

International Training
Chapel Counseling Center



BASIC TRAINING COURSE

Teachers Guide

Lessons

The Discipleship Mandate.....	5
A Personal Ministry of the Word	11
An Essential Ministry of the Church.....	19
The Sufficiency of Scripture	25
Not the Wisdom nor the Weapons of the World	31
Basics for Spiritual Growth	43
The Doctrine of Spiritual Growth.....	51
Men as Trees.....	57
Qualifications of a Biblical Counselor	63
Biblical Foundations #1	69
Biblical Foundations#2.....	76
Helping People Change	83
Understanding Hearts in Temptation	93
Hearts in the Wilderness.....	101
Heart Exposing Questions.....	111
The Christian and their Body	117
Basic Elements in Counseling Sessions	121
Self-Esteem, Self-Image and Self-Worth.....	135
Dealing with Guilt.....	143
Conflict Resolution.....	153
Dealing with Anger.....	163
Dealing with Communications Issues	171
The Heart of Fear and Worry	176
Biblical Basics for Marriage	181
Biblical Roles in Marriage.....	191
Biblical Leadership in the Home	205
Parental Attitudes and Wants.....	215
Parental Responsibilities.....	221
Biblical Change through Counseling	229

©2009-2017 Chapel Counseling Ministries

Russ Kennedy

Exclusive use permission granted to Clearcreek Chapel

Document: CTC.Basics Course.docx

Printed on: August 24, 2017

The Discipleship Mandate

Biblical Command to Disciple God's People

Russ Kennedy

Introduction

Statement of Topic

The Bible speaks with authority and clarity on...

Discipleship is the means by which God causes His people to grow and change. One aspect of discipleship is to deal with people who are sinning, suffering or struggling as a result of their own sin or others in against them.

Exposing the Issue

What are the issues, concerns, difficulties that Christian people face? What false wisdoms and perspectives keep them from responding in ways that please God?

Biblical churches often do a good job in the public ministry of the Word. They work hard at expositing the Bible in preaching and teaching the Bible in other settings. However, they often struggle and outright fail in their personal ministry of the Word. So one anothering and discipleship is often weak and unhelpful. The result is that the discipleship of those who are sinning, suffering or struggling with life is not available or put in “Counseling” ministries or even worse, given to the world.

What does the Bible call us to?

Expositing the Bible

What does the Bible say about this topic and its related issues?

The Sending of the Church (Matthew 28:16-20)

¹⁶ Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷ And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

The Mixed Response (v. 16-17)

There is obedience...

There is worship.

There is doubt...

The Sovereign King (v. 18)

The King's words...

The King's authority...

The King's Command (v. 19-20)

The Scope

All: All authority, all nations, all teachings, all times

The Purpose

To make disciples

The purpose of going is to make disciples of all people groups.

Disciple-making is the heart of the great commission. No disciple-making, no obedience.

Disciples are not merely converts, but committed, growing, serving, followers of Jesus.

The Profession

Baptizing the convert as a means of publicly confessing Christ.

All other means are unbiblical substitutions for the Biblical means.

The Process

Teaching them to do what the Scriptures command

Anticipates the rest of the New Testament teaching on discipleship.

Involves teaching the Word...

Involves practical application and training...

Is to be appropriate for the disciples need...

Is to be inclusive of all the Bible requires...

The Presence

The King will be present in and with His disciples wherever they may be until the end of this age.

Anticipates the coming of the Spirit...

Anticipates the commission spread of the gospel and kingdom until the end of the age.

So, how does the church in the world today obey this directive given to the disciples? From Jesus, to them and now to us through the rest of the New Testament. This is a simple but clear command. But it is also insufficient to fully define, describe or do the work of the church entailed.

The Aim of Discipleship (Ephesians 4:11-16)

What is the primary aim of discipleship? This text provides a structure for how the ministry functions. It is inclusive of one-anothering but is not limited to it.

¹¹ And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, ¹⁴ so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. ¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

God gives gifts to people and gifted people to the church who are responsible to bring people to:

Ministry

The leadership is to equip people for their work of ministry...

Maturity

The work of church is to help people come to spiritual and personal maturity...

Stability

The work of the church is to help people know and believe truth and doctrine so that they are stable in their thinking in all areas of life.

Purity

The work of the ministry is to help people live lives that are pleasing to the Lord in all areas of life.

Is your church functioning like this?

The Categories of Discipleship

In wisdom, there are different categories of discipleship aimed at meeting the goals above. Wise discipleship will be intentional and what and how the disciples are being taught so that each disciple is growing in a balanced way.

Formational

This is discipleship aimed to begin the process of spiritual formation in a new or untaught convert.

New to Christ: It will teach the basics of Christian doctrine and life.

New to Church: It will introduce the disciple to the church: its doctrine, duties and community life.

Transformational

This is discipleship aimed to grow in holiness and wisdom.

It will teach the **principles** and **practice** of New Covenant obedience...

It will teach how to live in wisdom in a way that is pleasing to God...

It will focus on one-anothering and the importance of the church as a community...

It will be intentional to identify the general and particular sins, struggles and suffering prevalent in the disciple's **culture** (**not** just locale!)

Equipping

This is discipleship aimed to train the use of spiritual gifts, experience and abilities in the service of God and His people.

It will equip people for all the work of ministry...

It will train **how to do** the work of ministry...

It will have a track that is identifying potential elders and giving them opportunity to teach, preach, shepherd...

Crises (Galatians 6:1-5)

This is discipleship of those who are overcome with sinning, suffering and struggling with issues of life.

¹ Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. ² Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

³ For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. ⁴ But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. ⁵ For each will have to bear his own load.

It will be an intentional ministry of the church largely overseen and carried out by the elders...

It will also be carried out by those who are gifted, trained and able to help people in deep spiritual difficulty...

The church **WILL NOT** abdicate this ministry to so called "Christian Counseling" and **NEVER** to the world's counseling and psychology...

Applying to Counseling

How do we connect the Scriptures to the sins, struggles and suffering of people? How do these texts shape our approach to the ministry of counseling?

What we believe and teach is that it is the responsibility of the church to carry out a comprehensive process (program) of discipleship.

In this training, the word “counseling” as a ministry is used to refer to Crises Discipleship largely define by Galatians 6.1-5.

It will include an area of discipleship that is most often called “counseling”. In the west it is common for churches to have Counseling Ministries and for there to be Biblical Counseling. While these terms are not wrong, they can and often do confuse what the focus of that ministry is to be.

Every eldership and church must decide for itself what it means by “Counseling” if it is going to use the term. Since there is training like this and so many important, good, useful and available books about areas of discipleship covered by counseling, it is helpful to be able to access those resources knowing what **and** how you intend to use them.

Engaging the Person

How do people experience, express and present these kinds of issues? How does the Bible understand the person and their place? What does the Bible **say**?

Church: The Place the Ministry Exists

It will be important to publicly identify what you are doing in your counseling or crises discipleship ministry...

Counselor: The Person doing the Ministry

It will be important for the person doing this ministry to know what they are doing and the focus and limits of the ministry.

We have found that over and over again that counselors end up struggling with wanting to do other categories of discipleship. They have to be willing to say this person has repented and is now restored to Christ and His people and release them to be helped by the other discipleship ministries of the church.

Counselee: The Person being Helped in the Ministry

It will be important for the person being helped to understand what the focus of the ministry will be.

Biblical ministry in love, compassion and mercy using Biblical instruction admonition, and correction seeks to be an instrument in the Lord's hands to bring repentance and renewal to a struggling saint.

Summary

The Church has been commanded and commissioned by God to carry out the work of discipling believers so that they grow in all aspects into their full maturity in Christ.

Lesson 2

A Personal Ministry of the Word

Titus 2:15

Russ Kennedy

Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you.
Titus 2:15 (ESV)

Introduction

Counseling that is Biblical is a personal, face-to-face ministry of the Word.

It is one-anothering...

It is discipleship...

It is Word and Spirit oriented...

Statement of Topic

The Bible speaks with authority and clarity on...

The Bible defines for us the field of ministry we call counseling. While the word itself is a modern invention, the why, who, where and what of counseling is woven all through the Bible.

The Issues

What about Sara¹.

She is unkempt and dirty. She slouches slackly in her chair, her gaze fixed on her feet. She is obviously way too thin. She has come to meet with you because her life is in disarray. She is in deep financial trouble. Her husband divorced her a month ago leaving her with a 6-month-old baby. She has an eviction notice on the table. She tells of a nightmare of a childhood, including incest, molestation and beatings. She is already mega-dosing vitamins and will soon be out of her current prescription for Prozac. And last night, her former husband came back to the house and forced himself upon her.

What do you say? What do you do? How do you enter Sara's world and give help and hope?

How do you keep from despair yourself at the hurricane of pain, suffering, trouble, sin and deprivation? Sadly, the church is often immature, simplistic, and sloppy with its thinking and doing of the care of souls. And the world today offers well-endowed, carefully structured, powerfully persuasive and richly elaborate alternatives. It is no wonder that we have become the borrowers instead of the source of valued and rich insights.

¹ A fictional character and composite situation.

What is at stake is worship.

Who is worshipped and how served in the midst of massively contradicting views of the nature of the world, man and ultimate and temporal things. Psalm 14 tells us that there is a madness that tries to live as though God is not. So we must be fierce in our insistence that life is lived before the face of God, that all we do and say in the care and cure of souls has an emphatic vertical dimension before the horizontal, human relation.

So we have personal disconnects.

Where the rivets holding what we say and what we preach to how we live are sprung.

And we have formal disconnects

When the care of souls is not about God in Christ reconciling us to Himself as our Redeemer and Ruler. Further, we are surrounded by common grace from God, which allows sinners to borrow good and truth from God and then twist it and turn it to serve ends contrary to God and His Word.

We also have lost a real sense of sin as a principle,

As a real, fundamental perversion of our nature that takes on real measurable forms and shapes and choices and passions. We are defined as the (somewhat) helpless victims of forces and events we cannot control that have determinatively shaped us into what we are.

Our Interactions

Developing a Biblical view is going to require us to interact with several key components.

With an ever-present and persuasive cultural milieu.

This is simply to say that the world and its system of values and views is constantly and subtly attempting to pour you into its mold.

With an authoritative and sufficient Word of God.

Here is the mind of God revealed to us in the very same milieu. The Bible is not a textbook nor is it a dictionary of counseling or theological terms. It is how God the Redeemer calls His people to be reconciled to Himself and live righteously in view of all He is in Christ for them and all He has promised to them.

With a needy, growing, learning covenant community.

We are both serving with and alongside one another. Our counseling insights are gained in dialog with one another so that we will be better able to minister to one another.

With people as neighbors needing hope and help.

This is where our opportunities and responsibilities in serving one another really exist. We are constantly giving counsel; the question is, "Do we counsel the Word?"

What are the issues, concerns, difficulties that Christian people face? What false wisdoms and perspectives keep them from responding in ways that please God?

Every renewal and recovery finds in what were familiar and cobwebbed words startlingly awakening truths. What we have read over and passed over again and again suddenly illuminates ourselves, our needs, sufferings, sins and our saving and transforming Redeemer.

All counseling answers some fundamental questions:

- What ought people to be like?
- Why do people do what they do?
- How does lasting change take place?
- How can I be an instrument of that change?

Everyone is dealing with the same set of facts. Not everyone is gathering, interpreting and responding to the facts the same way.

Expositing the Bible

What does the Bible say about this topic and its related issues?

What is Counseling? ²

We must begin with thinking about what is counsel according to Scripture.

Counsel at Creation

Genesis 1

“All of life and humanity is counseling!”

As soon as God creates, He begins to talk to them. Even before the fall, man needed God and His Word, needed God’s counsel to figure it all out. Perfect people in a perfect world still need God and His counsel so that they can order, interpret and respond rightly.

Why?

- People were created to be revelation receivers and God communicators.
- People were created to be interpreters – to not live by facts; but by interpretations, the meaning of things.
- People were created to be worshippers with the fundamental consequence that what/who we worship drives us.

Counsel in the Fall

Genesis 3

“We live now in the confusion of competing voices.”

1st time in human history there is the voice of a different counselor.

Notice the fundamental moral nature of counsel: interpretation of reality involves ethics. What is believed and desired will drive what is felt and done.

Eve steps out of her responsibility to live by God’s counsel and tries to act without God. Doing so brings complication, confusion and corruption.

² Adapted from *Changing Hearts, Changing Lives*, © 2000 CCEF, page1.

Counsel as the Redeemed

Hebrews 3:12-13

“We need the counsel and care of community.”

You live in the flow of the details of your life: if God does not rule the mundane of your life, He does not rule your life at all.

The fundamental problem for God’s people is unbelief and wrong desire that leads to turning away and hardness of heart. So, we must have an adequate theology of blindness:

Sin blinds
Sin deceives } So, need community to counsel and correct me.

The most significant effect of our blindness is that we are blind to it.

We must crave the community of insights:

Welcome and love the courage of honesty

Desire and pursue the humility of approachability.

Everyone needs help and everyone is a helper.

What we are calling for and shaping and defining and modeling is the care and cure of souls.

Hence, we are considering the personal ministry of the Word. How will we, in face-to-face conversations, help people overwhelmed and entrapped in the situations and sins of life?

If we are called as Christians to glorify God in every facet of our lives, if sin is falling short of the glory of God and if we aim in all we do to please God, then we have much work to do. This is our aim – to think carefully and deeply about these things in concert with others of like mind so that we may do good for God’s people and pass on to others what we have learned.

What is our Biblical Mandate?

Though the Scriptures are weighty and full of imperatives, instructions and illustrations on the cure and care of souls, these two texts are foundational to set the gaze of our ministry.

A Ministry with an Agenda

Titus 2:11-15

Verses 11-13 are a rationale for why people should live the lives and obey the instructions in the prior verses. Live like this because...

Grace Comes with a Change Agenda

Though we usually think of grace as the poise of God in merciful love, the Bible more often speaks of it as the power of God for transformed living. Grace not only brings God's good to us, but is the very power of that good in us.

Bringing us our Redeemer's Salvation (v.11).

This is where our care and cure for souls begins. God's mercy and enabling grace brings to people in every culture the salvation of God's Son. Even with all the powerfully formational culture in Crete (Titus 1:10-16), the Redeemer's salvation brings change.

Instructing us in our Redeemer's Transformation (v.12).

Grace teaches us how to live. The three categories here impact pleasing God in any culture.

Sensibly Live with thought out, reasonable, knowledge and wisdom.

Righteously Live with a growing correspondence to the glory and holiness of God as revealed in Christ.

Godly with an overwhelming God-centeredness.

This is not just a morality of do's and don'ts, although it will involve that as a consequence. Godliness in the Bible is the grace of God-centeredness, of living before the face of God and in the presence of His glory.

Focusing our gaze on our Redeemer's Glory (v.13)

Grace enables us to place our hope and faith in God's promises so that our gaze is upward and forward, longing and hungering and thirsting for God.

This is often the great need of those in our care – that they would fix their gaze on Christ, His promises and glory. Thus our counseling must have a radically vertical orientation that results in and shapes our horizontal transformation.

Christ Comes with a Change Agenda

Verse 14 describes Christ's sacrificial cross work of redemption as designed and aimed to purchase a people to Himself and for Himself.

From choices arising from lawless thoughts and affections.

The focus here is not that Christ comes to deliver us from being functional antinomians. Our Redeemer in Himself is the very embodiment of that righteousness that the law describes. Lawless deeds are those that do not conform to the glory and holiness and mind of Christ.

To character in a community owned and mastered by God.

This from/to process must engage the complexity of a person's heart and life.

Our cure and care of souls must never become individualistic and outside the called out community of Christ, the church. The purity to which we are bought and possessed and owned is not merely private, but is as "a people". This needs careful thought when we send this people to be mastered and owned by other systems. Why would we give the cure of a soul to a philosophy of this world? Would we just as easily send someone to a Muslim or a Mormon as we would a psychologist?

Energized by/with a passion for conduct reflecting the righteousness of Christ.

What we are after are people who have a passion for living a God-ward life. Do not think of the good deeds here as merely being do-gooders. Rather, think of a people whose love and reverential fear of God shape a personal and practical righteousness in real, measurable thoughts, affections and choices.

Christians Come to One Another with a Change Agenda

Verse 15 requires a personal ministry of the Word in the lives of others as care and cure for souls.

A ministry of words

In imitation of God who speaks, we come to one another in our counsel speaking. It is a ministry of words. We speak truth in love to one another, embedding that truth deep in the soul so as to bring forth genuine repentance at the heart level and authentic holiness in conduct.

A ministry with authority

Rebuke arises from the authority of God's Word and our words. The authority is not embedded in us, but rather in the office that is borne (in Titus' case) and in the truth we speak.

A ministry not to be circumvented

The care and cure of souls in both the public and personal ministry of the Word must not be disregarded. Today, this must be heard by both the leadership in our churches who disregard counseling Biblically and their responsibility for it, and also those who are its objects.

A Ministry with One Another

Hebrews 3:12-15

This care and cure of souls is not just the ministry of shepherds, elders or other church leaders. There is a dimension that makes it a personal ministry.

The Constant Dangers We Face

All Christians are faced with two deadly and destructive heart dangers.

Hearts that are doubting and unbelieving

The locus of our struggle is in the heart. We have sinful, unbelieving hearts that are so prone to wander and desert our dear Redeemer. Thus, our battle is over what our heart wants and pursues and trusts. So faith that hopes and loves is how we battle the doubt and sin that so easily besets us.

