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# Posttraumatic Growth in the Distribution of Negative Interpersonal Relationship: A Christian Perspective\*

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** This paper attempts to explore a Christian perspective on the process leading to growth after complex trauma caused by family violence experience. To achieve it, the article tackles the analysis of relationship between the inflictor father and victim, interpersonal relationship, and relationship with God in terms of growth after suffering from the trauma of family violence with a Christian perspective. **Research design, data, and methodology:** This study employed an in-depth interview as a methodology. Seven Christian adults who have experienced family violence in childhood are selected for the qualitative case study. 58 concepts, 24 low-level categories, and eight high-level categories are derived from each interview case. **Results:** The results of the case study show that the negative emotion caused by family violence during childhood is likely to lead to narcissistic rage. It is found that the reflection for post-traumatic growth starts with crying to God, simultaneously expressing pain and suffering. **Conclusions:** The interesting thing is that they are willing to forgive in the process of trauma therapy. It should be noted that the research results also demonstrate that relationship restoration entails the meaning reconstruction in the interpersonal relations.

**Keywords:** Distribution of Complex Trauma, Posttraumatic Growth, Relationship Restoration, Interpersonal Relationship

**JEL Classification Codes:** I12, I10, I19, I30

## 1. Introduction

Humans and family were made by God. God created a human in God's figuration, and Genesis 1:27 shows that God created a human in God's figuration. God wanted a holy relationship with the human, but God knew that the human is insufficient to live alone, and so gave a spouse to help him, and family started here. This is well revealed in Genesis 2:18, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I

will make him a help meet for him." Family violence is a typical example showing human's wrong nature deviating from God's creation principles. Therefore this study pays attention to the point that family violence occurred by corrupt human nature, not by God's creation principles. Victims of family violence reveal negative emotions due to corrupt human nature.

Humans, however, ruminate over thoughts to overcome the trauma of family violence and reconstructs meanings to solve the trauma. This study examined the process to overcome negative emotions suffered from relationships with inflictors, namely family violence victims' fathers, and from the interpersonal relationship from a relationship aspect.

Previous studies on human relationship problems or interpersonal relationships were mainly quantitative studies drawing results by using quantifying tools handled from an outsider's point of view. Qualitative studies were lack interpretation from the Christian perspective in handling relationships with fathers or interpersonal relationships by

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family violence and in the process of overcoming the relationship.

This study analyzed the relationship between the inflictor father and victim, interpersonal relationship, and relationship with God in terms of growth after suffering from the trauma of family violence, and explained them from the Christian perspective. To this end, this study tried to intensively deal with various themes on what meanings exist through direct experiences using a qualitative approach.

## **2. Theoretical Discussion**

### **2.1. Complex Trauma by Family Violence Experience**

The definition of trauma can be found in a “Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM),” and a traumatic event refers to what a person him/herself experienced or witnessed at the event site in DSM-IV. Fear, emotional horror, and lethargy from the experienced events are felt, and these are called traumatic events. When the above symptoms continued for over a month, it is diagnosed as post-trauma stress disorder (PTSD), and it is referred to as an acute stress disorder when the duration is less than three months. However, the event scope was broadly interpreted in DSM-5. That is exposure to indirect trauma, by which one knows that others close to oneself (family, colleague, relative, neighbor) experienced a traumatic event, and repetitive and detailed exposure to the traumatic event due to occupational reasons are included in the scope of trauma.

As for family violence experience, exposures to events are diverse. A family violence victim experiences family violence, or witnesses a family member becoming a family violence victim; however, there is a case that one knows that a family member is exposed to family violence, although the person does not directly witness family violence as specified in DSM-5.

The trauma can be divided into simple trauma and complex PTSD (post-trauma stress disorder). Complex PTSD can be the events by prolonged and repetitive violence in a willful state. In PTSD, the victim experiences psychological pain, while remembering invasive thinking, emotions, and memories of the events for more than one month, after experiencing the traumatic event. The victim wants to continuously avoid stimulations causing the pain, and so negative emotions continue or the belief system changes, and physical function level is reduced due to physical hyperarousal phenomenon (Joo, 2016). Allen (2005) classified psychological trauma into three categories: one-time and repetitive psychological traumas, natural and

artificial traumas, and interpersonal relationship trauma and trauma from the non-interpersonal relationship. Trauma by family violence is psychological trauma, because violence is repetitive, not one-time violence, and also it belongs to artificial trauma by an inflictor. As the inflictor is a family member, it is interpersonal relationship trauma.

