhopes.com.

2020—A Lesson in God's Faithfulness

It is November 2020, and as I write this article, I am thinking back 20 years ago to the year 2000. If you were alive during that time, you will remember the term "Y2K." It was widely recognized and used. I was in my 40s, and my children were all at home yet. Life was pretty normal, but change was about to happen. It was the beginning of a brand new millennium commonly known as "The Year 2000." There was so much uncertainty in the air. As January 1 approached, fear crept in and occupied every empty space it found in my heart. And, if I am honest, it even invaded some of the secure places that I had deemed off limits. We were told by many that computers were destined to crash at the start of the new year because they would not be able to navigate the date change from 1999 to 2000. I did not have a great understanding of the problem or how we got here and felt helpless to do much to prepare. I remember April and I followed others' advice as we were told to prepare for the worst. We bottled water, canned extra food, and

then hunkered down and waited. Would the electrical grid crash? Would we wake up without electricity or the ability to stay warm? Would the stock market crash, bringing a halt to the growing economy we enjoyed in the 90s? Would we be able to survive the harshness of this event? We all breathed a sigh of relief when we woke up on New Year's Day and the lights were on and our homes were warm. Computers somehow figured out that it was 2000 and not 0000.

What was on my personal calendar for the rest of that year had not yet been announced to me. January 24, 2000, I woke to the devastating news that our family business was on fire, and one hour later we were all staring into piles of destruction everywhere. No words could explain what I was experiencing at that moment. What was normal twenty-four hours earlier was now turned upside down and looking hopeless. Nine months later, on September 11, I found myself lying in a

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hospital bed with a broken femur and wrist in one of the poorest countries in the world. Again, feeling alone and forgotten, I wondered if I would even survive this one.

Somewhere during all that devastation, Jesus was there. He had not forgotten me. He had not forsaken me. He was with me and was mighty to save. He had not missed an event nor blinked. While my situation seemed dire and impossible, He showed up to comfort me in my suffering. I remember distinctively hearing His voice through the Psalms. As I lay in my hospital bed halfway around the world, the words of the psalmist washed over my soul. "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living," Psalm 27:13. I held onto that promise. The next several months were some of the most difficult of my life, but what I was learning was about a new kind of relationship with Him that would hold infinitely more value than what I had lost physically or financially. In fact, it was because of those lean years that Haven of Hope was birthed. As I look back to that difficult year, I can see that the Holy Spirit was teaching me simple lessons in trust that I would use over and over—trust that mirrors that of a child—so simple, yet so profound and so deep.

A year ago, we were encroaching upon a very unsettling year, but none of us knew anything about COVID-19. As it made its announcement, our 2020 became much like my Y2K. COVID changed our lives in so many ways. Jobs were affected, and financial investments took a dive which impacted retirement. It threw our already divided nation into panic. The election prompted uncertainty for many as we watched a decline in the moral values of our nation. Some of you, no doubt, contracted the virus or cared for or watched loved ones suffering. Still

others lost relatives to the virus or knew others who did. And, last but not least, I know it has brought a tremendous strain on many marriages and relationships. It threw our lives into turmoil, and we did not see it coming.

Whatever your case may be, may I leave you with something fresh and good. "His mercies are new every morning." As we face the end of 2020, let us for a moment look back at the faithfulness of our God. He has led us when we did not know the way. He will make a new path when we do not know where to go from here. So, can you trust Him? Will you trust Him? As we look forward to Christmas, let me invite you to consider the words of this Christmas song, "What Can I Give Him?" The question it raises is simple but so profound and deep. The song references an old, beautiful Christmas poem by Christina Rossetti. I love the simplicity of this poem—it says it all really. "What can I give Him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb; If I were a wise man, I would do my part; Yet what can I give Him? Give Him my heart." Jesus wants nothing from me but my heart—to love Him, to trust Him, and to follow Him.

Now before I end this, let me just say *thank you* to all of you who allowed me to walk with you this last year—for sharing a deep piece of your heart with me and allowing me to witness Jesus touch your life. You have ministered to me in so many ways and have enriched my life in ways you will never know. You have taught me how to trust. My life is better because you shared a piece of your heart. And *thank you* to still others who have financially supported God's work at Haven of Hope, making it possible for others to come. You have been faithful over the years with your resources, and we never take them for granted. Thank you in advance for journeying with us into next year. We have been so blessed. May God grant you another blessed year! Shalom.

—Steve Swartz, Executive Director

*I had fainted
unless I had be-
lieved to see the
goodness of the
Lord in the land
of the living."*

Psalm 27:13

Touching Lives One Couple at a Time

Changed lives are our biggest inspiration. Many hurting couples find hope and healing through the ministry of Haven of Hope. Here is what some couples had to say:

While quarantined away from home, Michelle & Russ share their experience.

"Whether live or virtual, our marriage is now magnetic. We are bound by interwoven heart strings together with our Savior. Although we continue to fall short daily, we now see one another's woundedness and recognize one another's triggers that God is healing. We are able to extend grace and ask for forgiveness. We are equipped to invite Jesus into our relationship; into the pain moments and into the celebration moment. Our marriage is being used by the Lord, as He designed, to be an iron-sharpening-iron union, refining our character to better reflect attributes of our precious Creator.

All of this is thanks to the work of the Holy Spirit sparked by our times at Haven of Hope. Through either the retreats we've attended, the on-site marriage intensive meetings, or through involvement with a follow-up group studying the Building Blocks for Relationships curriculum, we have found true healing and hope through the ministry of Haven of Hope.

Haven of Hope, along with our commitment to the Lord, much prayer, hard work, and a growth-mindset, has allowed God's transformative work in our marriage. The hard work continues. Difficult moments still arise. However, hope now envelopes our relationship! We are FOREVER changed by the Hand of God through the ministry of Haven of Hope."

"We were at a point of desperation in our marriage. It seemed like there was no way to continue forward. We felt completely disconnected from each other and wondered how we could ever deeply love each other again. We both had a lot of unresolved past pain, and we didn't know how to deal with it. We came to Haven of Hope hoping for a change, and God ended up doing a miracle!

We saw and felt the true love of Jesus for the first time. Our counselor was so kind and accepting of us in spite of our pasts. We came to understand why we had so many of our struggles and why we were carrying baggage. For the first time in our lives and marriage, we felt freedom and healing in Jesus!

We came to understand how we could have a living relationship with Christ. We found Jesus, and He helped us to begin resolving the pain in our hearts. With the help of Haven of Hope, we have worked through many issues in our lives and marriage. We are now enjoying a beautiful connection!"

—Jason & Priscilla



"After 23 years of marriage and four kids, there was very little communication between us. When we did try to communicate, it always led to an argument. There was anger and resentment on both our parts. We became two people living two different lives who had become roommates.

We had been to many different types of marriage counseling over the years, but with no rewards. Counseling offered us little hope, and we had decided that divorce was our only option. That is when we heard about Haven of Hope Ministry.

Our time at Haven of Hope was truly life changing. We learned how each other's hearts had been wounded in the past and how our actions in the present were keeping those wounds open. Our counselor taught us how to bring these wounds to Jesus and allow