Hardness arising from the deceitfulness of sin

We are vulnerable to being hardened because sin dupes us and deceives us. Constant exposure to sin builds calluses on the heart that deadens sensitivity to God.

The Common Duty We Share

All Christians are to be engaged in watching over and warning one another.

Careful watchfulness over one another

Counseling is the care and cure of souls that is deeply concerned and intentionally aware of one another. It is the fruitful tenderness of our love and life together as believers.

Encouraging engagement with one another

Counseling is the care and cure of souls that is actually engaged with one another's lives. It is the powerful toughness of our love and life together as believers. It is an engagement that is persistent and practical. Any day and every day that we can say, "Today", we are to watch and warn one another.

The Corrective Design We Expect

All Christians aim to be sensitive and serious in our pursuit of God and our dealing with sin.

Applying to Counseling

How do we connect the Scriptures to the sins, struggles and suffering of people? How do these texts shape our approach to the ministry of counseling?

Here is the basis for our care and cure of souls. We are committed to the sufficiency of Scriptures. We understand that sufficiency as follows:³

The Bible is comprehensive, not exhaustive. It allows us to gaze on, view, evaluate, engage and understand...

The Bible alone is how we understand life. We can go to outside resources as long as we don't buy into the worldview.

There is an exegetical basis for all of ministry. We develop a thematic understanding, rooted in texts and mapped onto people's lives.

There is no disrespect for history/creeds while we intentionally aim at developing new categories and criteria

There is a systematic, Biblically authentic model of discipleship (counseling) towards which we work in our thinking and ministering.

Engaging the Person

How do people experience, express and present these kinds of issues? How does the Bible understand the person and their place?

Here are the elements of a care and cure of souls

We are working in partnership with others to develop the categories and criteria for a Biblically authentic ministry along the following lines:

Analysis – What is wrong?

An evaluation and diagnosis of what is wrong that is penetrating and comprehensive.

³ Dr. David Powlison, *The Ministry of the Word: Conversation and Proclamation*, lecture at the 2001 Bethlehem Baptist Pastor's Conference.

Solution – What change must take place?

An effective solution that is as deep and wide as the problem as seen from God's eyes and initiated by our Redeemer.

Methodology - How will change take place?

A wise pastoral methodology that roots change in the heart, calls for genuine repentance, and implements practical steps of action.

Structure – Where will this ministry take place?

A carefully developed structure within the church(es) as a container and a channel for the public and personal ministry of the Word.

Apologetic - Described and defended how?

A carefully and clearly worded standpoint from which to debunk and to critique other systems.

Thinking it Through

What are some Steps toward a Care and Cure of Souls?

We hope to see each of you working towards being personally engaged according to your gifts and capacities in the care and cure of souls.

Vision	Gain a vision of what is possible.
Commitment	Be persuaded to its resulting in commitment to its practice.
Training	Gain knowledge and insight through instruction and interaction.
Practice	Develop skill over time with practice.
Leadership	Become a leader through growth, serving and sacrifice.

Summary

What can I do to help people?

The circle of obedience as the eye of the storm.

The circle of a believer's obedience is like the eye of a hurricane – it is small and manageable. You cannot fix the whole storm. But you can obey God in the midst. Consider Job 37-38.

Counsel as a nightlight and a flashlight.

In the midst of the real darkness of a person's life and trouble, just be a nightlight or a flashlight. It might not be much, but it can show the way.

Discipleship as to our Redeemer and under our Ruler.

Give yourself to bring believers to their merciful Savior in the midst of the struggles of life and point them to their good and wise Sovereign who rules in all things for their good and His great glory.

Lesson 3

An Essential Ministry of the Church

Romans 15:14-16

Russ Kennedy

Introduction

Romans 15:14–16

14 I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another. ¹⁵ But on some points I have written to you very boldly by way of reminder, because of the grace given me by God ¹⁶ to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

Statement of Topic

The Bible speaks with authority and clarity on...

The public and personal ministry of God's Word through the church is the Biblical place to receive the general and specific counsel needed to please God in all situations of life. Counsel, the Word of God and words of God's people are sufficient resource for God's people.

Exposing the Issue

What are the issues, concerns, difficulties that Christian people face? What false wisdoms and perspectives keep them from responding in ways that please God?

It is common for people who have major life issues to seek for counsel outside the church.

It is common for churches to have no one available to Biblically help.

Expositing the Bible

What does the Bible say about this topic and its related issues?

The New Life of God's People (Ephesians 4:17-24,ff)

¹⁷ Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. ¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. ¹⁹ They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. ²⁰ But that is

not the way you learned Christ!— ²¹ assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus...

Not as the world (Gentiles)

You cannot allow the world's values to govern the way you live..

You cannot go to the world to know how to live as a Christian.

Because of their way of thinking...

The world's way of thinking is empty, futile, vain, useless...

Because of their darkened understanding...

Darkened by sin, unbiblical thinking, myths, lies and anti-God agendas...

Because of their ignorance...

Even when it appears to be wisdom

Because of their hard hearts...

Hardness of heart causes a person to be deaf to even creation level wisdom.

Because of their sensuality...

The people in the world have callused consciences and are not convicted of their sin. The result is that they devise ways of living designed to allow their sensuality and lusts (not just sexual, but of all kinds).

But as we have learned Christ

Our problem is that too many Christians have never learned their identity and position in Christ. It has all been much about Law not Life., Rules not

Focus on both the different types of people, struggles and ministries to them with an emphasis on patience.

The One-anothering of God's People (Hebrews 3:12–14)

¹² Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. ¹³ But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. ¹⁴ For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.

We need faithful one-anothering to keep our hearts believing and not hardened because sin is so utterly deceitful.

The Shepherding of God's People (Acts 20:27–28)

²⁷ for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. ²⁸ Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to [shepherd] care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.

Christians who are sinning, suffering and struggling with the issues of life need the shepherding care, comfort and correction of their shepherd/elders.

The Means of Grace for God's People (Hebrews 10:24–25)

²⁴ And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

The community of God's people is where we stir one another up to love and good works. We are to know each other well enough that we know what it takes to accomplish what God calls us to here.

The Admonishing of God's People (Colossians 3:16)

¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

The ministry of the Word in the context of public gathering and worship of God's people.

The Struggles of God's People (1 Thessalonians 5:14)

¹⁴ And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.

Three categories of problems among God's people:

(a) the idle or unruly/undisciplined, (b) the small-souled, faint-hearted, (c) the weak

Three different responses and help for God's people:

(a) admonish, (b) encourage, (c) help

One overarching command, **patient** with all.

The Discipline of God's People (Matthew 18:15–20)

¹⁵ "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶ But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸ Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹ Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them."

When a professing believer is unwilling to deal with or repent of their sin, then the Bible outlines a process that ends with the person being treated as an unbeliever and removed from the membership of the church. The process of restorative discipline is designed to (a) produce repentance and restoration or (b) expose someone who is not truly a Christian.

Applying to Counseling

The following model attempts to locate crises discipleship (counseling) within the discipleship ministries of the church.



Public Sphere

Public Discipleship

Discipleship through the preaching and teaching of God's Word

Crises Discipleship

Discipleship by spiritually qualified and equipped people of Christians who are overcome by sin, suffering or struggling with life's issues.

Church Discipline

The discipleship ministry of the Elders and Church Body to seek repentance and restoration or to identify and treat the unrepentant as being an unbeliever.

Personal Sphere

Self-discipleship

All that a believer does in personal discipleship to grow, change and please God focusing on faith working by love.

Mentoring

Discipleship by those who are older, wiser, more experienced in the Lord (Titus 2)

One-Anothering

Discipleship with other believers, both in receiving and giving...

Engaging the Person

The call to people to engage with each other in discipleship.

People who are not engaged in discipleship are vulnerable to sin, hardness of heart and self-blindness.

The call to the church to establish effective discipleship ministries.

A church who is not discipling is simply failing in its call as a gathered body.

The call to elders/pastors/shepherds to model and master personal and public discipleship.

The leaders of the church must be regularly involved in all aspects of discipleship to gain experience and skill as well as to grow personally.

The call to God's people to rely on the discipleship ministries of the church.

People who go to the world for help with issues of life, suffering and sin are disobeying the Scriptures.

Thinking it Through

What questions, supplemental reading, and connections to ACBC Certification Exams need to be made?

Are you involved in being discipled?

Are you seeking to disciple others?

How do your spiritual gifts enable you to do discipleship?

Summary

All that God's people need to be pleasing God in all areas of life should be provided by the gathered church or churches in partnership. God's people should not be going to the world for the solutions to their struggles.

The Sufficiency of Scripture

Tim Nixon and Devon Berry

Introduction

“There can be no doubt whatsoever that all the troubles in the church today, and most of the troubles in the world, are due to a departure from the authority of the Bible.” (Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones)

In counseling, as in every area of life, the people of God must take their marching orders from the word of God, committed to its authority and sufficiency. Believers are called to counsel one another with the rich truths of God’s word in a way consistent with the gospel of Jesus Christ. The center of this counseling ministry is marked by the truths, power, and authority of God’s word and the gospel. (Dr. R. Albert Mohler Jr.)

Statement of Topic

Biblical Counseling recognizes and affirms the claim of Scripture in its promises, precepts, principles and wisdom to be an all-sufficient resource for matters of life and godliness.

The heart, from which our responses and choices and sins issue, is addressed in such a way by the Scriptures that a believer may know how to obey and glorify God regardless of the life situation. Rather than simplistic and ever-changing descriptions of man’s problems in relation to himself and others, the Bible provides richly elaborate and abiding explanations and solutions to man’s problems. These problems are first seen as related to and defined by God, then as having self and other dynamics.

Exposing the Issue

One of the most revolutionary aspects of the gospel of Jesus Christ is the assumption that our main problem is inside of us and our only hope for rescue comes from without. In matters of counseling, the secular worldview, driven by the engine of therapy, says precisely the opposite. Our problem is something outside of us, and the rescue we need is something that comes from within.

Any attempt to reconcile these worldviews with the gospel subverts the gospel intentionally or unintentionally. Mixing secular psychology with the churches theology makes the gospel something that it is not the history of secular counseling bears witness to this fact. The theories of Freud, Jung, and Maslow, are all contrary to the Christian worldview. Yet one of the great tragedies of our age is that the average Christian bookstore is teeming with literature promoting the agenda of secular psychology.

This means that the task of biblical counseling must be undertaken with a sense of urgency. We are living in a time of tremendous cultural and theological confusion this has led to a vast and dangerous infection of the church.ⁱ

Expositing the Bible

The Bible has much to say about itself.

The Presuppositions from Scripture

Inspiration

God superintended the human authors of the Bible so that they composed and recorded without error His message to mankind in the words of their original writings.

I Peter 1:21, II Tim 3:16, I Cor 2:13

I Peter 1:21 For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

II Tim 3:16 All scripture is God-breathed and is useful...

I Cor 2:13 This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.

Inerrancy

The Bible tells the truth...and it does so in all parts with all its words¹.

Matt 5:17-18, John 10:31-38, Matt 22:23-33, Matt 22:41-46

Augustine – “most disastrous consequences must follow upon our believing that anything false is found in the sacred books...If you once admit into such a high sanctuary of authority one false statement, there will not be left a single sentence of those books, which, if appearing to anyone difficult in practice or hard to believe, may not by the same fatal rule be explained away as a statement, in which intentionally, the author declared was not true.” Aquinas – “nothing false can underlie the literal sense of Scripture.” Luther – “The Scriptures never have erred.” Wesley – “Nay if there be any mistakes in the Bible there may well be a thousand. If there is one falsehood in that Book it did not come from the God of truth.” (Ryrie, p. 81)

The Purposes of Scripture

2 Timothy 3:14-17 (v. 16) All Scripture is God-breathed...

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

The perfection of the Scripture and its profitable use is aimed to make a man of God complete and fully equipped.

The Believer's Salvation (v. 14-15)

The Scripture is sufficient to make a man wise of Salvation

Rom 10:17, Acts 3:11-26

Rom 10:17 Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

Acts 3:11-26 Peter's sermon after healing the cripple outside the temple, using OT truths to communicate the gospel to the hearers.

v.15, Paul sets his teaching side by side with OT Scripture.

The Believer's Maturation (v. 16)

Teaching

Instructing believers in God's truths or doctrine

Reproof/Rebuke

Confronting and admonishing those in sin

Correction

Restoration to an upright or right state, improvement of life and character

Instruction in righteousness

Literally "child-training," guiding new believers in God's ways. As is often heard in ACBC circles, the Scriptures are useful *to tell us what is right; show us when we are not right; tell us how to get right and finally what we must do to stay right.* (R. Patton)

The Believer's Actuation (v. 17)

"Man of God" —one who must provide spiritual leadership to others

To Complete the Man of God

To be made perfect, being able to meet all demands

To Equip the Man of God

"thoroughly furnished" to complete a special purpose cf. Eph 2:10

Applying to Counseling

Let's look at specific ways that we can use the Scripture in the counseling environment from Psalm 19. (adapted from "Sufficient for Life and Godliness" Paul Tautges and Steve Viars)

The Bible restores our soul. (v. 7)

God's words strengthen and nourish our hearts. Psalm 19:7 reads, "the law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul..."

The Bible makes simple minded people wise. (v. 7)

God's word has the ability to move us from foolishness to wisdom since Scripture reveals to us the glory of Jesus Christ, who is our wisdom (1 Cor 1:30). Psalm 19:7 continues, "the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple..."

The Bible brings joy to the heart. (v. 8)

The words of our Lord bring joy to our saddened hearts. Through our affliction we turn to the precepts of God which are, "right, rejoicing the heart." (Psalm 19:8) Jesus explained to his disciples that the reason he taught the father's commandments to them was so that his joy would be in them and that their joy may be full (John 15:11).

The Bible enlightens the eyes of the heart. (v. 8)

The word of God, used by the Holy Spirit, supernaturally opens spiritual eyes that are blinded by the effects of sin. It enlightens the eyes of the mind and heart so that believers are able to be responsive to God (Psalm 19:8).

The Bible endures forever. (v. 9)

God's words will never die or become irrelevant. They are, "clean, enduring forever..."

The wisdom of the world comes and goes, but God's word stands forever. Because the Bible endures forever, we can be confident to counsel the words that are, "true, and righteous altogether." (Psalm 19:9).

The Bible warns of disobeying God, and promises reward to those who do obey. (v. 11)

The word of God warns of the consequences of sin and foolishness. In like manner the words of God also promise "great reward" to those who align their hearts and life to its standards (Psalm 19:11).

The Bible's own testimony concerning its sufficiency forms the basis of our confidence in its unique authority for the personal one – another ministry of counseling. As biblical counselors, we echo the confidence of the word and are profoundly thankful for the provision that God has given us in the Bible.

In Christ and in his sufficient word, we have access to divine resources as we gently and skillfully help broken people experience freedom in Christ, forgiveness, and grace.

Summary

Is God's word profoundly sufficient, necessary, authoritative, and relevant to equip God's people to address specific, complex issues in today's broken world? The answer is a resounding "Yes!"

It communicates a way of viewing God's Word to address life in a broken world - a theology of the personal ministry of the Word. It presents a way of using God's Word to minister to broken people - a practical methodology of the personal ministry of the Word

It is our hope that you will gain competence in using God's Word to address the real-life issues of people in a broken world. All to the glory and praise of God.

Resources

Kellerman, Bob (General Editor). “Scripture and Counseling.” Zondervan (2014)

Emlet, Michael R. “CrossTalk – Where Life and Scripture Meet.” New Growth Press (2009)

Grudem, Wayne. “Bible Doctrine – Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith.” Zondervan (1999)

Thiessen, Henry C. “Lectures in Systematic Theology.” William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company (1979)

Boettner, Loraine. “Studies in Theology.” William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company (1947)

ⁱ Mohler, Albert Jr. Forward to “Scripture and Counseling” Zondervan (2014)

Lesson 5-6

Not the Wisdom nor the Weapons of the World

Counsel that is the Wisdom and Power of God in Christ

Russ Kennedy

Introduction

1 Corinthians 1:22-24

²² For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, ²³ but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. (ESV)

Statement of Topic

The Bible speaks with authority and clarity on...

The Christian must rely on God's Word to interpret all that is and must reject all ideas and interpretations that are contrary to the Scriptures. So, we do not rely on the wisdom nor the weapons of the world in any kind of ministry including counseling/crises discipleship.

Exposing the Issue

What are the issues, concerns, difficulties that Christian people face? What false wisdoms and perspectives keep them from responding in ways that please God?

The culture around us presents us with pervasive and persuasive models by which we are to understand life and living.

Pervasive...

In that they are in the intellectual, academic, entertainment, social and religious air we breathe. Myths like self-esteem have reached the point of unconscious social assumption and agreement.

Persuasive...

In that they are generally argued from life-stories that seem to ring true. We fall prey to the truism that the person with the facts is always at the mercy of the person with the experience.

The Scriptures are emphatic about the dangers of human devised wisdom of world-views and techniques. It places them placing over against them the stunning wisdom of God and the surpassing and all-encompassing gaze of God. But because the wisdom of the world is pervasive and persuasive, Christians need the lens of the Scriptures to bring things into focus. Let's pick up the eyeglasses of two texts that orient us towards the seductive wisdom of the world.

Not the Wisdoms of the World

Colossians 2:1-11; 1 Corinthians 1:30-2:16

What does the Bible say about this topic and its related issues?

Mere Human Teaching as False Wisdoms

Colossians 2:1-11

Christ is the very wisdom of God for all of life and eternity, for salvation and transformation, for every facet of our care and cure of souls.