Therefore trauma by family violence experience is chronic and repetitive interpersonal trauma, and so it can belong to complex PTSD. Regarding complex PTSD, Herman (1992) reported that interpersonal relationship trauma is carried out repetitively and is distinguished from simple trauma, and so it should be handled as complex PTSD. He said DENOS (disorders of extreme stress not otherwise specified) should be added to the trauma diagnosis standard. This is called complex PTSD, and he focused on a chronic change of disposition or trait after experiencing trauma. Courtois and Ford (2004) defined complex PTSD as a chronic, repetitive, and prolonged traumatic experience or event. The inflictor of family violence experience is a family member, as family violence occurs within the family, and it can be complex PTSD, as it has a prolonged and chronic aspect.

### **2.2. Effects of Complex PTSD and Posttraumatic Growth**

The family violence experience examined above is chronic, prolonged, and repetitive, and so it belongs to complex PTSD. According to scholars studying trauma, complex PTSD is explained by self-regulation disorder and also by deleterious effects on the self-system. The disorders and damages change self-perception and also relationships with others, and so the meaning system changes, and then personality structure on individuals changes (Kim, 2017). Briere and Rickards (2007) asserted that children who experienced emotional and physical abuse and sexual abuse have an identity problem on themselves, failure in controlling themselves, and problems in relationships with others, and these damage themselves. According to them, the damage has a tendency of self-abuse such as alcohol or drug addiction, when they become adults, and then they may have a disposition of abusing their children.

Although the experience of complex PTSD affects negative emotions and relationships, it positively adapts in order to achieve, despite major assaults suffered in the process of exposure to and development of severe adversity or important and serious event risks in the Resilience Theory (Luthar, Cicchetti & Becker, 2000). Walsh (2016) explains it as an active process of coping with assaults, correcting oneself right, and growing oneself as an ability to become more robust, possess many resources within oneself, and challenging response to assaults.

Resilience develops with various environmental

protective actions or interactions, and it is not fixed, but changes as time goes on. Resilience improves by protective factors from individuals and the environment. Resilience makes one actively cope with assaults and repetitively experience the ease of stress, and consolidate oneself. Resilience is not fixed, but it makes one develop or sophisticate another technology to cope with stress, and makes one have successful experiences consolidate himself.

Resilience assumes high risk (assaults) situations and focuses on the role of protective factors to overcome the assaults. Protective factors are those revising and improving individual responses in a non-adapting or a risky situation. They are a flexible concept to maintain a function to adapt to a serious risk (assault) situation.

Tedeschi and Calhoun (1996) explain posttraumatic growth with three things: First, self-perception positively changes. This makes one find strengths within oneself, while one experiences trauma, and such an experience can be positively evaluated. Second, posttraumatic growth changes in interpersonal relationships. In the posttraumatic growth process, one expresses more about him/herself, feels friendliness towards others, and positively experiences. The third is a change of life. Priority changes in life. One feels gratitude in daily life, and he experiences spiritual growth.

This study examined posttraumatic growth from the Christian perspective. Yun (2012) explained the concept of posttraumatic growth from the Christian perspective using Jurgen Moltmann as a model theologically. Posttraumatic growth sees self-change, change in relationship with others, and philosophical change of life as positive changes (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1998). Yun (2012) saw depression and the experience of growth on PTSD as the social support received from the laborers and their family in Scotland, and as an experience of change in gradual Christian faith, while undergoing psychological identification process with writers in the Psalm and Jesus Christ, when one reads the Psalm and the Gospel of Mark in the Bible. Through the experience of trauma, Moltmann shouted towards God and sought God. He had awareness as a companion of Jesus Christ who was crucified, as identifying with the writers in the Psalm and Jesus Christ. He had inner solidarity with Jesus Christ who was crucified, practiced it, and expanded it to solidarity with the socially weak. (Yun, 2012).

Falsetti (2003) studied the relationship between PTSD and religious belief, and drew a result that 30% of people diagnosed as having PTSD showed a decline in the religious aspect, but 20% showed more change religiously. Although religious aspects can be reduced after trauma, it implies that the victims can also be changed religiously. This study interpreted an experience of family violence trauma as those who suffered from family violence being able to grow in the process of growth from a Christian perspective.

### 2.3. Factors in the Process of Posttraumatic Growth

Tedeschi and Calhoun (2004) presented cognitive processing as factors required for the posttraumatic growth process. In cognitive processing, emotional pain occurs, if the personal system collapses due to a traumatic event, and experiences are ceaselessly ruminated to understand the experiences in order to control emotional pain. The rumination occurring immediately after the event is automatic and invasive. Continuous thinking on trauma can be interpreted as a system to adapt and be mature, and the traumatic pain is shared with surrounding people, and the person experiences social support. Such a process becomes posttraumatic growth generating introspection process of one's own life.

To examine cognitive process, this study looked at emotional crises on family violence experience, and also interpersonal relationship to observe surrounding people and social support system. To re-interpret from the Christian perspective, this study examined relationship with God.