We do not have to live very long to know that it is easy to fool people. Donald Barnhouse tells of the practical joke he and his teenage friends used to pull. They would stand on a busy sidewalk and stare intently up into the air, pointing, discussing and debating – saying, “Yes, it is” and “No, it’s not.” Soon a large group of people would gather around looking up while Barnhouse and his friends would slip away. Sometimes, people would stand and talk and look for 20 minutes before moving on. This illustrates how earth-born worldviews can tell people to look where there is actually nothing and delude them into thinking they are seeing something.

The Reason: Christ is Wisdom’s Fullness (v.1-5)

Christ Himself is the very wisdom of God. A Christian attains what God expects through knowing and understanding Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. So compelling compassion, loving obedience, purifying discipline and stabilizing faith come from knowing and treasuring Christ.

What makes Biblically authentic Christian care and cure of souls is not its doctrine, methodology, compassion or even word in all situations. Our uniqueness and genuineness arises from our emphasis on a Person, the Lord Jesus Christ. No philosophical, scientific, religious or psychological worldview is true wisdom when it does not know, understand or value Christ. Most so-called Christian systems could be practiced by almost any moral person – a Moslem, a Mormon or even an ethical atheist. Biblically authentic care and cure of souls seeks its wisdom in Christ, understanding that it is mystery and hidden requiring Word and Spirit to see truly. And it is centered around a Person – on the truth in Him, on bringing Him to people and on bringing people to Him.

The great danger is that we will be deluded by persuasive argument.

The Christian is called to be discerning, insightful and Biblically agnostic about the world’s wisdom. Yet we are often trusting, often enthusiastically embracing false wisdoms as genuine because we are uncritical, pietistic and yearning for the recognition and praise of the world. Training in most Christian educational institutions sets these wisdoms of the world as viable alternatives, particularly when dealing with unbelievers.

“We have men who are exacting in their practice and sloppy in their theology.
“(Attributed: Ray Ortlund)

The Result: Christ is the Object of our Faith (v.6-7)

The primary aim of the care and cure of souls is to so focus faith, trust and reliance in Christ so that people walk in Christ...

...that is, live God-honoring lives in Him. So we are to help people, even in crises discipleship, to be rooted, established and built up in Christ resulting a life so graced by

God that it overflows with gratitude to God. The primary method is through instruction.

This is not just some pietistic, moralistic spirituality. This is to so ground people in Christ, in the treasures and delights of all that God is for us in Him, that they respond to situations of life, sufferings, bodily ills, emotional distress in sin, fallenness and being sinned against as Christ did (and still does). Too much of what is being done today is an attempt to orient people towards themselves, others and life situations without first orienting them towards God. This is what the Psalms are all about. Even in perplexity, horror and desperation, the sweet singer of Israel (and others) find satisfaction and delight in their orientation towards God, even when there is no apparent resolution of the cause.

The Responsibility: Christ is the Test of the World's Teaching (v.8-11)

Kent Hughes writes, "How is it possible for one not to be sucked in by a philosophy which is subtly deceitful in its language, logically compelling within its system of reason, and enticingly moral?"⁴ The answer is that Christ is the standard against which all human systems of wisdom are to be measured.

This whole area of counseling and psychology is particularly vulnerable to false wisdoms. Psychologies find their source, structures and shape in basic human teachings and in basic natural structures. They are deceptively captivating because they have the ring of truth. They are deceived because they are the study of and study by depraved men who assume that the fallen order is normative. Many Bible scholars believe the phrase "elementary principles of the world" here may refer to the occult and the fallen spirit world of Satan. It should give us real pause in all human systems of wisdom to realize that they may be the delusions and doctrines taught by demons. As a side note, it is simply a fact of history that some founders of psychologies were deeply involved in occultic beliefs and practices.

The incarnation, the fullness of redeemed persons in God and God as the final and absolute ruler, head and source of all reality are the foundations upon which all true wisdom is built and over against which all other wisdoms are evaluated. The most fundamental reality for redeemed persons is all that being united with Christ has done for them and delivered them from.

The wisdom of God in Christ stands as the Christians treasure, teaching and transforming wisdom. We turn away to the seductive and persuasive systems of human wisdom to our ruin. We will be despoiled of that which is our only hope and help, that we believe, trust, embrace and walk in Christ.

⁴ Kent Hughes, *Colossians*, p.71.

Mere Human Technique as False Wisdoms

1 Corinthians 1:30-2:16

God opposes the human wisdom of the world because it is rooted in human arrogance (1:18-29).

God spotlights the Lord Jesus Christ as the locus of all His wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption in order to elicit the admiration and acclaim of His people (1:30-31).

C.J. Mahaney has so helpfully pointed out that these two truths must radically shape our thinking and doing of ministry in the care and cure of souls:

- Unless we obscure the cross and eviscerate the gospel of its power (1:17).
- Unless we diminish God's sovereignty and misunderstand human rejection (1:18-21).
- Unless we devalue the gospel and remove Christ from its center (1:22-23).
- Unless we misread the purpose of God and pilfer from His glory (1:26-31)

The Distinctives Characterizing Ministry

(v.1-5)

What set apart Paul's ministry from others and thus set an example for us as well?

In What is Rejected

(v.1)

Based on the principles above, Paul rejects a particular technique of human wisdom in his culture. In spite of the prevailing use of empty rhetoric merely as a means of persuasion, Paul embraces speech in public and in private – proclamation and conversation – that is full of content. So he rejects what was common in the marketplace as an effective means of ministry. He rejects mere conventions of speech over against real content and clarity of speech.

In What is Resolved

(v.2)

What Paul rejected is governed by what Paul has resolved. A Biblically fundamental commitment orients his faith and practice. He is not just committed to content instead of verbal manipulation. He is committed to Christ crucified, the Messiah and His execution. The tendency of human wisdom is to rely on methods, techniques and practices as perspective giving and problem solving. Biblical counseling, as a subset of all of Word ministry, relies on a Person, His perfections, promises and power.

There are two fundamental commitments for a Christian who is going to think deeply about ministry and interact Biblically with the culture.

God has determined to undermine reliance on human wisdom by magnifying Himself as worthy of fear and respect. (1 Corinthians 1:19; Isaiah 29:13-14)

God magnifies Himself by elevating Jesus, His cross and crown, as the sum and substance of all God's truth and wisdom.

In What Are Its Results

(v.3-4)

The evidence that we are rejecting mere human technique and relying on our sufficient Redeemer emerges in these two verses. In personal frailty and difficulty, ministry not relying on human technique became ministry demonstrating God's power.

In What Are Its Reasons

(v.5)

Biblically authentic care and cure of souls rests on and relies on God's power, not the wisdom of men.

How much of religious psychology and religious counseling puts its faith in the power of human wisdom rather than the power of God, His Son and Spirit?

The Design Shaping Ministry

(v.6-13)

In rejecting the wisdom of human invention, we are not rejecting wisdom, per se. The wisdom of the Word is characterized by:

Its Relation to the Purposes of God

(v.6-8)

God's wisdom is communicated among those who are mature and in terms of mystery. God's redemptive historical purposes shape how the wisdom of God is progressively unfolded and increasingly understood. This is our present task: to exegete the wisdom of God bringing the mind of God to bear on the culture.

Its Revelation by the Spirit of God

(v.9-10)

The outwardly invisible and inwardly unimaginable treasures of what God has prepared for believers has been revealed by the Searcher of hearts, the Spirit. The wisdom of Christ and the cross is divinely revealed, not naturally discovered.

Its Reception by the People of God

(v.11-13)

Part of the work of a care and cure of souls is to bring those now disclosed truths to bear on the issues of life and sin in a believer. The demonstration of the Spirit's power (v.4) comes through counsel (v.13) of what the Spirit has disclosed (v.12).

The Dynamics Involving Ministry

(v.14-15)

God's designation of His wisdom in Christ and the design of its Spirit given revelation and illumination is connected to dynamics operating in those to whom we minister.

The Natural Man's Inability

The crippling effect of depravity in the unbeliever means that he will not accept God's wisdom and he cannot understand God's wisdom, since it is apprehended by the Spirit in us. Remember Nicodemus, who cannot enter nor can he see the kingdom without being born from above.

The Spiritual Man's Enablement

The equipping power of the Spirit enables a man to truly see the wisdom of God. We have the mind of Christ through the Spirit's revelation and illumination of the Word.

Not the Weapons of the World

2 Corinthians 10:1-6

³ *For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh.* ⁴ *For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.* ⁵ *We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,* ⁶ *being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.* (ESV)

Dr. David Powlison makes the following observation:

Modern psychology in its most significant form is a marketplace of differing popular philosophies of life. Different schools of thought dispute each other (psychologies, not psychology). Each psychology's interpretive system is embodied in a set of categories and labels that map onto life lived. Norms and ideals set standards, against which diagnoses are made and toward which therapies aspire in seeking to alter life lived into something more worth living. The schema guides counseling conversations toward whatever "image" a human being is meant to be. As intellectual systems the personality theories are "alternative spiritualities" offering "rival words about human nature;" they "mean their words to be taken to heart, to shape our souls, and their therapies are potent methods for planting their ideas in us so that we may grow in the shapes that they ordain" (Roberts) Just as there are many philosophies and many religions, it is no surprise that there will always be conflicting psychologies until the kingdom of God is established and everyone faces up to the final truth about our souls.⁵

The Christians of Paul's day were not exempt from facing some of these same issues. There were alternative worldviews posing as truth that were being integrated and absorbed into a system of thought in the church. The book of Colossians was written to deal with an alternative spirituality coming at the church from the outside; Galatians was written to deal with an alternative coming from the inside. Additionally, we find many in the church at Corinth who were so influenced by their culture and its worldviews that they misunderstood, misinterpreted and misrepresented Paul's ministry.

Chapter 10 of 2 Corinthians brings us directly to one category of these questions. *How do we choose the strategies we use in ministry?* In our case, this question runs like this, "Can we depend on the agendas and strategies for change given to us by one or the various psychologies?"

Our Expectation

We desire authentic ministry in a fallen world.

In verses 1-2 Paul is dealing with an accusation against him. He is being judged and evaluated as though he guided his conduct and ministry according to mere human strategies and wisdoms. They were reacting to the meekness of his personal presence with them and the powerfulness of his letters to them. They accused him of using

⁵ Dr. David Powlison, *Psychology and Christianity*, edited by Eric L. Johnson & Stanton L. Jones, p.205.

his writing as a mere human strategy to overcome his personal and speech defects (v.10-11). Paul's overall answer is to say that what he is pursuing is authentic, God-honoring ministry.

We minister to real people who live in a fallen world.

Even the care and cure of souls must constantly do a reality check. Are we being true to God, His Word while being really engaged with people, their lives, troubles and sufferings?

There is a very real and subtle temptation to create a false, illusionary world out of which we think people are coming to us. Our ministry must constantly check itself against how people are thinking, where they are sinning and how they are suffering.

Our Ministry may be misunderstood.

As we become skillful at understanding the Word, people and their life situations, our ability to help people in wisdom will increase. But so will our vulnerability to being misunderstood as merely operating in the realm of human wisdom and techniques in the flesh.

Our ministry may be misrepresented.

That we minister with people and from a Biblical stance may subject us to those who will intentionally misrepresent what we are doing and why we are doing it.

As we develop a Biblically informed, carefully thought out, practically implemented care and cure of souls that stands in contrast to both the world's way and the way of many Christians, there will often arise opposition who will misrepresent us and our ministry.

Our ministry will require both tenderness and toughness.

Because we speak for God and His truth, we must have courage and compassion. We must never sound as though the truth does not matter. And we must never minister as though the people we minister to do not matter.

Our Explanation

We depend on God's power, not on mere human strategies.

Verses 3-4 explain where our rest and trust lies – the confidence of our ministry. We are dependent on God and His power because:

We understand the difference between living in the world and ministering according to the world.

Notice Paul's careful shift in language here. We are here in the world; we are not going to do ministry in the world's way nor according to the world's techniques.

We see the true nature of what we are involved in.

We are involved in a war for the souls of men and women, boys and girls. This is not a game – it is the work of God to reconcile and restore redeemed people to their Redeemer and Ruler. The war and battle analogies help us to think correctly about this ministry.

One of the dangers of human psychologies is that they tend to experiment and tinker with people. The amazing insights in fallen motivations can be skillfully used to manage and manipulate people. This is not the Bible's way. This is neither a playground nor a human testing lab.

We believe that Biblical change comes not by mere application of human techniques, but by God's power.

What is set over against one another are the weapons of the flesh versus that which is divinely powerful (namely what follows). The point is to recognize the severe limitations of mere human weapons. So we rely on what is divinely powerful. Why? Because real lasting change comes when God gives faith and repentance. God has ordained that faith and repentance come through the means of grace, through the ministry of the Word publicly and privately.

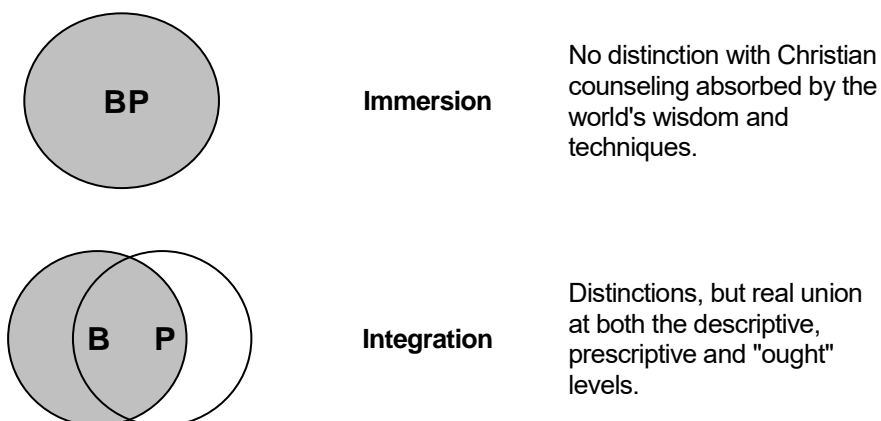
This does not mean that there are no Biblical techniques – there are. God has invested the ministry of the Word and Spirit, the ministry of prayer and intercession, the ministry of the gifts to one another with power for salvation and sanctification. So the Word tells us what we ought and ought not to do, why we do what we do, probes the inner man, the heart, while renewing the inner man along the axis of righteousness.

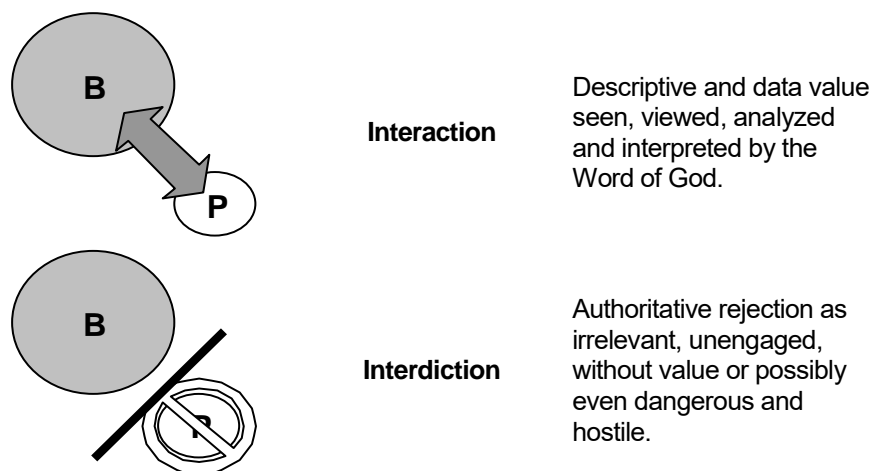
It is fundamental to the Scriptures and to Biblical Counseling that we cannot really change people – that is God's work.

But we are involved in people's change as we speak the truth to them in love. We come to people with the Word utterly dependent on God to illumine, convict, cause godly sorrow. Yet we come with penetrating questions, with a wide array of Scriptural precepts, illustrations, analogies and principles, with real love for God that fuels love for one another.

We analyze how we stand in relation to human wisdoms and techniques.

Though there is much more work to be done to articulate a Biblically authentic stance, we offer the following as a tentative proposal to visualize how we relate to the world, its ideas and techniques.





There might be some blends of these, but these 4 models predominate. We believe that the Interaction Model is the one generally adopted by the Bible writers and can be used across other disciplines. For example, in biology, we may get accurate information even in the context of an evolutionary worldview. We also recognize that the evolutionary worldview also taints the data. This tends to work across the board. The claim to being objective is simply not to be accepted by Christians – it is much wiser to determine where the subjectivity and the coloring tints are applied and see what is true and valuable and what is not.

One other consideration – there is quite a difference in studying the molecular structure of water, the gravity on the moon, and the intricacies of the heart. Yet too often, they are treated as though the scientific method employed yields the same quality of data regardless of the object of study. This is simply not so.

Our Exercise

We deal with people, their beliefs and behaviors.

Verses 5-6 briefly describe the nature of the warfare, particularly the sphere in which we are operating. The text here wonderfully represents the belief – behavior, heart – obey, inner – outer, root – fruit of the Scripture and Biblical Counseling.

An initial and powerful focus is on the way people think.

Initially, we are dealing with the way people think and what they believe (v.5). We begin with the soul or heart, the reasonings, affections, pursuits, desires of the inner person. Paul is operating here on a clear teaching throughout the rest of the Scriptures that out of the heart are the issues of life.

These ways of thinking are strongholds – that is, they will be fortified and defended.

Expect that people will have plausible reasons for their behavior and will vigorously defend the beliefs from which those actions rise.

Note: It may be necessary to mention that there are those who teach that these strongholds are fortifications erected by Satan in people's lives. Generally, their counsel is aimed at some kind of interacting with Satan and the strongholds, not seeing them as reasonings, arguments, speculations, thoughts and so on.

We are engaged with people's hearts as "thinking".

Thinking is a process – ideas, lies, foundational and functional myths, truths are what we think with. Everyone has an interpretative grid to explain life and its dynamics. The sum and substance of what we believe to be true makes up that grid. This is what we call "worldviews". We will think a bit more deeply about worldviews at the end of this lecture.

We are engaged in both tearing down false thinking and taking captive the process of thinking.

Our counseling must:

1. Identify and expose the false way of thinking;
2. Define and explain the Biblical way to think;
3. Call for repentance, to turn from the false way of thinking to believe, trust and think in the Biblical way;
4. Show how the Biblical way of thinking works out in practical ways of obedience.

We are engaged in helping people submit their thinking to Christ.

Again, the uniqueness of Biblical Counseling is its Godward orientation; its being Christ-centered. The point of this is not just self-discipline in our thinking, but further, bringing our thinking to be in subjection to our Redeemer and Ruler.

A corresponding and practical follow-up on the way people act.

Biblical counseling is not just aimed at getting people to think right. It is ready to respond to how people behave.

Biblical counseling may end in discipline.

We must, as Paul was, be ready and willing to bring the pressure of authentic church discipline to bear on disobedience. In other words, we must align ourselves with God's agenda and God's methods for change and restoration. More will be said about church discipline later.

Biblical counseling aims for comprehensive obedience.

Biblical counseling works to see people growing in grace, progressing in sanctification in "across-the-whole-life" ways. It sees all of life as being under and subject to God and seeks mature holiness.

Applying to Counseling

How do we connect the Scriptures to the sins, struggles and suffering of people? How do these texts shape our approach to the ministry of counseling? What textures will the fabric of this text have in our time and place in redemptive history?

The Scriptures have a clear and articulated stance on the issue of human wisdom and techniques.

The issue is fundamental because it touches on the nature of man and sin, Christ and the cross, revelation and illumination, God's power and provision.

Being Christ-centered is not merely a theological statement, a creedal necessity or a theoretical, but not related to our practice truth. Without it, Christian truth and practice is no longer Biblically authentic.

The strategies we implement in the care and cure of souls are shaped and selected by where we place our trust and reliance – whether in the techniques of human wisdom or in the power of God.

The wisdom for salvation and sanctification requires that God both reveal it in principle and in person

Summary

The work of the ministry must wholly rely on Christ, the Scriptures and the empowering, transforming work of God's grace and Spirit. The work of crises discipleship (counseling) must not turn to the so-called wisdoms of the world nor rely on its weapons.

Resources

What questions, supplemental reading, and connections to ACBC Certification Exams need to be made?

Why Christians Can't Trust Psychology, Ed Bulkley

Taking God at His Word, Kevin DeYoung

Competent to Counsel, Jay Adams

Basics for Spiritual Growth

Practical Application and Union with Christ

Russ Kennedy

Introduction

Romans 6:17-18

But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. (ESV)

Statement of Topic

The Bible speaks with authority and clarity on...

In the gospel, that is the truths of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, is the truth needed to overcome sin. Our union with Christ in his death and resurrection is the fundamental truth to be pleasing to God. Through the gospel we overcome the power of sin and the Law so that we live as sons by the Spirit even in the midst of suffering.

Exposing the Issue

What are the issues, concerns, difficulties that Christian people face? What false wisdoms and perspectives keep them from responding in ways that please God?

Most of the people you will be counseling with will be there because of struggles with issues of life, and particularly with sin. It raises a fundamental question that you must answer with confidence – for yourself and for those to whom you minister. “How do people who have been justified by faith defeat sin?”

The large answer to this question is what Romans 6 – 8 is all about. The foundations to the answer are laid in Romans 6. Paul poses the same questions for us, just worded according to the particular objections he faced. Should a believer go on sinning because grace will forgive? Must a believer go on sinning because of indwelling sin? In our care and cure of souls, we will regularly be faced with people who will answer these two questions wrongly.

- If I keep on doing this, thinking this, feeling this way God will still forgive me.
- I can't stop sinning in this way – it is simply too strong for me.

Obviously, there are many texts that you can go to that will respond to these two statements. But in this text, Paul specifically deals with those two issues. Additionally, he gives us the underlying structure necessary for all spiritual growth.

John Piper writes, “We Americans are pragmatists to the max. We want results. And we want them yesterday. We want them simply. We want them without too much pondering and too much pain. And in the church, we have developed all kinds of Christ-coated remedies that are shallow and short-lived. We are not, by and large, the deeply grounded saints that some of our forefathers were. [Romans] does not skip from chapter 5 to 12. It leads us down deep into the roots of godliness, so that when we come up, we are not people with lists, but people with unshakable life and strength and holiness and wisdom and love.”⁶

Expositing the Bible

What does the Bible say about this topic and its related issues?

Process that Directs our Counseling

Romans 6 follows a process that provides a very helpful structure to our crises discipleship.

Examine (v.1-2,15)

We must observe and understand wrong thinking that is leading to wrong behaving.

Notice how Paul anticipates and responds to people misusing a doctrine. “Since grace abounds in the presence of lots of sin, then let’s sin more so there will be more grace.” “Since we are no longer under a principle of law as Christians, but under the power of grace, then we can sin because we are no longer condemned but forgiven.” The underlying problem lies in the Romans 1 tendency – to suppress, substitute, or speculate about truth so as to serve our own heart idols.

Generally, the reasoning that frames, masks or justifies sin is best uncovered through penetrating questions. All through the Bible, God and His servants ask questions designed to expose sin and sin’s reasonings. We will talk much more about this in a later lecture.

Know (v.3-10)

We must teach or remind people in crises discipleship of the truths that are directly connected to their sins and struggles.

Paul is not squeamish about teaching even difficult doctrine to deal with excuses for sin. A Biblical Counselor who is not willing or able to teach in their counsel, particularly in crises discipleship, will be severely crippled in their ministry. It is truth that sets us free because all that really matters is that the person you are ministering to has faith working through love (Galatians 5:6). “Don’t you know...” may become a constantly repeated phrase in your counseling.

Apply (v.11)

We must help people to personalize the truth you are teaching them in renewing their minds and transforming their lives.

⁶ John Piper, *United with Christ in Death and in Life*, sermon 9/24/200, Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, MN.

We are not asking people to pretend that something is true when it is not. And do not use the “head knowledge and heart” model. The difference comes when a person takes the “out there objective truth” and realizes it as “internal subjective principles.” The Bible calls this “reckoning, accounting.” Believe this to be true in such a way that it changes your actions. Can be illustrated by having money in the bank and yet acting as though it is there. The danger of psychologies are that they often tell you there is something in their bank that isn’t really there and want you to act as though it is – this leads to failure and bankruptcy.

Yield (v.12-14)

We call people to surrender themselves in practical ways so as to overcome sin. Part of the imperative in counseling is in the growth and change activities designed to help people to yield themselves – their bodies, ways, lives – to God instead of to self and sin.

Many people who will agree that something is true, and is true about themselves, will not stop sin having control over them and stop presenting themselves to sin for its use. So while someone may agree that the impure in mind do not go to heaven, that purity is required for fellowship with God and that purity is first in what we think and meditate and reflect on, many ladies simply will not stop going to the Romance section of the library and the bookstore thus presenting themselves to the temptation of the enticing pornography of Romance novels. One of the major aims of Growth and Change Activities (Homework) is to get people to identify the ways in which they present themselves for sin’s use and to replace it with presenting themselves and yielding themselves for God’s use. Again, we will unpack this in more practical detail in later sessions.

Applying to Counseling

How do we connect the Scriptures to the sins, struggles and suffering of people? How do these texts shape our approach to the ministry of counseling?

We have union and identification with Christ.

For those who are in Christ, by God's doing, Christ becomes for us "*wisdom* from God, and *righteousness* and *sanctification*, and *redemption*." (1 Corinthians 1:30) All that Christ is for us, he is for us because we are "in him"; because we are *united* to him. So we can tell counselees, “Because you have the union with him that Paul is talking about in Romans 6:5:⁷

Christ becomes *wisdom* for you and this overcomes your blinding, deadening ignorance.

Christ becomes *righteousness* for you and this overcomes your guilt and condemnation.

Christ becomes *sanctification* for you and this overcomes your corruption and pollution.

Christ becomes *redemption* for you and this overcomes in the end all the miseries and pain and futility that come from sin and guilt – like sickness and death (compare "redemption" in Romans 8:23).

⁷ John Flavel, *The Method of Grace*, p. 14.

Our identification with Christ as taught in the Scriptures is to be used to help believers to change in practical ways. Yet this is rarely done. *Who we are in Christ* frames what we are becoming now in the world and eventually in glory.

We may not live as though sin does not matter.

Verses 1-2 show us the incongruity, but not the impossibility of ongoing sin. It is not that it is not possible. The very imperatives through the rest of this chapter and through Romans show us that it is possible. But we must not think that our union with Christ and our being now in the sphere of grace frees us to live any way we choose.

We may not live as though sin has control.

The rest of Romans is designed to show us that sin's power to control us has been broken in principle at the cross as applied at our conversion and in practice as believed in our conduct.

We have been delivered from the old life and are empowered for the new life (v.4-11).

Verses 3-7 argue that, our union with Christ has identified us with His death and resurrection. This means that we no longer are to be controlled by the old self but are to live to God in the new self. Because of the cross, our union and identification with Jesus' death and resurrection, we are no longer enslaved to sin as a controlling power. We now have the power of God exhibited in the resurrection for living God's new way.

We have been delivered from the condemnation of the law to the freedom and power of grace (v.14ff).

Before we were converted, while we living as the old selves, we under the condemnation of the law – even our righteousnesses were stinky in God's evaluation. But we have now been brought into the sphere of grace so that we can live pleasing to God by the power of grace in our lives as we believe God's promises.

We must not let sin master us because sin is not going to master us (v.13-14).

We must speak to people's responsibility through Biblical imperatives while upholding God's supremacy in His promises and provisions. Christians must obey God while depending on God who works in them to cause their obedience.

(Piper) "This is the striking way that New Testament ethics is structured. If that strikes us as strange, which it does at first, it's because we come to the Bible with our man-centered bias toward self-determination. In other words, we come with the bias that if the Bible tells us to make a choice (like "don't present your members to sin"), then in the moment of that choice we, not God, have the final say. And if you come with that bias – that genuine, responsible choice means ultimate self-determination – the connection between verse 13 and verse 14 will probably make no sense. Don't yield to sin (verse 13) because sin will not be master over you (verse 14). But if you learn from

Scripture to see the sovereignty of God and the real responsibility of man in such a way that God is ultimate and decisive, then this is the way you will learn to talk about the choices of the Christian life: I choose not to let sin reign in my body, because God is at work in me and will not let sin reign in my body (see Philippians 2:12-13; 3:12; 1 Corinthians 5:7).”

We must obey truth from the heart, having been freed from sin and become God’s slaves (v.17-18).

This text is central to our thinking about Biblical counseling and the need of people in crises discipleship. We get people to commit to what the Scriptures teach is true of them (freed from sin and bound to righteousness) so that they begin to obey from the heart.

We must present ourselves to God for His use, rather than presenting ourselves to sin for its use.

This is where sin is put off and righteousness is put on. This is not a theoretical yielding, but rather practical aspects of what we do that cut off sin and cultivate grace.

We must understand that we may not live as though sin were not deadly and sanctification were not demanded.

Justification always brings transformation leading to glorification. On this point the Bible is crystal clear – our sanctification is decisively God’s work and dependently our work. So, those who have been justified by grace will grow in grace. Sin is deadly and holiness is demanded.

This is the whole point of Romans 6 and is why Paul comes to this point at the end. Though we use this verse in our evangelism (and often misuse it, frankly) this final paragraph and the closing sentence are really an explanation of our sanctification. Verse 22 is true – authentic and inevitable sanctification leading to life eternal – because verse 23 is true – sin’s earned income is death but God’s free gift is life eternal by being united with Christ.

Two possible points of misunderstanding.

What we are not saying:

We are not saying that justified people may lose their salvation.

We are not saying that justified people are immediately perfect.

We are not saying that justified people do not struggle with sin.

What we are saying:

We are saying that justified people are delivered from sin's power.

We are saying that justified people fight remaining sin.

We are saying that justified people will not be unconcerned about sin.

We are saying that justified people will increasingly become holy.

Engaging the Person

How do people experience, express and present these kinds of issues? How does the Bible understand the person and their place? What does the Bible **say**?

Thinking it Through

What questions, supplemental reading, and connections to ACBC Certification Exams need to be made?

An Illuminating Illustration⁸

The following is a compilation of material from Dr. John Piper writing and preaching on Romans 6. We have edited some of the material in order to move into the third-person voice we use in these lectures. We believe that this analogy will be very helpful both to your own understanding of the sin dynamics in those growing in grace.

⁸ All of the material under this heading comes directly from several messages on Romans 6 preached by John Piper during November and December, 2000 at the Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis MN. We present it almost verbatim, acknowledging our huge debt to the clarity of Dr. Piper's writing and preaching.

The Battlefield

Verses 12-14 are the description of a great conflict or battleground in the life of a typical believer. This is you and me and our counselees here. So who and what make up this conflict? Let's describe the situation here. [There are] eight things in the warfare of these verses.

There is a kingly throne or reign. Verse 12: "Do not let sin reign." There is a reign that is being contested in this passage. A throne. The word "reign" is simply the verb form of the word for king.

There is a challenger to this throne, a revolutionary, a rebel who wants to take over the kingdom, namely, sin. "Do not let sin reign." He is in revolt and mutiny and means to lead a coup and gain the throne. And you are called to resist.

There are a town and castle that are under attack by the challenger to the throne, namely, your body. "Do not let sin reign in your mortal body."

There are servants in the castle who may become deceptive secret agents of the rebel leader and use their inside servant role to seduce and capture parts of the castle. These servants are called "desires." "Do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its desires." The word is neutral. They may become "evil desires" or "lusts," but not if the rebel sin does not capture them.

Incremental surrender is possible. That's what the word "obey" signals in verse 12. "Do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its desires." If sin, the leader of the revolt, takes some desire captive and sends it in behind the castle walls with a deceptive promise of immunity and reward for capitulation, the obedience to that desire would be the surrender of part of the castle.

There are weapons in the castle that may be captured and turned around and used by the enemy for his unrighteous purposes. These weapons are the parts of your body – your eyes and ears and tongue and hands and feet and sexual organs. Verse 13: "Do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as weapons of unrighteousness." The word, *opla* (*hopla*), in all its four other uses in the New Testament (three in Paul and one in John 18:3) means "weapons," not just instruments. In other words, I am not just making up this battle imagery. Paul is pointing to it. Don't let the rebel, sin, capture the members of your body and turn them into weapons against the true King.

There is a true king over the realm, namely, God. Verse 13b: "Do not surrender the members of your body to sin – the rebel contender for the throne – so he can make them weapons of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as weapons of righteousness to God." So the true King is God. Sin is the rebel and the insurrectionist. Stay loyal to the true King with all your weapons and all your servants – all your desires and all your members.

Finally, there is the constitutional authority of the kingdom, namely, grace, not law. Verse 14: "For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace."

Our Desires – Servants or Secret Agents?

Pleasing Delilah was a legitimate thing for Samson to do while she was a faithful wife. But when she was a secret agent of the enemy, Samson's surrender to her meant destruction. So it is with our desires and sin. If they are faithful desires, loyal desires, reflecting the truth and value of God, then we may please them. But if sin captures them and makes them his deceptive agents, then our pleasing them would be joining the conspiracy and may become treason.

Specifically, there is, for example...

The desire for *food* (hunger) which serves us well, but when sin captures it, the desire becomes gluttony or bulimia or anorexia and it rules us for the sake of the enemy, and our tongue and mouth and stomach become weapons of unrighteousness.

The desire for *drink* (thirst) which serves us well, but when sin captures it, the desire may become alcoholism or caffeine addiction, and the tongue becomes a weapon of unrighteousness.

The desire for *sexual satisfaction* which is a good servant of procreation and marriage joy, but if sin captures it, the desire becomes lust for pornography or masturbation or fornication or adultery or homosexual relations, and our sexual organs become the weapons of unrighteousness.

The desire for *rest and sleep* which serves us well, but if sin captures it, the desire becomes sloth and laziness.

Summary

The following summarizes all this for us.

All of us by nature are enslaved to sin – we don't rule sin, sin rules us.

God is the decisive deliverer from sin – and our efforts, though real and crucial, are dependent on Him

Without this deliverance from sin and the resulting new direction of righteousness and sanctification, we have not and will not inherit eternal life.

The Doctrine of Spiritual Growth

The Process of Transformation by the Informing of Christ

Tim Pasma



Introduction

What would happen if a baby did not grow?

Imagine that for a moment. If a baby did not grow, you would have a human being that required continuous care. The baby could never reach the point of taking care of himself but would need someone all the time to do everything for him. He would experience limited joy. His joy revolves around whether he is full, his diaper is clean and dry and if he gets enough sleep. A baby can never serve anyone else either.

Christians must grow spiritually as well, for if they do not...

They will require continuous care; they would have limited joy; they could not serve others.