Gillies & Neimeyer (2006) presented the process of reconstruction of meaning as another factor. This is reconstructing a new meaning structure to understand traumatic events through cognitive efforts. This study examined the process of reconstructing meanings on relationships through an interpersonal relationship in the posttraumatic growth process. This study examined not only interpersonal relationship, but a relationship with God, and so researched the reconstruction process on the meaning of relationship.

## 3. Methodology and Procedure

### 3.1. Data Collection

This paper explores individual trauma caused by family violence and how posttraumatic growth functions in terms of Christian perspectives. For the data collection method, a purposive sampling method in which subjects suitable for the study purpose are sampled and a snowball sampling method in which similar subjects are introduced were used. The methodology employed in this paper is fully qualitative, which differs from some other papers. Hence, this paper achieves its own uniqueness in regard to the research method. Many activities in management & distribution sciences involve psychological interactions between different agents, and thus we should need more qualitative studies in this discipline. In this respect, the qualitative assessment with a snowball sampling fits with the purpose of this study. The methodology would contribute to

motivating further studies, which take qualitative and narrative approaches.

The data collection period was from August 2018 until September 2018. Written consent was received from the participants before the interview, and an in-depth interview was carried out for about two hours using the researchers-made open and semi-structured questions. For sufficient

data collection, interview details were audio-recorded. The number of the interview was once to twice per participant and the duration was about two hours. The interview venue was a church or a study room café. Together with the case study data collection, an analysis was performed.

General characteristics of the participants are as follows:

**Table 1:** Participants' Personal Details in the In-Depth Interview (Source: Own)

	Sex	Age	Education	Family Member	Family Violence Type
Participant 1	F	31	University graduate	Father, mother, two older sisters, one younger brother	Physical and verbal violence between the couple, and towards the children
Participant 2	F	27	University graduate	Father, mother, older brother	Physical and verbal violence towards the children, and physical and verbal violence between the brothers
Participant 3	F	38	Graduate School graduate	Father, mother, younger brother	Physical and verbal violence between the couple
Participant 4	M	34	University graduate	Father, mother, older brother	Physical and verbal violence between the couple, and verbal violence between the brothers
Participant 5	F	24	University graduate	Father	Physical and verbal violence towards the child
Participant 6	M	25	High school graduate	Father, mother, two older sisters	Physical and verbal violence towards the children
Participant 7	M	21	University student	Father, mother, older brother, younger brother	Physical and verbal violence between the couple, physical violence towards the children, and verbal violence between the brothers

### 3.2. Analysis

To look into the Christian point of view on posttraumatic growth, this study applied a case study method. A case study is a research method to handle complex and various aspects in-depth and scrupulously in terms of study subjects, events, and records. A case study focuses on a specific case and conducts in-depth research of the subjects or scenes of the case from a natural context. This study carried out an in-depth research on how the subjects who experienced specific trauma, namely family violence, and how the subjects grow from a natural context by focusing on them. The posttraumatic growth concept dealt with in this study researches more in-depth issues emotionally, and so qualitative study was judged to be more suitable.

As for the data analysis method in the case study, categorical aggregation and direct interpretation presented by Stake (1995) were applied. They are carried out by interpreting individual cases directly, and then collect them until they become one type of story. This study arranged each case individually, namely arranged family violence experiences, fatherhood, and spirituality to be researched, integrated cases, found characteristics, and then categorized

them. In integration, classification was carried out in an intuitive aggregation, and this study tried to understand and analyze participants' inner experiences. To reduce researcher bias, a review was performed after consultation with experts.

### 3.3. Rigor and Ethical Consideration

In a qualitative study, rigor is used instead of validity. This study made an effort to enhance reliability and validity, centered on four rigor evaluation standards presented by Lincoln & Guba (1985), namely true value, applicability, consistency, and neutrality.

First, true value is internal validity on how accurately a study was measured in reality. This study selected two people having family violence experience among the clients having a consultation with the researcher of this study and carried out the pilot interview, and so study questions were researched in advance. Through a case analysis, the details were analyzed beforehand, and so the study began. Such a part was discussed with an expert who researched the qualitative study method. Second, applicability is considering whether study results can be applied to the environment in addition to the research situation, and it

corresponds to outer validity. This study made an effort to collect data in-depth, and all processes of data collection and analysis alongside various information collection including newspapers were recorded. Third, consistency is reliability on whether data analysis is consistently carried out. This study performed interviews with semi-structured study questions and mainly analyzed whether study results were produced consistently. Fourth, neutrality means being beyond biases that may be drawn from study results, which is objectivity. This study carried out bracketing to improve objectivity, and cross-checking of the data with colleagues in the doctoral program who having more than 10 years of consultation for advice and support of peer group.

The theme and purpose of this study were explained to the participants in relation to the ethical aspect of this study, and also guaranteed compliance with privacy secret and free withdrawal of participation was explained. The consent form to participate in this study including the mentioned

details was drawn up and consent from the participants was received.