They will be hostile and demanding.

They will cause divisions.

They will be tossed about with every wind of doctrine.

They will not be ready to give an account of themselves to Christ.

But are we as careful and intent on teaching the doctrine of spiritual growth as we are other doctrines?

Unity, harmony, maturity, service, testimony, evangelism and the entire ministry is affected.

Although it is important, it is rarely mentioned and often ignored.

Because it is often ignored, churches established by missionaries and missionaries themselves reflect the same problems of churches here!

We must choose between quick fixes and shortcuts and a biblical theology of growth & maturing.

You must understand that counseling is the systematic understanding and application of a theology of growth.

If counselees would grow they must understand sanctification.

If counselees would grow they must understand the means of growth.

TRANS.: If you would counsel effectively...

Your Counselees Must Be Convinced of their Sanctified Status

Sanctification is “being set apart for a relationship with the Holy One, to display his character in every sphere of life” (Peterson, Possessed By God, p. 24).

(see Leviticus 8:30; 11:44-45)

The idea of *separation* is pre-eminent.

When someone or something was “holy” it was set apart **from** normal use and set apart **for** God.

Sanctification is not acquired by human effort, but is a status or condition which God imparts to those whom he chooses to bring into a special relationship with himself.

Believers are “sanctified” or “set apart” in Christ.

(see 1 Corinthians 1:2, 30).

1 Corinthians 1:2

They are “sanctified in Christ Jesus”, that is set apart in their **conversion and incorporation into Christ.**

They are “called to be holy [ones]” - the set apart people of God in the New Covenant.

They have been called and appropriated by God to be exclusively devoted to him and to his service.

1 Corinthians 1:30 - we have a NEW STATUS because of Jesus, the wisdom from God. Our standing does not depend on our effort, but depends entirely on the grace of God in Christ.

Believers are “sanctified” or “set apart” by faith through the Word

(Acts 20:32; 26:18).

As the gospel is proclaimed and faith elicited, we are brought together into a ***sanctified relationship*** with God ***through Jesus***.

We enter into a “sanctified status” through faith in the gospel.

Believers are “sanctified” or “set apart by the Holy Spirit.

(Romans 15:16).

“When the Spirit brings people to faith through the preaching of the gospel, they are set apart from their unbelieving contemporaries and are bound together with other believers in an exclusive relationship with God” (Peterson, p. 59)

Believers must be convinced of this sanctified status or they will not grow.

They will be enveloped in self-righteousness.

They will despair (thinking that their standing is due to their efforts rather than God's grace in Christ).

A grasp of justification is necessary if one would grow.

Quick overview of the Roman Catholic view.

Counselees Must Be Convinced That They Are Active In Their Growth

Those who are sanctified must yet grow

(see 1 Peter 1:2)

In the OT, Israel, who had been sanctified by God delivering them from Egypt, were to obey his law and live a distinctive life among the nations; they were separated from the beliefs and practices of the nations by their obedience and devotion to God.

Likewise, God's New Covenant people, who are sanctified in Christ, have a profound reorientation of their values and behavior.

1 Peter 1:2 - Notice that we are sanctified in the Spirit so that we would OBEY (by first believing the gospel and living a life of obedience).

Illustration Here is a 2-year old child. Physically, he may be perfect. He is a complete human being. He needs nothing else in order to make him a member of the human race.

But he is far from being fully developed. If he is going to reach mature manhood, those cells, muscles, limbs and ligaments will have to grow. *The same is true of the Christian life.*

Beware of views that see personal effort as unnecessary or wrong.

There is the “Wesleyan” view - but we are indeed already “entirely sanctified” in Christ.

But the use of the word “sanctified” is used almost entirely of our *position*.

There is the “Dedication” view

This “Let go and let God” does not do justice to the biblical data.

There is the “Quarterback” approach

Wayne Mack in Introduction to Biblical Counseling discusses the “quarterback approach” to spirituality - “we pass the ball or hand it off to God (by praying) and expect Him to run it across the goal line without any help from us. But such an approach only creates a false hope, because God never promised that we could reach the goal of godliness without strenuous personal effort...”

The Holy Spirit is the agent of growth, while you are his instrument of growth.

A man is as incapable of living out his sanctification as he is of saving himself and is dependent on the work of God.

(Romans 8:13; 1 Peter 1:2; Philippians 2:12-13; Galatians 5:16)

In the final analysis, God the Spirit sanctifies us, we do not sanctify ourselves.

You are called to cooperate with the Spirit in your growth

(Philippians 2:12-13; Ephesians 4:1,17-24; Colossians 3:5-14; 2 Peter 1:3-7; Colossians 1:28-29).

Although you are dependent you are not passive.

God’s work is not suspended because we work and our work is not suspended because he works.

Colossians 1:28-29 - The evidence that God is at work is that *you are at work* (note “labor” and “struggling” [*agonizing*]). When *resurrection power* is at work, *man* is at work.

Great expenditure of effort is required

(2 Corinthians 7:1; 1 Timothy 4:7; 6:11; 2 Timothy 2:22; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; 2 Peter 1:5-8; Ephesians 4:22-24)

Growth is a gradual process

(Philippians 3:12-14)

Counselees Must Utilize the Means of Growth

Knowing and delighting in God

(Psalm 27:4ff.; Psalm 73; John 8:29; Genesis 39:9)

You must know the Father.

*“The more we know of the Father’s majesty, holiness, power, glory and love, the more concerned we shall be that we please him in every part of our lives” (John Blanchard, *Learning and Living*).*

An appreciation of the Savior’s death.

By understanding what happened at the cross, we can grow

(Romans 6:5-14)

We are aware that, because of the cross, sin no longer has the mastery.

*“There is a total difference between surviving sin and reigning sin, the regenerate in conflict with sin and the unregenerate complacent to sin. It is one thing for sin to live in us; it is another for us to live in sin. It is one thing for the enemy to occupy the capital; it is another for his defeated hosts to harass the garrisons of the kingdom.” (John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, p. 145.).*

By contemplating the cross, we are motivated to grow

(2 Corinthians 5:14-15)

*“How can a Christian gladly consent to sin when looking at the cross of his Savior: The more the death of Christ means to the Christian, the less he wants to sin.” (John Blanchard, *Learning and Living*, p. 64).*

The word of truth

(Psalm 119:9, 105; Matthew 4:4,7,10; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3)

It must have a renewing effect on the mind

(Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 4:23)

Make the point that the Word is important in terms of helping counselees interpret reality (e.g., what would you think if you were thrown in jail and your property confiscated? Notice the interpretation of that in Hebrews 10:32-34; 12:5-11).

It must have an effect on habits or actions

(See e.g., Ephesians 4:25-6:9).

Power through prayer

(Hebrews 4.16)

A living faith

(Hebrews 11:1-12.3; Romans 6:11-12)

A living faith in Christ - trusting him for forgiveness, power, wisdom and guidance and fixing our eyes on him as revealed in Scripture.

“In looking at Jesus, a glance can save, but only a gaze can sanctify” (Blanchard, p. 67).

A living faith in the truth of Scripture - the command of Romans 6.12 is based on the belief of Romans 6.11).

Trials and hardships

(Psalm 119:67,73; Hebrews 12:5-11; Romans 5:3-5;
2 Corinthians 4:16-18)

CONCLUSION

As a counselor, you must be convinced of the necessity of sanctification as the foundation of changes in your counselee.

You must hear clearly what your counselee believes about growth.

Keep your mind settled on biblical truths concerning sanctification and growth.

Resources

Adams, Jay E. *A Theology of Christian Counseling* (Zondervan, 1979)

Bridges, Jerry. *The Discipline of Grace: God's Role and Our Role in the Pursuit of Holiness* (NavPress, 1994)

The Practice of Godliness (NavPress, 1983)

The Pursuit of Holiness (NavPress, 1978)

Transforming Grace: Living Confidently in God's Unfailing Love (NavPress, 1991)

Ferguson, Sinclair B. *The Christian Life: A Doctrinal Introduction* (The Banner of Truth Trust, 1981)

Grow In Grace (The Banner of Truth Trust, 1989)

Peterson, David. *Possessed By God: A New Testament Theology of Sanctification and Holiness* (Eerdmans, 1995)

Ryle, J.C. *Holiness* (Evangelical Press, 1979, reprinted, 1997)

Lesson 9

Men as Trees

Christians as not Blind but not Seeing

Russ Kennedy

Introduction

Mark 8:14-38 -

Statement of Topic

The Bible speaks with authority and clarity on why Christians struggle with situations of life. The Gospel of Mark in chapter 8 shows us how those who believe, can and do respond wrongly to teaching, trails and temptations.

TEACHER: Allow this lecture to simply unfold. It will be very easy to want to say the conclusion first instead of allowing it to arise naturally from the exposition of the text. Do NOT “this is what we will see...” – let the lecture be from and follow the text.

Exposing the Issue

What are the issues, concerns, difficulties that Christian people face? What false wisdoms and perspectives keep them from responding in ways that please God?

In your counseling, you will engage people who seem to know and understand the Bible and yet will have the most amazing blind-spots. It is very important for ministering to people that you have the Biblical perspective on how and why this is so.

Having pondered over this long and hard both in my own life and the lives of others, I am convinced that the Scriptures themselves intend to illuminate both the exterior and the interior of our sin. Mark does this in his gospel as amidst the rising virulence of religious opposition, the disciples seem almost incapable of really getting it. What Mark unfolds here for us will be the condition of many of those to whom you will minister.

The Problem of Understanding

Counselees will struggle with understanding truth. How many people do you know really understand Romans 6-8 and apply to daily living? People often know what the Bible **says**, but very dim understanding of what the Bible **means**.

The Struggle in Interpreting

Counselees rarely interpret life through the lens of the Bible. Life is understood and interpreted through all kinds of alternative lenses.

The Challenge of Applying

Counselees often do not see how the Bible relates to them except possibly through its precepts and proverbs.

Expositing the Bible

Mark 8:14-38

What does the Bible say about this topic and its related issues?

This section is framed-in contextually by the feeding of the four thousand and a confrontation with the Pharisees. Mark is showing us how the provider of bread in the wilderness is the Messiah who will go to the cross then enter the glory of His kingdom.

The Probing Evaluation

(v.14-21)

Mark is also showing us why it is that people who follow Jesus just don't get it. The disciples are involved in both the miracle of the feeding and the confrontation, and yet are confused. So they are experiencing both the heat (the problem of feeding so many in a desolate place) and the dew (God's miraculous provision of food). In the midst of this they are focused on their failure to bring bread.

Jesus' confrontation only sets up the rationalization of their hearts and the discussion among themselves. They see Jesus' confrontation in terms of what they had failed to do. The situation of the feeding is supposed to teach that Jesus provides the true bread from heaven. The Pharisees and Herod see bread as a means to power.

Jesus' confrontation provides a true interpretation. It is not that they are ignorant – it is that they are hard of heart (v.17-18). Blindness is a matter of lostness (1 Corinthians 2:14; 2 Corinthians 4:3-5). But for disciples, blindness is a matter of heart hardness. Jesus points them back to Jeremiah 5:21. The larger context of Jeremiah addresses a people who have forsaken God to serve idols, rendering them senseless, foolish, unable to see, hear, or to fear and tremble before God's face. The underlying cause is rooted in a stubborn and rebellious heart (v.23) that does not speak words of truth to itself (v.24) with the resulting chastening that follows (v.25). Jesus' probing questions in verses 18-21 are meant to expose the heart. "Do you not yet understand?" No, in fact they don't.

Have you ever said this when talking with a counselee? Don't you understand it yet? Can't you see? Don't you get this? Have you ever said it to yourself?

The Living Object Lesson

(v.22-26)

The miracle that follows in this paragraph is to a living object lesson to the disciples. He has just challenged them about their sight, now He illustrates for them what this means. They are not blind, but don't see.

How do I get this? Simply by asking two questions: How is this paragraph part of its context? Why a two stage healing? Mark uses two healing of blind men as bookends around this section. What he is showing us here carries forward until Mark 10:46-52. Between these two miracles, Mark shows us the disciples who are like the first and will become like the second. Jesus' initial act of healing restores his sight. The key is in verses 23-24. "Do you see anything? Yes, I see men like tress walking around." So he is not blind, but he does not see clearly. This is exactly the case of the disciples. They are not blind – they are disciples. But they do not see. And Mark is going to give us further demonstrations over the next 2 chapters that though the disciples are not blind, they really do not see.

This is the case with the people to whom you minister. Some are just blind and need to be brought to Christ for salvation. Most are not blind, but like this man, they see men as tress walking—they see life through blurred vision and confused images. Not blind, but don't see.

The Stunning Illustration

(v.27-33)

The interaction between Peter and Jesus shows that it is hardness of heart that causes us to not see the importance of God's agenda.

Peter confesses that Jesus is the Messiah (v.27-30). So he is not blind. Then he turns right around and rejects God's agenda of the cross. So he sees as trees walking—he sees in blurred vision and confused images. Not, he is not blind but he sure does not yet see. It is interesting that Jesus sees behind Peter's confusion Satan's work. He aims for Peter's heart and mind, which is pursuing man's interests instead of God's agenda.

We will find this ever to be so. We ourselves and the people we minister to will often have strong and true and commendable affirmations of faith. And at the same time our minds, which are set on earthly things, reject God's agenda, in particular His agenda for the cross and self-denial and sacrifice.

Where do I get that? Look at what comes next!

The Sobering Confrontation

(v.34-38)

The summoning of the crowd levels the playing field. What he is about to say is not just for disciples, it is for the crowd as well. The challenge to not seeing and its great solution is *the cross*. Jesus' claim and call is unmistakable. To pursue Christ means taking up the cross and following Him. So when we are faced with both the blind and those who see men as trees walking, bring the cross to them and bring them to the cross. Call them to the cross.

The cross challenges these categories of psychological refuge:

v.35	Saving and losing life	Self-preservation
v.36	Profit and gain	Self-sufficiency
v.37	Exchange for soul (self)	Self-determination
v. 38	Ashamed of Christ	Self-actualization

Our ministry to people as Crises Discipleship, cure of souls or counseling must bring people to Christ and to the cross. That call must be clear and unmistakable. When people are blind, bring

them to the cross for salvation. When saved people can't see, don't understand out of hard-hearts, bring them to the cross.

I am convinced that in this day this is where we fail the most. We must bring people who want relief from the consequences of their sin, who are looking to serve their agenda in the midst of the situations and issues of life, who are thinking about life and its pain, problems, joys and struggles—we must bring them to take up the cross, to die to self, to stop trading eternal things for the worthless trinkets of the world, to stop pursuing lesser loves than love for God, to stop serving heart idols and turn to serve the living God with unashamed courage until the glory of His appearing.

Applying to Counseling

How do we connect the Scriptures to the sins, struggles and suffering of people? How do these texts shape our approach to the ministry of counseling?

Let's enumerate the principles that define our task and the ministry it describes.

Disciples and counselees will tend to be consumed with the problems, failures, pains and feelings in the experiences of life.

The people you minister to must be taught to interpret life through Biblical models, analogies and metaphors. While not having bread was a problem, being vulnerable to the leavening error of Phariseism and legalism and having hard hearts with dim and muddled vision and agenda rejecting soul pursuits are ever so much more dangerous to the well-being of believers.

Disciples and counselees have hard hearts.

Because they are believers, they are not totally blind. But because of their hard hearts, they do not see. It is no wonder then they often only see dimly what heart issues the hardships and blessings are designed to expose. They are not blind, but they do not see.

The central issue as Jesus exposes it is that of hard-heartedness. Thus the need for the piercing power of God's Word to expose and transform the heart (Hebrews 5:11-13).

Disciples and counselees may both affirm saving truth and yet seemingly reject transforming truth.

You will be confronted over and over again with people who will be absolutely sure that they are Christians and yet will doubt God and His Word for their life's problems and sin solutions.

Disciples and counselees tend to reject God's agenda.

Hard, self-serving, idol worshipping and pursuing hearts will tend to reject God's agenda for their life situations and the requirements for their heart change. It should not surprise us to find that the people we minister to will tend to avoid the implications of the cross and self-denial for themselves, their heart pursuits and life situations.

Disciples and counselees must be brought to the cross.

The death and resurrection of Christ, our identification with it and our powerfully painful application of it to our hearts, choices and loves is an utter necessity. No Christian will grow in godliness and saintliness of character and conduct beyond their understanding, embracing and application of the cross and resurrection.

Disciples and counselees must not reject these truths as a second tier or advanced spirituality.

Due to the influence of much of today's pop theology and religious psychology, many Christians believe that discipleship, cross bearing and so on are elements of *the deeper life*. Thus one may choose to become saved and then later on choose (or actually reject) this kind of call to the cross that Jesus makes in this text. Please remember that the call to the cross of verses 31-38 is to the multitude and to the disciples together.

Thus, they must be taught that our sovereign, good and wise God will move in the heat and dew of our life to expose our hearts, its thorn bushes and fruitful trees so that we will embrace Christ crucified and the provisions of grace in the promises.

Engaging the Person

How do people experience, express and present these kinds of issues? How does the Bible understand the person and their place? What does the Bible expose, explain and transform the hearts of people?

There is a penetrating power of questions framed by Biblical principles and aimed at heart issues.

Questions that address the principle of the heart.

Verse 17 uses the category of questions that illuminate the heart as the root and source of the response. That is to say, we formulate questions to get people to see the heart itself.

Questions framed by Biblical criteria and categories.

Verse 18 show that the questions are framed by knowing, understanding and applying Biblical texts, their principles, precepts and redemptive-historical categories and structures to the situation. Thus the Scriptures are being used as an interpretative template laid over their life situation and heart pursuits.

Questions as examples of what and how they ought to have interpreted, understood or responded to life's situations.

Verses 19 – 20 are the kind of questions that the disciples should have been asking over the situation of the miracle and their subsequent failure to bring the supplies. Their failure to know God's agenda for the dew and heat was a failure to ask Biblically informed questions and address the internal, heart issues.

Questions designed to draw distinctions between the errors that surround the disciple/counselee and their own faith and confession.

Verses 27 – 28 are a category of defining/distinguishing questions. *What do others say about* leading to *but what do you say about*. Correct answers are confirmed while incorrect answers are confronted and corrected.

Questions whose penetrating power is aimed at changing the will and directing the affections.

Verses 36 – 37 are a category of application and implication questions designed to draw out a volitional and affective response to the truth. They are in the category of *if this is so about the larger principles then what about the particulars?* These are the questions that make the truths powerful to bring about repentance, belief and obedience.

Resources

What questions, supplemental reading, and connections to ACBC Certification Exams need to be made?

The Message of Mark, R.C. Lucas

Heart Penetrating Questions, David Powlison

Summary

Seek to bring the Scriptures and our Savior to bear on people's heart pursuits. Understand and recognize when the person you are ministering to is not blind, but is not yet seeing – is seeing men as trees walking. And bring them to the cross with truth and in heart penetrating questions for real, lasting, God-pleasing life change.

Discussion

The following questions will help you to think through the truths and applications of this lecture.

How do you handle the Bible to prepare for counseling and to use during counseling?

What is the value of descriptive, diagnostic texts? Do you tend to rely on imperatives or commands?

What do you rely on to get truths across to people? What does Jesus rely on to express, explain and apply what He is teaching the disciples?

What explanations do people have for not understanding or not applying the Scriptures? How does this text diagnose those explanations?

Qualifications of a Biblical Counselor

Who is qualified to help people change?

Tim Nixon and Tim Pasma

Introduction

We have already established that there is a Context for Biblical Counseling that is, the local church. Since the Scriptures are clear that this is the place for the cure and care of souls, we must then determine who is qualified to bring Godly, wise, Biblical counsel to those in need. Counseling skills are important, but the character qualities, functional qualities and the relational building approaches of a counselor also significantly contribute to effective biblical counseling.

Statement of Topic

What God told believers in Christ to do for others involves counseling. A person cannot be faithful doing what God wants each of us to do for others and not be involved in counseling to some extent.

“We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. 2 Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. 3 For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, “The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me.” 4 For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. 5 May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, 6 that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 7 Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.” (Romans 15:1-7 emphasis mine)

The church that wants to fulfill its God-given counseling ministry must have members who are practicing biblical counseling among themselves. In other words, the members must have an open, honest, loving relationship with each other that involves mutual ministry to each other, mutual teaching, mutual admonishment, mutual reproof, mutual correction, and mutual discipling of one another. These members “who are strong” must be well grounded doctrinally and understand how theology relates to the problems of people. These members understand the hope brought into lives through the encouragement of the Scriptures.

Exposing the Issue

You are “qualified” to be a biblical counselor if you have a desire to help people. There is undoubtedly something different about people helpers. Many are described as having gifts of mercy, encouragement, discernment, and compassion. Others are servants and givers, and still others are truth tellers who desire to redirect the sheep that have wandered off the path.

There are some personal requirements for those who desire come alongside other people. Teaching, rebuking, correcting, training in righteousness, and restoration must be done with affectionate admonition because included in the greatest imperative of Jesus Christ was to love one another. Our love is to be sacrificial for those we counsel.ⁱⁱ

Expositing the Bible

Not Everyone is Qualified to Counsel

The Scriptures speak of at least three areas in which Biblical Counseling takes place:

Through Pastoral Shepherding (1 Peter 5:1-4, Ephesians 4:11-12)

Through daily and formal Discipleship (Ephesians 4:12-16, 2 Timothy 2:2)

Through Crisis Counseling (Galatians 6:1-3)

The Bible is clear that certain characteristics must be present in the life of a believer for them to be qualified to counsel at any of these levels. Scripture defines levels of personal holiness, maturity, skill levels, and Spiritual giftedness that all apply to one’s ability to counsel.

Pastors are qualified to counsel (or they should be).

They are those who have been called to “keep watch over your souls as those who must give an account” (Hebrews 13.17).

Thus, counseling is not a nice thing to add to a pastor’s repertoire.

Counseling is part of the shepherding task.

To be a pastor is to take on the duties of face-to-face, personal ministry of God’s Word.

Every pastor will some day give an account as to how he went about the task of binding up the wounds of the sheep entrusted to his care.

Pastors are involved in both public & personal ministry for the purpose of change (Colossians 1.28).

- “Warning” is **νουθετεω**, the word that comes closest to what we would call “counseling.”

Public and personal ministry has as its goal the presentation of members as “mature in Christ.”

God has called all believers to counsel through informal and formal discipleship, assuming they have the character qualities required (Colossians 3.16; Galatians 6.1-4).

Note that “counseling” (here “admonishing”) is a “one-anothering” activity (Colossians 3.16).

What are those qualities?

Romans 15:14

“I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you are **full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another.**” (emphasis mine)

Colossians 3:16

“Let the **word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom**, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, **with thankfulness in your hearts to God.**” (emphasis mine)

You are qualified to counsel if you are full of goodness (Romans 15:14)

- Are you able to be kind, generous, and compassionate with others?

You are qualified to counsel if you are growing in knowledge (Romans 15:14).

- The Biblical counselor must be a student of the Word.
- Do you understand the Gospel, the work of Christ, the role of Scripture in counseling, the grace of God in the transformation of people, the work of the Holy spirit through the reading and application of the Word?

You are qualified to counsel if you have the ability to adequately teach /admonish another. (Romans 15:14).

- This ability may come to some naturally but for most requires training, reading, prayer, and practice.

You are qualified to counsel if you are growing in wisdom (Colossians 3:16).

- Wisdom is knowledge rightly applied.
- Wisdom comes, not with acquiring knowledge, but with obeying the truths, commands, and promises of Scripture.

You are qualified to counsel if you are thankful. (Colossians 3:16).

- You MUST understand that it is the grace of God that enables you to listen, understand and care for those in need.
- You MUST understand that it is the grace of God through which the Holy Spirit uses the Word of God to penetrate hearts and transform you and those you counsel.

God has gifted some to counsel during crisis situations (Galatians 6:1)

*“Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you **who are spiritual** should restore him **in a spirit of** gentleness. **Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another’s burdens**, and so fulfill the **law** of Christ” (Galatians 6:1-2, emphasis mine)*

Much counseling is done as a result of our brothers and sisters in Christ being “caught” in sin and in crisis. Unfortunately, like the unbeliever, most Christians are proud and arrogant people with hearts that worship things other than our Lord. This being the case, they often don’t come to us until they have chosen sin and that sin has become a habit or lifestyle producing a crisis in their lives.

What does “you who are spiritual” involve? How does this determine the depth of our involvement?

The depth of a person’s involvement in counseling should first be determined by his Spiritual giftedness.

“...Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly” (Romans 12:6 – 8)

The “you who are spiritual” relates directly to the context of Galatians 5.

walking by the Spirit and thus exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:16-26)

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.” (Galatians 5:22-25)

Walking by the Spirit in Galatians 5 implies a level of maturity and experience.

Those who walk by the Spirit have learned to crucify the flesh.

Those who walk by the spirit have learned the joy and peace of following Christ over a period of time, testing, and circumstances,

Those who walk by the Spirit have developed self-control.

Those who walk by the spirit have demonstrated the fruit of the Spirit in their lives.

You must be gentle (Galatians 6:1)

You must exercise caution (Galatians 6:1)

You must be committed to the sometimes exhausting care of others. (Galatians 6:2)

Applying to Counseling

If we were to say that the ultimate goal of Biblical Counseling comes from 1 Timothy 1:5, “But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.”, then the qualifications of the Biblical counselor are focused at bringing that about.

- Is our life and our Godliness sufficient to **guide** in bringing true heart change to our fellow brother or sister in Christ?
- Are we vessels prepared, studied, and gifted to be used by God in the life-transformation of others?
- Are our hearts and lives transforming into the likeness of Jesus?
- Would God count us worthy of the calling to which we have been called?

Resources

Tripp, Paul. “Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands”, P&R Publishing (2002)
Adams, Jay. “Competent to Counsel”, Zondervan (1970)
“The Holy Bible”, Ephesians, Colossians, Galatians, Romans

Summary

What God told believers in Christ to do for others involves counseling. A person cannot be faithful doing what God wants each of us to do for others and not be involved in counseling to some extent.

“God has called his people to a personal ministry of the Word. He expects his people to use that Word as the content for personal transformation (heart-change) personally and in the lives of others. Thus, we all must give ourselves to the Word, submitting to it in every detail if we are to be competent to counsel.”

ⁱⁱ Ganschow, Julie, “Can I Become a Biblical Counselor”, Blog (August 31, 2015)

Lesson 11-12

Biblical Foundations #1

Overview of a Model for Christian Growth

Dr. Robert Jones

2 Peter 3:18

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

KEY QUESTION: How should you understand yourself, your life situation and your God--in a *biblical* way--so that you can “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ?”

ILLUSTRATION:

The Case of the Eight Workaholics

Mr. A, Mr. B, Mr. C., Mr. D, Mr. E, Mr. F, Mr. G and Mr. H are all popularly known as "workaholics." How do we think biblically about them?

Their BEHAVIOR--identical in all eight men--is sinful.

What's wrong with their behavior?

They devote inordinate time and energy to their job life.

Enslaved - Even at home they think about work, take business phone calls, take work home, use their laptop computers and cell phones.

They neglect other God-given duties.

Pentathlon Priority Pie chart:

Personal vs. Family vs. Church vs. Community vs. Work.

Workaholism is an acceptable vice in our day in corporate America

What do they all need to do? Change their behavior !

Establish a biblical view of the balance of the relationship spheres of life to God.(priorities)

Implement biblical principles of time management⁹

Their SINFUL HEARTS drive their sinful behavior.

This is a Biblical truism: Matthew 15; Mark 7; Proverbs 23

Yet, while their behavior is identical, their individual hearts vary widely!

What heart desires drive each man?

Vastly different – all sinful but vastly different

- Mr A = Greed, Mammon
Wants to buy/own expensive luxury items, large boats, house, etc
Matt. 6:19-24; 1 Tim 6
- Mr. B = Fear/worry (about future)
Not want rich things, but afraid of financial loss, unsure about future
Matt. 6:25-34
- Mr. C = Jealous of brother, crave parental approval, affection & admiration
Brother extremely successful career; parents always promise brother things; he got good grades *Gen. 37; Luke 15*
- Mr. D = Reputation and pride
Wants neighbors and community to view him highly. *Phil. 2:1-11,20-21*
- Mr. E = Escape responsibilities/duties
Bad marriage & family life, not want to come home. When home he convinces himself and his family that he is too tired to help, deal with relationships, etc. *Eph. 5:15-6:4*
- Mr. F = Pre-adultery
Finds acceptance/approval female secretary, beginning to form unwise, inappropriate relationship, pre-adultery brewing *Matt. 5:27-30*
- Mr. G = Fear of man
Afraid of displeasing boss, losing boss' approval *Proverbs 29:25; John 12:42-43; Galatians 2:11-13*
- Mr. H = Self-righteous, legalistic, perfectionist
Proud of his work ethic, good Christian, does what is right, believes that being perfect worker makes him righteous *Phil. 3:4-9*

In each case, the person can justify/rationalize their workaholic behavior. Jeremiah 17 says that the human heart is deceitful.

⁹ Key passage: Ephesians 5:15-6:9; also John 4:34 with John 17:4.

Recommend: Doug Sherman & William Hendricks, *How to Balance Competing Demands* (NavPress).

Jim Petty, "Time Pressure...Do You Feel It?" (CCEF's Pulse, Spring '92).

Jim Petty, "Your Time and God's Kingdom" (June 1990 CCEF Lectures).

What do they all need to do? Change their hearts !

Joel 2:12-13

Render your hearts not garments! Heart not behavior.

Because God is gracious. Grace precedes repentance.

Quote: WSC Q#87 on *Repentance*

What is repentance unto life?

Repentance unto life is a saving grace, (Acts 11:18) whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, (Acts 2:37–38) and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, (Joel 2:12, Jer. 3:22) doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, (Jer. 31:18–19, Ezek. 36:31) with full purpose of, and endeavour after, new obedience. (2 Cor. 7:11, Isa. 1:16–17)¹⁰

Further Comments on the Label "Workaholic"

While this label may help to describe people, it is both *deficient* (it doesn't say enough) and *distorted* (communicates wrong ideas).

- 1) The "-aholic" suffix implies a medical "disease" or "addiction" model, without physiological warrant. Such labels tend to remove moral responsibility for behavior, ignore God and dehumanize people.
Image of God – functional sense to image God, reflect or represent Him.
Not automaton.
- 2) Scriptural metaphors are far stronger and richer:
I serve my job as my master (slavery).
I worship my job as my god (idolatry).
I embrace my job as my lover (spiritual adultery). *James 4:4; Hosea*
- 3) Such labels rob people of biblical hope. Unlike disease, God forgives and changes slaves, idolaters and spiritual adulterers (*1 Corinthians 6:9-11*)!

¹⁰ Westminster Assembly, *The Westminster Shorter Catechism*, (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.) 1995, [Online] Available: Logos Library System.

THE THREE TREE MODEL: A Comprehensive Model for Christian Growth

On page 82 of your notes is the three-tree model diagram. Please refer to it for the following.

1. *Situation* _

Your world, circumstances, experiences, etc.

This includes your past, present and anticipated future aspects.

Heat = Hardships, trials, suffering, effects of sin & curse

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| (1) General life hardships | (4) Satan |
| (2) Being sinned against | (5) False counsel (false |
| (3) Body problems | teaching & false models) |
| Chronic or acute | |
| Minor or severe | |
| Include brain disorders. ¹¹ | |

Dew = Blessings, good things from God's common grace

Your situation does not cause or determine behavior, though it may influence, provoke, tempt, limit, lull, impact, encourage, discourage you (even the dew: Deuteronomy 8; Proverbs 30:7-9).

2. *Person* _

Two kinds of people. Each person has two levels (fruit and root)

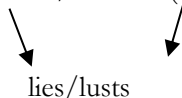
Thorn Bush = Ungodliness, foolishness, fleshly.

Bad Fruit = *Sinful behavior*:

Words, actions and emotions

Bad Root = *Sinful heart* :

Hebrews 4:12 – beliefs/motives (heart idols/ruling desires)



Fruit Tree = Godliness, wisdom, spiritual.

¹¹ See Welch, *Blame It on the Brain*.

Good Fruit = Godly behavior:

Words, actions and emotions

Good Root = Godly heart :

Beliefs/motives

3. God and His Provisions

Who God is and what God provides in Christ.

Triangle & Circle = Triune God as sovereign, wise and good
(Romans 8:28-30)

See also Jeremiah 29:11; Genesis 50:20

Cross = God's provisions in Christ

Mercy, forgiveness, wisdom, hope and power including Christ's Body and the cross.

Stream = The Holy Spirit's application to you of God's provisions

J.I. Packer, *Keep in Step with the Spirit*

Holy Spirit as spotlight on cross' glory

Holy Spirit as mediator of cross' blessing

God's Provisions for You in Jesus Christ in Hebrews 4:12-16

Verses 12-13 -- Your Plight:

1) *God exposes you*

2) *God judges you*

Verses 14-16 -- God's Provisions:

1) *Who Jesus is: (v.14-15)*

Our High Priest

Who sympathizes

Who did not sin

2) *What Jesus provides: (v.16)*

Mercy

Grace to help

There is real hope and help for you today!

The crucified, risen Lord Jesus Christ, through his Spirit and his Word (the Bible), can solve your personal and relational problems. He provides the forgiveness, the wisdom and the power you need to grow as a Christian and handle life his way. Consider...

John 1:16-17

Luke 10:38-42

John 6:66-69

Matthew 22:37-40

Hebrews 1:3

Colossians 2:3,9-10

Hebrews 4:16

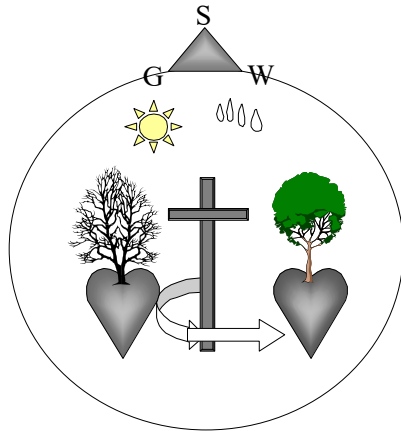
1 Corinthians 10:13

2 Peter 1:3-4

Philippians 4:12-13

The Case of the Depressing Day Off

An illustration from the life of a pastor.