#### 4. Results

This study arranged each case individually and analyzed data on family violence experiences, interpersonal relationships, fatherhood, and spirituality. By integrating each case, the characteristics were found and categorized. In integration, classification was performed with intuitive aggregation, and this study tried to understand and interpret participants' inner experiences. The theme analysis on family violence and relationship are shown in Table 2. Eight were analyzed as an upper category, 24 as a subcategory, and 58 were as revealed phenomena.

**Table 2:** Theme Analysis between Family Violence Experience and Relationship (Source: Own)

Revealed Phenomena	Subcategory	Upper Category
Father's verbal and physical violence	Direct experience of violence	Exposure to family violence
Beating by father and other family members (mother, siblings)		
Verbal oppression ("Grind and eat you up," "A person like you should die," "Are you gunshot?" "I should not have given birth to you.")		
Witnessing father's threat and violence to family	Indirect experience of violence	
Emotional negligence		
Fearful memory and avoidance of violence	Painful with fear, anxiety, and lethargy	Experiencing various emotional crises
Being accustomed to fear and pain		
Hard to live being frustrated		
Resentment against oneself that cannot do anything	Resentment, bitterness, and anger	
Feel bitterness and anger		
Depressed and pent up in most of the time	Depression, suicidal impulse, and self-injury	
Continuous thinking of desiring to die		
Disgust against father's violence	Subject of anger	
Fearful existence that I don't want to talk about		
Pain due to not being loved		
Discomfort of economic difficulties and reproach	Incompetent father	Relationship with father
Recognized as being irresponsible for family and a selfish existence		
Confused when being treated well	Confusing existence	
Confused with devoted image while harassing me		
Fearful about resembling father's personality	Resembling although fearful to resemble	
My own personality alike my fathers' personality		

Experience of being outcast by friends	Maladjustment to school life	Negative experience in relationship with others	
Deviant behaviors at school			
Meeting with depraved friends			
Feeling betrayal from friends and collapsed trust	Distrust of others		
Victim mentality that friends ignore me			
Pushing away people			
Frequent parting in relationship with opposite sex without prolonged relationship	Poor at and failure in interpersonal relationship		
Cannot accept approaching friends			
Poor ability to express own opinions			
Friends who accept me when things are difficult	Positive friend support system	Positive experience in relationship with others	
Friends supplementing lacking resources			
Community performing bidding prayer for me	Faith community		
Valuable people performing faith life			
Church filling emptiness of heart			
Sharing wounds	Empathy with wounds		
Free people from wounds			
Revealing resentment and anger to God	Sufficient emotion revelation		Finding spiritual meaning
Realizing no prayer is made if I am engulfed with resentment			
Making an effort to willfully forgive and repent	Willful prayer		
Praying when unconfident, concerned, and when I have to make a choice			
Experiencing responses to my prayer			
God afflicted at my own wounds	God empathizing with wounds		
God who laments and is heartrending			
Automatically stopping drinking and smoking	Severing deviant behaviors	Change due to God's intervention	
Severing the adulterated interpersonal relationship			
Realizing that I persecute my father	Emotional shift		
Understanding father's life			
Accepting wounds	Free from the past		
Forgiving and restoring			
Perceiving that my father and I are the same sinners.	Perception change towards father	Meaning reconstruction of relationship	
Perceiving my father is also God's child			
Perceiving relationship is made by God	Change of relationship perception		
All relationships are planned by God			
Warmhearted God who loves me in this image of myself	Meaning of God		
God, a shelter, trainer, curer, guardian, and resolver			
Spiritual father who listens to everything			
God who plans my own life			

The theme analysis examined above can be organized as follows:

First, victims are exposed to family violence in various types. They directly experience verbal and physical family violence or indirectly experience by witnessing family members are victimized by family violence. If victims are directly or indirectly exposed to family violence, they experience a variety of emotional crises. They feel fear, anxiety, lethargy, and pain due to violence, and they try to avoid it, as it is difficult to cope with such a situation. After family violence ends, they have bitterness and anger towards the inflictors, and the negative emotions deteriorate to depression, suicidal impulse, and self-injury.

Second, the posttraumatic victims experience a negative relationship with the inflictor, father. They regard the inflictor, father as a subject of anger, but they feel confused when their fathers are devoted or receive care in the relationship with fathers. They feel repulsion on taking over the father's negative aspects, and the situation was difficult when they found the father's image in themselves. They experience not being harmonious with friends, being ignored, or being outcast at school, and the negative experience causes top to perform deviant behaviors. Confusion in a relationship makes it difficult to trust others. The confusion of relationships negatively affects interpersonal relationships, and some failures occurred in forming interpersonal relationships due to being immature.

Third, posttraumatic victims seek support to overcome their environments. From the interpersonal relationship aspect, they seek support that can positively support them. They shared wounds, as they knew others who accepted them. They let them know about their lacking aspects and kept secrets, and others had wounds as well. As the victims experienced cases overcoming wounds indirectly, they sought positive encounters. They performed bidding prayer, continued faith life together in a church community, and they could positively experience interpersonal relationships through such a positive relationship and support system.

Fourth, posttraumatic victims started to seek spiritual meaning to restore the wounds they suffered. After they saw

their own problems, they turned their attention to others, and sought healthy local governments or communities in interpersonal relationships. Experiences in churches or faith communities made victims turn to God. They completely frankly expressed their emotions to God.

When they expressed their emotions to God, they could see God's heart and experienced God empathizing with their wounds. Then they willfully prayed and started to forgive in interpersonal relationships.

Fifth, as posttraumatic victims started to forgive, they experienced God's intervention. This made them reconstruct the meaning of father and interpersonal relationship, and experience relationship restoration. Their own negative actions were severed, and as their emotions towards fathers shifted to understanding and acceptance, perception changed. The victims could forgive and restore wounds, and experienced God's diverse types of nature towards individuals.

## 5. Constructing Biblical Framework of Posttraumatic Growth

The participants expressed negative emotions as narcissistic anger in the cognitive processing process in terms of posttraumatic growth. In the continuously reflecting process to control the emotional pain, they grow to sadness and pain of the process evoking their anger to God. When they turn their attention to God, they try to forgive to solve the events, while experiencing heartrending God. They reconstructed a new meaning structure to understand and solve the traumatic events.

The participants reconstructed the new meaning from the relationship aspect, and their perception of their fathers and interpersonal relationship changed and was reconstructed while experiencing God's goodwill and spiritual sense.

The biblical model of relationship restoration after complex PTSD is presented below:

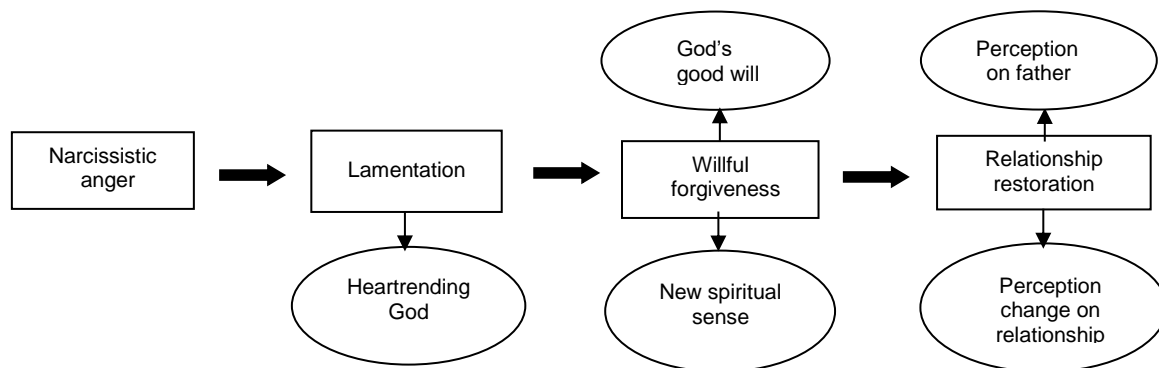


Figure 1: Biblical Framework on the Process of Growth after Complex PTSD (Source: Own)

### **5.1. Biblical Perspectives on Narcissistic Rage and Lamentation**

To more closely examine the Biblical model of posttraumatic growth, this study looked into narcissistic anger and bitterness. To look into the emotion of anger, one should perceive that emotion starts from oneself. Kohut (1971) said cohesion should exist for self-structure to be normally developed, and if self-structure that may fail or collapse on this is formed, offensive behaviors, which can be pathological nature, are shown. If one receives narcissistic wound, his/her desire to erase the wound is revealed as anger. Narcissistic wound occurs when narcissistic desire does not receive empathic response from self-object (Kohut, 1972). Namely self-assertion that should be expressed in a healthy way is expressed as destructive emotion of anger which can be aggression, and this is derived from empathic failure according to him. Family violence is carried out within family, and the family members can be victims or onlookers in many cases, and so it is difficult to find an empathic object. Empathic failure has the sense of loss on idealized object, and this is experienced as trauma. In this case, it is difficult for optimal internalization to occur. If psychological structure cannot be properly developed, it may depend on transition relationship between oneself and object, and this means a desire for a strong object. Although this is not real object, it eagers for partial function on mental instrument in which self is not developed (Kohut, 1971). (Kohut, 1971). People whose optimal internalization is not made long for non-fulfilled partial functions, and feel deep sense of emptiness emotionally. Those who, experienced family violence, and received consultation from the research of this paper complained it as lethargy. Furthermore, they may have the emotional deficiency and emotion of anger as a paranoid warrior towards others. If one experiences repulsion from others, the emotion of anger that he/she had in childhood reinvigorates. Self that did not develop by family violence experiences emotional deficiency, and expresses anger to others in social relationship, after the person becomes a grown-up.