“I don’t want to be off”

His Situation:

Physically tired
Long to-do list
Accountability from wife

Sons' desires
Cancelled game

His Sinful Behavior versus Godly Behavior:

Mildly depressed

Didn't feel like doing anything

Bored

Guilt

Lethargic

Escapist behavior – lay down

Tried to sneak in ministry

Over-eating and snacking

His Sinful Heart Motives versus Godly Heart Motives:

Sinful

- Driven by performance – ministry was his idol
-
- Indulgence – short-term laziness and selfishness

Godly

Learn to rest in Christ's righteousness

Learn to rest in God's providence and provision for his ministry

Learn to deny self and find joy in serving others

Biblical Foundations#2

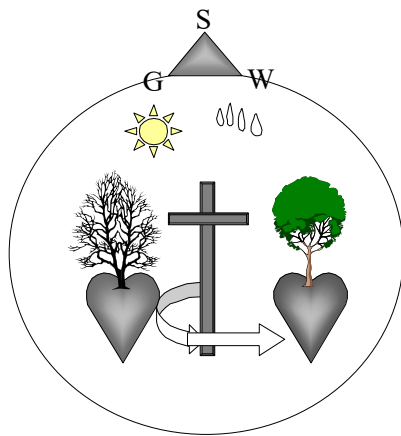
Overview Of A Model For Christian Growth

Dr. Robert Jones

2 Peter 3:18

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

THE THREE TREE MODEL in Jeremiah 17, esp. 17:5-8 ¹²



¹² See Jeremiah 17 Bible Study

1. Situation

(Your world, circumstances, experiences, etc.)

Heat (17:3-4,8; 16:10)

Divine judgment

2. Person

(Two trees, with both fruit and root)

Thorn Bush (17:1,5-6,9)

Verse 1 – evil behavior & heart idols

Fruit Tree (17:7-8)

Godly behavior and heart trust in God

3. God & His Provisions

Who God is and what God provides in Christ.

Triangle & Circle, Cross, Stream (17:8)

God searches hearts and judges all people (17:10)

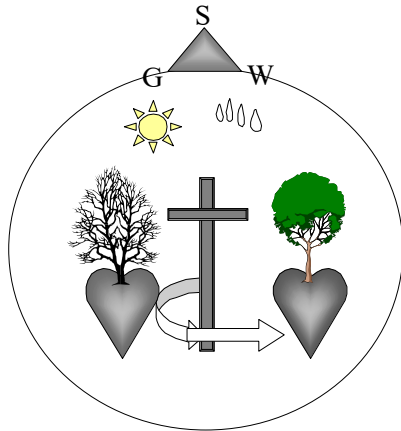
God heals and saves his people (17:14) ¹³

Healing metaphor – restoration of heart to God and restoration of covenantal blessings.
See Hosea 14:4. This is not inner healing, psychic healing, emotional healing, healing of memories. (Cultural replacements for prayer, spiritual meditation)

¹³ On the Bible's use of "healing" as a metaphor, see Gary Shogren, "Recovering God in the Age of Therapy," *Journal of Biblical Counseling*, 12:1 (Fall 1993), 14-19.

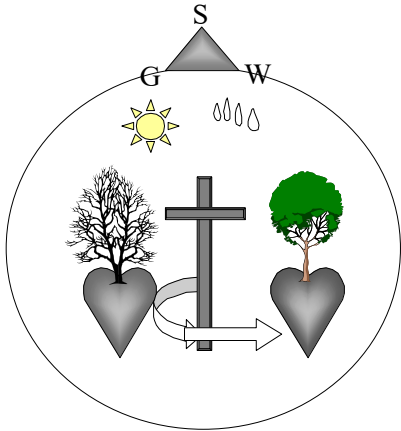
BIBLICAL CASE STUDIES: Selected Psalms

Psalm 23



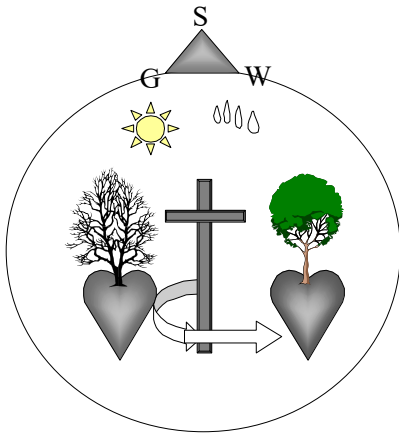
Heat – Enemies, shadow of death
Heart – Tempted to fear versus contentment
God – My Shepherd and my Host
Provision – God is with me

Psalm 27



Heat – foes, enemies, mother and father forsake him
Heart – fear, worry, depression, anger, bitterness, slander, hopelessness, craving love, craves protection, safety
vs.
confidence, joy, worship, love enemies
God – whole list (do this)
Verse 4 one thing it produces

Psalm 46

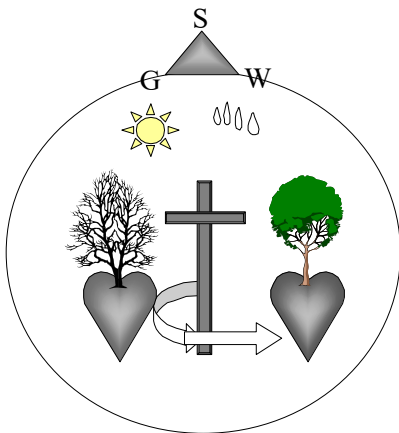


Crises Psalm

Jay Adams on this Psalm:

- God is in the problem
- God is up to something
- God is up to something good.

Psalm 94



God vindicates and judges

BIBLICAL CASE STUDY: Mr. & Mrs. Job in Job 1:6-2:10

1. Situation: Severe suffering.

How did they both suffer? Loss of...

Possessions

Children

Job's health

2. Person

- Mrs. Job was a thorn bush who cursed God. Bad root/fruit.
- Mr. Job was a fruit tree who blessed God. Good root/fruit.

3. God & His Provisions:

God is Sovereign (1:6-2:10; 38-42)

God sovereign control over everything, even evil. What the theologians call "God's Decrees"

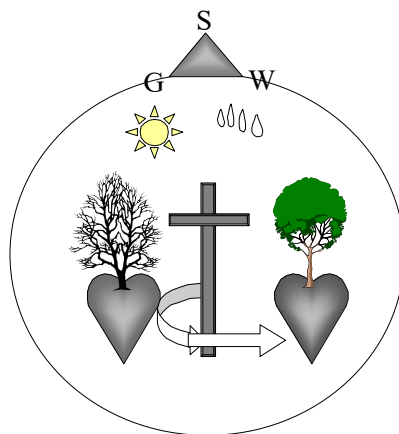
Everyone in book knows God as the ultimate cause:
Job, Mrs. Job, Writer, Servants, Satan, God

God is good (1:21; 2:10; 42:7-17; James 5:11)

Everything he received came from God. See 1 Corinthians 4:7 about the problem of pride.

God has a purpose (40:3-5; 42:1-6)

To prove Satan to be a liar
Agenda to mature Job



Summary observations about Mr. & Mrs. Job:

- 1) They both suffered severely.
- 2) They both knew that God was the ultimate cause.
- 3) They both faced a spiritual crossroad, but responded differently: ¹⁴

- * He followed God

- * She rejected God

She followed a path of folly (which leads to death – Proverbs) – "foolish woman"

Severe suffering cannot cause you to sin nor prevent you from obedience.

Concluding Exhortations about Our Three Tree Model

Master this model and its dynamics, nuances and implications, for your life and ministry.

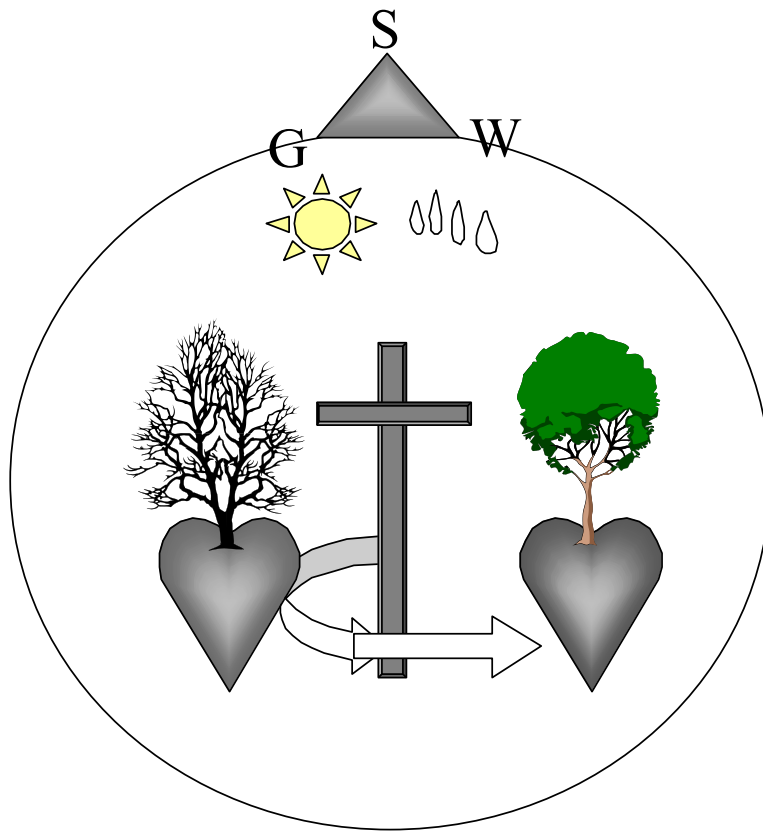
Use it to help you better understand your Bible, and use your Bible to fine-tune this model.

Use it to help you better understand yourself, and begin to immediately look at your situations, your fruits and roots, and your merciful, mighty Savior in light of this model.

Use it to help you better understand the people to whom God calls you to minister. You will find this a helpful tool to draw out and apply to them.

¹⁴ Recommend Robert D. Jones, "Anger Against God," *Journal of Biblical Counseling*, 14:3 (Spring 1996)

Three-Tree Model Diagram



Triune God

Sovereign – in control

Good – loving

Wise – knows best

Sphere of Circumstances

Circle – life under God's providence

Heat – Hardships

Dew – Blessings

Three Trees

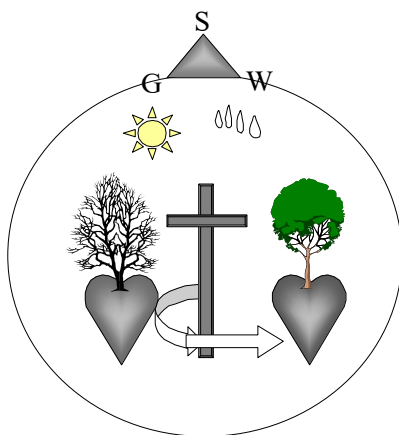
Thorn Bush – sinful reactions from a bad heart

Fruitful Tree – Godly responses from a Biblical heart

Cross – God's provision in Christ's work

Stream

Stream of God's grace that the Holy Spirit applies to us



Helping People Change

Russ Kennedy, adapted from Paul D. Tripp

Introduction

Statement of Topic

The Bible speaks with authority and clarity on...

The Bible gives us a simple, but rich way of engaging people sending life-transforming love and truth through a relationship.

Exposing the Issue

What are the issues, concerns, difficulties that Christian people face? What false wisdoms and perspectives keep them from responding in ways that please God?

One of the challenges facing us as we think deeply about the care and cure of souls is the pervasive presence of a clinical model for counseling.

This clinical model includes the *necessity* of offices, office hours, availability of resources, files, controls and formal counselor/client relationships. So we meet with people for an hour to hour and half *and we have little other engagement in their lives.*

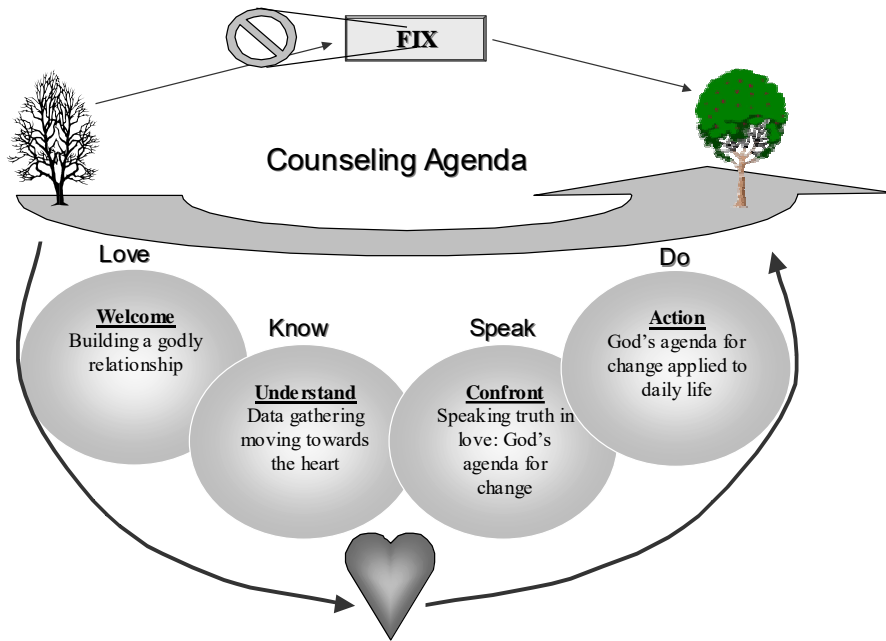
It is not first about *what* and *where*, but about a model that sees what we are doing as *IN AND WITH PEOPLE IN THEIR LIVES.*

Not that having certain structures of time, place, and resources are wrong and should be eliminated. But when these become the key features of our counseling and they allow us to do “ministry” without a real, relational engagement in people’s lives, then we need to move forward with all our thought, planning and development to put a relational emphasis in place.

Developing a Biblical Model

What does the Bible say about this topic and its related issues?

A Diagram of the Model



Do not think just in terms of phases, but rather aspects and categories that are constantly functioning. Certainly, at the beginning of working with someone, the *love* and *know* aspects will be most important.

NOTE TO INSTRUCTOR: Using the Power Point, go through each part, just briefly summarizing each aspect. You will be going through it in more detail in the lecture itself.

LOVE

Welcome - Building a relationship in which God's love thrives

2 Corinthians 5 - your relationships do not belong to you. They have representative/redemptive categories that define and drive our relationships.

Enter a Person's World

Hebrews 2:10-18

An entry gate is the particular person's experience of this problem.

A woman abandoned by her husband—the immediate experience is fear

Help a counselee become a seeker .

1. Building horizontal trust .
2. Building vertical hope .
3. Commitment to the process .

Develop the skill of listening.

The best counselors are the best listeners.

1. Listen for words describing emotions .
2. Listen for interpretive words.
3. Listen for self-talk .
4. Listen for God-talk .

Incarnate the Love of Christ

Colossians 3:12-17

People are changed not just by what we say , but also by who we are .

Their experience of suffering will affect you and you share in their experience.

True godly love for people will understand and feel the needs, hurts, hardships and difficult experiences of others. If what the people you are working with does not affect you, you should repent of being hardhearted and uncompassionate.

You are called to speak the truth in love .

Otherwise it is bent and twisted by someone else's emotions and desires.

Truth is not a weapon—it is used by an intentional love to offer their Redeemer and call to/from this Ruler

Be the evidence of what Christ can produce .

Tell and show the mighty, life changing love and grace of God in your own life. For many people, your own changed and growing life will become the strongest message and evidence of God's power and thus they will gain hope.

Identify with their Suffering

A Theology of Sharing

Hebrews 2:10ff

Cultivate an atmosphere of brotherhood reflecting Christ our brother and compassionate One who takes us to God; so we take others to God

The Theology of Suffering

2 Corinthians 1:3-12

Do we have a Biblical theology of suffering

Not even your suffering belongs to you—it belongs to the Lord

A methodology for sufferers

Honest self-disclosure

1. Concretizes truth – incarnates and makes it real
2. Discourages an unhealthy dependence on counselor
3. Christ comes to others through my story/counseling .

Accept with a Biblical Agenda

Redemption as our model

Just as Christ accepted us—in our sin—so we accept others by salvation
for sanctification until glorification

All redemptive activity and change takes place in the context of relationships.

KNOW

Discovering where change is needed in the life of another

Goal of Data Gathering

To understand the person .

Hebrews 4:14-16

Jesus entered your world and for 33 years, He did data gathering

Not on a sin hunt – want to understand the person, especially the heart

Insightful people are those who ask the right questions
—what is God doing and why don't I see it?

To help people to know themselves biblically .

People are trapped by their own bad questions:

X – “Why isn't God working in my life”

✓ – “What is God doing and why don't you see it?”

Problem of Assuming Too Much

When we assume, we don't ask

—when we don't ask, we don't know

Define their Concepts

Get people to define their terms - what do they mean by what they are saying.

Clarify their Behavior

Be sure that they make it obvious, plain, clear. There must be no room for mutual misunderstanding.

“Give me an example of what you defined, show me the video...”

Expose their Heart

Give the reason, logic, motivations

“Why did you make the choices you did?”

Ask Good Questions

Open vs. closed questions

Closed questions tend to allow “Yes/No” answers.

Are you angry with _____?

Open-ended questions require self-disclosure

What about your _____ makes you happy?

What about your _____ makes you sad?

Survey vs. focused questions

Focused – many questions about an area leading to roots and causes

Survey – asking a little bit about wide areas leading to themes and patterns

Illus: Survey is like going down a hallway opening doors – focus is like tearing apart the rooms

Certain questions uncover particular kinds of information

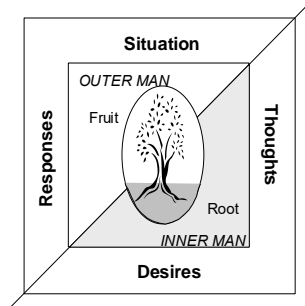
Question	Data
What?	Basic info
How?	Mechanics/way done
What for?	Purpose/motivation
When/how often?	Themes/pattern
When?	Order of events

**** What do I not know about what I know? ***

Interpret Biblically the information you've gathered

You do not counsel on the facts you gather but on the Biblical interpretation of the facts.