Within narcissistic desire, various desires are latent. The person can have a strong desire to revenge those who try to criticize the person, express a desire to correct things not right, and also a desire to cancel the wound the person received. These desires can be expressed as narcissistic anger, and the victims expressed narcissistic anger within the family violence experience, which is the case in this study. If one experiences family violence, the person has anger to revenge his/her father, an inflictor, and perceives his/her exposure to violence is resentful, bittering, and wrong, and so the person wants to correct it. Therefore anger by family violence can be interpreted as narcissistic

anger. Victims also have a desire to cancel the wounds Anger generated by family violence experience could be interpreted as narcissistic anger. Due to the experience of family violence during the growth period, the victims revealed anger to erase the reality and wounds (Kohut, 1971). The participants in this study implied narcissistic anger was primarily revealed. As they focus on their emotion, they reported resentment towards their fathers, bitterness, and anger. In relationship with father, they experience self-structure failure and collapse, and express offensive anger as pathological personality. The participants said “I feel bitterness and anger, and sometimes lose my temper.” Although narcissistic anger is expressed as bitterness and anger, the latent anger was expressed as losing one’s temper.

When one’s attention shifts to God from oneself, the expressed anger showed a different aspect. Secondly, anger towards God was grief. Grief does not hide emotion experienced in hardship. The participants fully revealed anger felt in the experience of family violence to God. Kim (2016) said it is the practice of belief frankly expressed to God. Grief is fully expressing emotions experienced in pain and that could be handled, and is a means to truly share self-emotions with God. The family violence victims frankly expressed their anger and wounds as grief with belief, when they expressed narcissistic anger towards father first, and then towards to God second. When they revealed their anger as grief to God as frankly as much, God met them and showed him to them.

Family violence victims suffer from pain and extreme hardship. The wounds of family violence give the sense of emotional emptiness to victims and let them have emotional deficiency and express the emotion of anger as a paranoid warrior to others. However when their attention shifts to God, narcissistic anger was expressed as earnest moaning, namely grief. They were not shaken and believed in God who would respond to them, experienced that God was grieving and hurt alongside them, and also God’s response. So the psychologically interpreted narcissistic anger could be the beginning of treatment and restoration, when it shifted to grief.

### **5.2. Biblical Perspectives on Willful Forgiveness**

While narcissistic anger due to trauma becomes cognitive rumination towards God, the participants grew to the stage of forgiveness. After they met God, they reported that they automatically severed deviant behaviors such as drinking or smoking or meeting adulterated friends or unsound meeting, but they reported that they had to willfully forgive their fathers (inflictors).

Enright (2012) classified the steps of forgiveness into uncovering your anger, deciding to forgive, working on



forgiveness, and discovery and release from emotional prison. Among the forgiveness steps, deciding to forgive is explained as being determined to go through forgiveness process. As change is fearful, whether a will to forgive exists should be inspected before deciding forgiveness (Enright, 2012). It is interpreted that there should be a will to forgive to go to the next step.

Allender (2003) explained an aspiration to restore should work as a motive for forgiveness, and revenge should be given up and good deed needs to be pursued. If a motive to restore wounds is found, a will to give up revenge is needed. This study interpreted the will necessary for forgiveness in a Bible way.

Calvin expresses a will as a free will, and explained it by distinguishing the creator God's providence and the will of humans, God's creation. Calvin explained that human's will to do good deed is the very God's grace, and human's desire to do bad things is derived from human's corruption and original sin. This seems to emphasize confrontational dichotomy. The participants' forgiveness can be explained as deriving from good will that stems from God's absolute sovereign power. Although Calvin emphasized confrontational dichotomy and God's absolute sovereign power, forgiveness is automatically given, but God made humans select on their free will as Calvin explained, and so willful forgiveness should be sought. First when one perceives, and willfully seeks from God, it is not forgiven by me, but God's good will leading to forgive.

Meanwhile Edwards defined "disliking, favorite, reluctant, joyful, rejecting, or acknowledging" as inclination, and said an action to be performed through being dominated by the inclination as a will (Samuel, 2016). Edwards emphasized the whole personal true nature of belief by stressing intelligence, emotion, and will. Namely true belief consists of whole personal belief, and intelligence, emotion, and the will should be integrated to it. The participants reported that they realized their fathers oppressed them, and they felt hating their fathers as a sense of guilt. But, they perceived they were the same sinner as their fathers. They perceived their fathers were also God's children. When they perceived that the inflictor fathers were the same sinners as themselves, and also God's children, they could start to have a will to forgive their fathers. The participants reported they could accept the forgiveness process when they gave whole personal belief to God through intelligence, emotion, and will.

If Calvin interpreted that people can have a will to forgive by good God's leading, Edwards interpreted that people can have a will to forgive with whole personal belief through intelligence, emotion, and will. Edwards (2005) added an interpretation with a new spiritual sense to have true nature of whole personal belief. He said if God creates new things that thinks, perceives, and awareness in human

heart, humans can know and think of completely new things. He said new sense is experiencing Christ and alliance. When the participants in this study meet God with grief in front of God and go towards God to willfully forgive, they experience the alliance with Jesus Christ, and the new senses help to accept the process of forgiveness.

In conclusion willfully forgiving should entail God's good leading and sovereign right, and when people meet God whole personally, a new sense, the alliance with Jesus Christ is carried out. This is the driving force to go over to the relationship of accepting and restoring wounds.

### 5.3. Restoration of Relationship with Biblical Perspectives

As examined above, family violence experience starts from narcissistic anger primarily, goes over to secondary bitterness, and then when the victims try to willfully forgive, God's good will and new spiritual senses are generated. Now, let's examine how relationship restores when victims willfully start to forgive:

Kim(2017) explained forgiveness for relationship restoration by shifting it to the Christian perspective through self-psychological approach. Forgiveness seen from the self-psychological perspective is explained with empathic relationship. Forgiveness was seen as the start of empathic relationship. In self-psychology, pathological self-treatment is seen as empathy. Empathy is to observe the emotions, thoughts, and experiences within others within one's own inner world in a proxy way, and understand others through one's own subjective experience, which means profound participation in mutual subjective relationship between the person and others. Empathy can be understanding the experience theoretically. Worthington (1998) interpreted forgiveness as substituting negative emotions such as anger or fear with positive emotions using a pyramid model. He interpreted that removing negative emotions is forgiveness, and empathy is understanding in the position of others, and also feeling pity for others. Kim (2008) said relationship should be turned, centered on the relationship with God from the Bible perspective. Forgiveness does stop at empathy, but should commit all processes to God, and the motive of forgiveness is possible with God's grace. When forgiveness is put into practice, he said it is participating in work glorifying God.

When forgiving, negative emotions can be shifted to positive emotions through human's empathy. However there is a limitation to solve with human's empathy relationship to accept and understand the inflictor, victim's father. Human empathy is to observe, experience, understand others form subjective experience that he/she experienced, and profoundly accept from the mutual subjective relationship with others. This has a limitation as

one's own subjective experience, and so human's empathic relationship is limited. However God's good leading and belief's new spiritual sense are beyond one's own subjective experience and there is the creator God's intervention, and so one can completely understand, accept others, and can re-perceive negative perception into positive perception. Therefore relationship with God should be preceded to go beyond the limitation of human's empathic understanding and acceptance.

Although forgiveness can start willfully, wounds of victims are too deep to solve with human's reason and emotion. If one is within narcissistic anger, it is difficult to start forgiveness and restoration, and so forgiveness should start centered on relationship with God, as forgiveness dose not start from human's empathic relationship like narcissistic anger goes to bitterness. Human empathic relationship can take the next step of acceptance and restoration, which is understanding and forging an inflictor, after relationship with God is restored.

The participants reported that perception on their fathers changes in the process that started from relationship restoration with God, and they realized relationship with God is God's work by meeting faith community. As they perceived the experience of family violence and all that interpersonal relationship was planned by God, and all relationships could be restored.

This implies that relationship with God should be restored first and so restoration of interpersonal relationship can be made. Relationship restoration is not from bottom to top, namely not through human's willful restoration, but it is top to bottom, that is God should award it to humans.

This study examined how Edward Welch explained relationship with God and relationship with humans. Edward Welch explained relationship restoration with God citing beatitudes. The first half, namely four beatitudes mean relationship with God, and the second half, namely the remaining four beatitudes mean relationship with humans (Welch, 2012).

Edward Welch explained the four beatitudes on the relationship with God as follows: First, the spiritually poor rely on God, are acknowledged by God, and they enjoy the glory of inheriting God's nation. Second, grief was explained as the insignia of honor of God's nation, illustrating the grieving persons as Job and Jesus Christ. Third, the gentle do not sell God, although they are persecuted, and Jesus Christ, who was living with God's will, not his will, was a typical one of gentleness. Fourth, being starved and thirsty is to live according to God's word, filling our necessities with God's words (Welch, 2012).

As explained above, relationship restoration with God should be made primarily, the four beatitudes also seem to explain relationship with God preferentially. If the first beatitude is applied, victims who experienced family

violence trauma can enjoy the glory inheriting God's nation when they admit they are poor, lethargic persons who cannot do anything in front of violence and weak to God to restore relationship with God, and so they rely on God, and they are fully combined with God. Second, family violence victims should honestly reveal everything about their pain by grieving towards God, not concentrating on their wounds so that relationship with God can be restored. Third, when the victims pray to God on their knees, they can accept all these as God's planning for each individual, and as it is God's will, not victim's will. Fourth, emotional and spiritual absence on father felt through family violence experience and negative experience from interpersonal relationship can be restored through God's words and love in terms of relationship. The family violence experience can go over to the relationship restoration with people, as the relationship with God is restored primarily.

Edward Welch explained the four beatitudes on relationship with people as follows: First, those who have pity start with knowing God's mercy, and they should offer the mercy to others. Second, cleanliness is that humans can have when they experience and believe Jesus Christ's heavenliness, and it is to truthfully act to others. Third, those who are peaceful accept others to be peaceful as they themselves who were deserted are accepted by God. Fourth, being persecuted for justice is living by following Jesus Christ's gentleness with low status, not worldly honor, and so hope during hardship and strength during persecution can be expected. (Welch, 2012).

The application of four beatitudes on relationship with people was interpreted as follows: First, family violence victims can forgive, understand their fathers, and can have pity for the inflictors, their fathers, as the relationship with God is restored. Second, the wounds of family violence are washed away by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, who was crucified, and the victims experience the heavenliness of the Christ. The experience becomes a driving force to show true behaviors to their fathers or in interpersonal relationship. Third, family violence victims can feel a sense of a crisis, lethargy, and become depressed, because they felt they were deserted by their family, as they experience their fathers' emotional and spiritual absence. However God feels being hurt, embraces, recovers their wounds as their spiritual father, and so they experience being accepted as children of God. They try to enjoy harmony and peace in interpersonal relationship. Fourth, although the persecution of family violence may leave only resentment that cannot be understood with the logic of the world, the victims can realize that it may become a passage to meet God and can be used as a tool to understand and accept others under God's plan. This makes them expect God's other plans. This study interpreted Edward Welch's beatitudes as above when they are applied to the relationship restoration process

through family violence experience.

For family violence experience, relationship restoration with God should be preceded, which implies that interpersonal relationship can be restored through it. Relationship restoration means the family violence victim's perception on their fathers and interpersonal relationship changes and it is re-examined. This becomes the process of reconstruction of meaning required for posttraumatic growth.

## 6. Conclusion

This study examined the process of growth after family violence trauma through case study. When looking at the results drawn up through the case study from the Christian perspective, negative emotions, that is, narcissistic anger shifts to grief, and when the victims try to grow it, they could willfully forgive through God's goodwill and new spiritual sense. In the meaning reconstruction process, which is a factor in posttraumatic growth, the victims could positively reconstruct the meanings on father and interpersonal relationships through the relationship with God.

When they are interpreted from the Christian perspective, they are presented as follows: The negative concept, narcissistic anger which is perceived by family violence trauma, can be seen to grow into grief when the victims vent it to God and share their emotions with God. When the family violence victims experience God who has grief and empathy towards them, a will to forgive occurs, and the will can be interpreted as God's goodwill explained by Calvin and a new spiritual sense explained by Edwards. Forgiveness should be accompanied by God's good leading and sovereign power, and a new sense, that is solidarity with God is carried out when they meet God in a whole personal way. As for the meaning reconstruction in the posttraumatic growth, Edward Welch's interpretation on a relationship with humans and relationship with God using beatitudes was reinterpreted. Concerning the reconstruction of the meaning of relationship restoration with God, the victims can see God's will planned for each individual, when they do not admit lethargy and weakness facing violence and do not concentrate on wounds, but when they frankly reveal their pain and wounds too and rely on God. Regarding the reconstruction of meaning with humans, the family violence victims can understand and have pity for their fathers, the inflictors, as their relationship with God is restored, and when they experience the precious blood of Jesus Christ. Also God becomes their spiritual father due to the absence of the father, and they experience they're being God's children. Although the persecution of violence cannot be understood with the logic of the world, the

victims can realize that it can be used as a tool, and expect God's other plans.

This study aimed to interpret growth after family violence from the Christian perspective, but this study has a limitation in that various complex PTSD cases of family violence were not presented. There is a need to analyze various cases on complex PTSD in a further study, and also diverse perspective approaches on the posttraumatic growth process is necessary. One suggestion for further studies is that a quasi-experimental design might be applied in identifying the relationship between religious belief and the overcome of trauma. One group of people is who believes in God, and the other is not.

The constructs on family violence experience and relationship are fully and clearly presented with multiple layers. This paper also maintains its own academic value by presenting pertinent literature, linked to the qualitative assessment of the interviewees' responses. Even though there is a limitation in the research because they did not fully encompass the elements of PTSD, this paper's in-depth focus on the role of religion in the evolution of posttraumatic status apparently obtains its contribution to the existing literature.

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