Data Organizing Tool



15

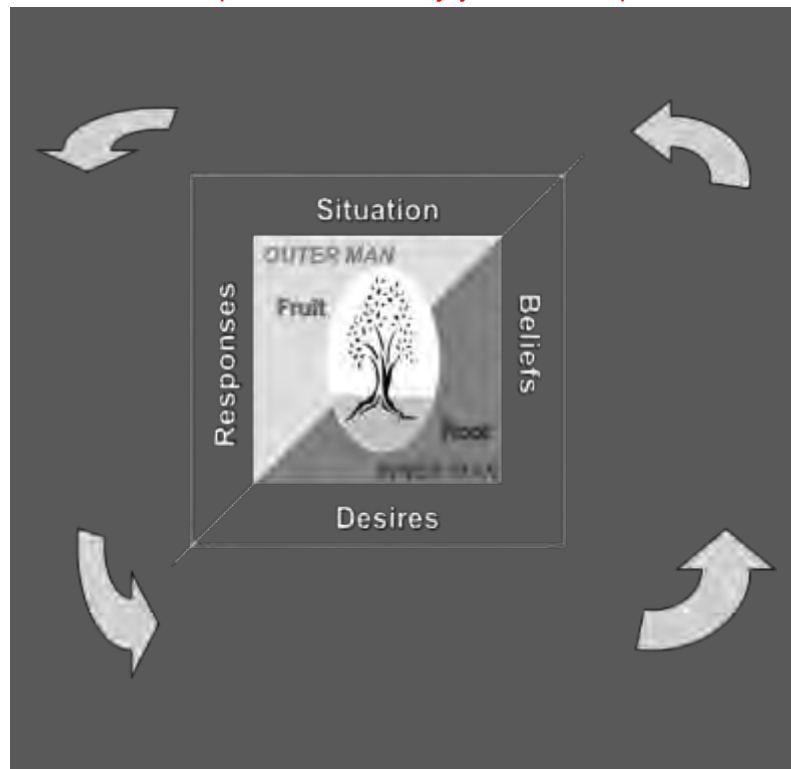
The following will help with gathering and organizing data so that a Biblical interpretation is more easily achieved.

❶ What was/is going on?

Describe their world, its heat and dew.
Its opportunities, responsibilities, trials, pressures,
temptations, stresses, joys, relationships

❷ What are they doing in response to what is going on?

Actions, reactions, responses
Field of their behavior
Themes and patterns on predictors/shape of the heart



❸ What are they thinking in/about what is going on?

Interprets, organizes, explains, reasons, talks
inwardly Functional theology/world view

❹ What do they want out of or in the midst of?

Treasures, goals, purposes, cravings, desires,
wants, delights, hopes and gains

The sum of 1-4 is a *Change Agenda*

¹⁵ Adapted from *Changing Hearts, Changing Lives*, © 2000, CCEF, Philadelphia, PA.

Illustration – Using questions

A person who is struggling with their job—

1. What happened?
2. How did you respond?
3. If you could have anything in the situation what would it be?
4. What were you thinking, believing, doubting?

SPEAK

Helping a person see themselves in the mirror of the Word of God

A Method of Confrontation¹⁶

The following model illustrates the relationships between the elements of confrontation. It is developed and explained on the following pages.

It is rooted in the Gospel

Too often, a great deal of confrontation is about:

Human agenda

Human anger

Human impatience

All about law and little about the gospel.

It seeks to comfort

Romans 8:1-11

Believe – truth

By bringing them to hope in Christ's forgiveness .

Guilt

The judicial punishment over my sin has been dealt with

Leading you to confession of sin

Inability

The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit

Enabling you to live a new life

It serves to call

Romans 8:12-17

Bow - obligation

By bringing them to accept responsibility before God.

¹⁶ Adapted from *Changing Hearts, Changing Lives*, © 2000 CCEF, Philadelphia, PA.

Go on a search and destroy mission for sin

You live as a true son when you, having received grace, fight sin.

Be serious about sin because you are a son!

Goal of Confrontation

To be an instrument of seeing

We aim to help people see their lives from God's perspective.

To lead people to repentance

We aim to help people repent of specific heart issues and behavioral sins.

Four Steps of the Process

Old self remnants/put off

Consideration

What does God want this person to see that they do not see?

How can I help them see?

Confession

Where does this person need to admit responsibility and make confession (specific & concrete)?

Before God and others

Commitment

New self realized/put on

Where does this person need to be committed to a radically new way of living?

How this person with this (situation) and these (relationships) work faith lovingly.

Change

How do these new commitments need to be applied to daily situations.

How to Confront

Involved/active engagement in their lives with the counsel of words

Start with Interaction

Illus: Nathan and David

Draw out the heart

Dialog /discuss through questions and responses

Describe through metaphors in the person's life.

Nathan stands along side David looking away to a story/analogy drawn from David's life that is a mirror on David's life and sin.

Reserve declaration for the rebellious

Illus: Jesus and Pharisees

Where a person will not respond

DO

Applying change to the everyday situations and relationships

Clarify your Agenda

Agenda— plan, steps for change

Where are we going?

What is the biblical way to get there?

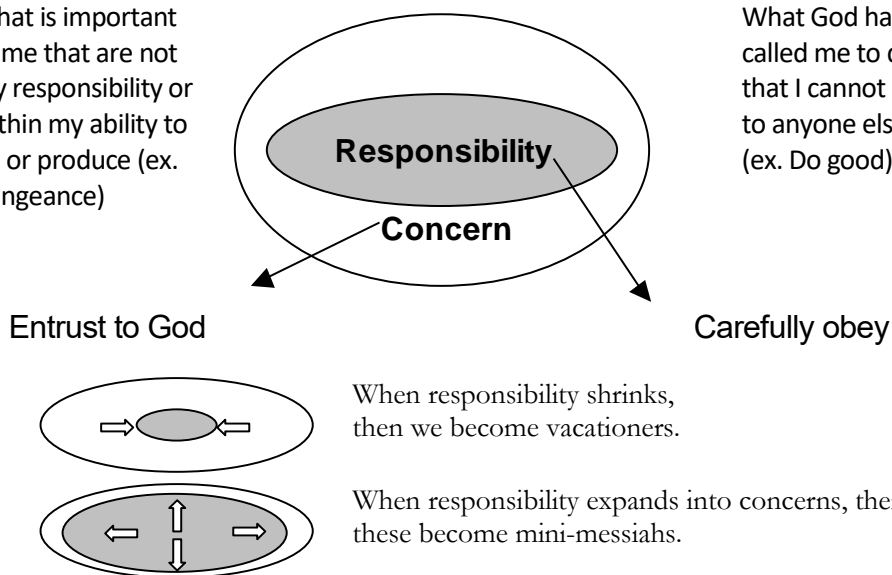
Clarify their Responsibility

My Concerns

What is important to me that are not my responsibility or within my ability to do or produce (ex. Vengeance)

My Responsibility

What God has called me to do that I cannot give to anyone else (ex. Do good)



Establish accountability

Not be a spiritual detective

The success of accountability rests on the one being held accountable

1. Gives a person guidance – maps Scripture on life
2. Gives structure – shapes obedience
3. Give encouragement – sustains hope
4. Gives oversight – maintains the big picture
5. Gives warning – heightens fear of God
6. Gives resources – shares practical help

Instill identity in Christ

2 Peter 1:3-11

Why ineffective and unproductive?

Don't have qualities

Why not have qualities?

Blindness, nearsighted, forgetful

Understand the Process of Change

What we want to see happen is change that honors and pleases God. Consider the following diagram as a model of the process of change in our counseling.

Summary

The issue is the heart ; we aim for repentance and change there first.

People you are ministering to will not discuss the issues that will open their hearts unless they trust you.

If they trust you (L o v e), they will answer your questions (K n o w), be confronted with God's truth (S p e a k) and respond with godly actions (D o).

Understanding Hearts in Temptation

Genesis 3

Pastor Russ Kennedy

Introduction

Statement of Topic

The Bible speaks with authority and clarity on...

The Bible establishes in the record of the fall in Genesis 3, where the real battle to obey God is located. There will be external temptations. They will be presented through the body (eyes, ears, etc.). They will come into the heart, the inner man, where beliefs and wants flow in words. Out of the words of the heart, the Word of God is believed or denied resulting in sin.

Expositing the Bible

What does the Bible say about this topic and its related issues?

The Commencement of Sin

(v.1-7)

The shift from the innocence of the Adam and Eve to the crafty serpent marks an ominous turn in the story. It is carried by the [sound](#) of the similarities of the Hebrew words for “naked” and for “crafty”. Adam and Eve are vulnerable and Satan is vile.

The Person of the Tempter

(v.1)

The serpent is introduced with attributes that are more than animal. This is a particular serpent. Here is deceit and evil craftiness as the embodiment of evil. Here is someone in the snake. The serpent, not just as a part of the animal creation, but as a part of the rebellious and fallen heavenly hosts, is an ever growing menace through the Scriptures. So while a talking snake sounds fairytale like, it tells us two very important things.

There is more going on here than just an animal tempting Eve.

There is a malevolent intelligence, an evil presence who uses the snake as his tool. The serpent here is not to be equated with modern, crawling reptiles. What we see today is the product of the curse. The clear implication here is that the serpent had legs, a dragon beautiful and superbly intelligent. Eve does not see the serpent as either strange or sinister.

Satan never appears as he is.

He is always parading as something or someone else. He even pretends to be an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14) when he is in fact a fallen cherub and full of darkness and deceit (Ezekiel 28:14, 16).

Here is the introduction of competing voices.

God's Word and counsel have been the sole guide for Adam and Eve. Their world is not only made by God, but their understanding of that world is entirely shaped by God. Since one of the persons of the Godhead is Word, Satan attacks humans by perverting and twisting what was to be their life and substitutes his own dark lies. This is what we face today. Even though we have the grand clarity and sufficiency of the Word of God, we can be overwhelmed with a cacophony of compelling, but corrupt counsel.

The Presentation of the Temptation (v.2-6)

In these verses, Moses establishes a clear understanding of how sin functions. Notice that Satan tempts Eve through the way God has made her soul to function. There is no sin nature driving this or being appealed to. This is temptation aimed squarely at her heart, at how it believes and wants.

Through Lies Directed at the Heart Beliefs (v.2-5)

The temptation is first presented directly through lies aimed at the part of Eve's soul which knows and believes.

Satan Questions God's Word (v.1)

He undermines its accuracy and authority The questioning is two-fold.

Is the Word she has accurate?

Did God actually say it? Is Eve really sure that what she believes is what God said? Is the Word she has, *ACCURATE*? The question intends to shake Eve's confidence in what Adam has taught and told her. Is the voice of counsel she has been following really telling her the way it is?

Is the Word she has authoritative?

Are you, Eve, included in this prohibition (due to the plural pronoun)? Was this prohibition for Adam only so that she is exempted? Is the Word she has, *AUTHORITATIVE*? The question may be including Adam's standing by in the plural. It also may be insinuating that while the command was given to Adam, it may be good for him, but not Eve. This line of attack is used over and over again. We are challenged with whether we have the Word in our hands. We are often tempted to think that what it is saying isn't applicable to us. I hear this all the time in counseling through sentences like, "Well that is just your interpretation;" and "I don't think that text applies to my situation."

Eve Changes God's Word

(v.2-3)

She undermines its scope and sufficiency. Her quoting of God's Word here is inaccurate by both taking away and adding to. The affect is to change what she believes to be true about God.

She leaves out "freely" and "all" thus making God less gracious.

She adds "neither touch it" thus making God more restrictive.

She leaves out "surely", making God less serious about judgment.

Note that she knows enough to respond to Satan with the Word of God. But she is not holding the line. She is not getting it right. She goes above the line by adding to the Word and below the line by taking away from the Word. Thank God for Jesus in the wilderness temptation who not only uses the Word of God to ward off temptation, but He gets it right and uses it right. Jesus holds the line when everyone else, including Eve and Adam here, fail.

Satan Challenges God's Word

(v.4-5)

He attacks God's integrity and intention. Satan now declares that what God has said is simply not true. He does not challenge the precept itself, only its punishment.

He attacks God's integrity.

He effectively says that God has lied. It is simply not true that you will surely die.

He attacks God's intention.

He also imputes evil motives to God. God has given this command in order to keep you down, to keep you below Him and beneath Him.

Notice that this attack is aimed at what God knows and what God intends. His slander of God is framed by the God's own heart functions. God has not spoken the truth because God wants to preserve His unique deity and not grant equal status to anyone.

Here is the heart of Satan and the underlying sin in all sin. Satan wants to be equal with or just be God. And so do we. At the root of sin is self. At the root of self is the deceit and desire to be like God. In our desire to be like Him in idolatrous ways, we mar the very holy and righteous ways we are like Him as image bearers.

Do you see how these are lies and deceits aimed at getting Eve to agree with Satan and to believe what is not true so that she will act on them? This is part of why you do what you do. You believe certain things to be true and that belief causes actions (as well as emotions, affections).

Through Lusts Directed at the Heart Wants

(v.6)

Now the temptation moves to present an attraction through lusts to the heart desires.

Temptation appeals through a physical medium, sees.

Most temptations are presented through the medium of the body. It is not that the body is evil, but that it is how the soul interacts with the world around it. Satan speaks, Eve hears. The tree is pointed to, Eve sees. Her heart is engaged with the temptation as enticement using the body.

Many temptations are to the misuse of legitimate things. There is nothing wrong with eating. But there is everything wrong with eating this fruit. Nothing is evil in and of itself. But almost everything has an evil misuse.

Temptation appeals to the wants of the heart, desires.

She is driven by her craving, desires and wants. She is going to trade desiring all the rest of the food and fruit of the garden to desire the one fruit she is forbidden. If she does not desire it, she will not take it. But she reaches out following the flow of her desires to take and eat.

Her believing Satan's lie shapes the object of her desires. The tree is not truly desirable to make one wise, but it is what Satan has said. Her wants are directed to what is false, deceived by Satan's lies. They deceive her into thinking this is a greater pleasure than all the legitimate ones God has given. Prizing this fruit more than the others causes her to crave, to be mastered by her desire for her.

Temptation appeals in thematic heart elements.

Notice that the fruit is delicious, delightful and desirable. It is good to eat. It is lovely and beautiful. It will bring me something I do not have now. The thematic heart elements have at their core pleasures and promises. Temptations hold out to the desires phony pleasures and false promises. Can you see in your own temptations how they appeal by presenting to you some sort of pleasure or promising you something desirable? Can you see how often they are substitutes for the true pleasures and promises God holds out for us?

Now, be clear on this: desiring is simply a function of the heart. It is not possible to "not want". But those wants, desires and cravings are to be shaped by truth and submitted to God. Now we watch what Eve believes linked with what Eve sees turn her desires against her to crave what God has forbidden. In the midst of sin, an important question is, "What did you want?"

Implications for our wants and desires:

Your wants are shaped by what you believe to be true.

Notice the movement here. Satan must first change what she believes before her wants begin to master her. This is why faith, knowledge and wisdom are the most essential ingredients for holiness.

Your wants and desires are carried about in words.

You want in words. We know what we want through the words that express and carry those wants.

You are responsible to control and to change your wants.

You are not at the mercy of the pull of vague, inward tuggings called wants. Your wants are your responsibility. We will be looking at this more in depth later when we study James 1 and 1 John 2:15-17.

The Product of the Temptation

(v.7)

What are the results of the temptation?

Sin Resulting from Disobedience

Eve takes and eats. She disobeys God by believing Satan's lies and desiring what is forbidden. Deceived, she disobeys.

Adam takes and eats. It is clear to me that in the words, "gives to Adam who was with her," that he is standing there watching this happen. He is with her. He is not deceived. He chooses Eve over God. He chooses to disobey. This single act of disobedience takes the whole human race down with him.

Shame Resulting from Guilt

They are aware of their sin. Satan said their eyes would be opened. They are opened, but not to what they expected. The poison of sin in their souls now changes how they see what they see.

They are ashamed of their sin. Their knowledge now of evil is the root, the cause of the emotion called shame. Their holy simplicity is now corrupted by guilty shame.

This knowledge of good and evil they now know is not Godlike. Their experience has not made them into gods. It has exposed them as visible and vulnerable and needing to be covered because of sin and guilt.

The Confrontation of Sin

(v.8-13)

I cannot help but think that verse 8 is immediately after verses 6-7. Here they are, startled in the first moments of their sin and shame, by the sound of the Lord God in His presence moving in the Garden.

Engages through Relationship

(v.8)

Live in the context of fellowship and relationship.

God engages Adam and Eve in a relationship with them. He comes to where they are to meet with them and fellowship with them. He confronts them out of a context of his communion with them. This encourages us as we want to counsel others to do so with a love, know speak, and do engagement. Build relationship,

understand issues, represent God's agenda for change and give practical steps of action.

God initiates an active pursuit of the sinner.

God is the seeker and man is runner. God knows that Adam and Eve have sinned. He is not coming into the Garden just to have a time of fellowship. He is coming in the time of fellowship to confront them with their sin. He is seeking them. They are hiding from God. This is ever the way it is – no one seeks after God first; He is always first in seeking man.

Sin destroys the relationship breaking fellowship through fear and folly.

The hiding and running from the Presence of God is a graphic picture of a broken relationship. How sin causes us to cower in fear. When they ought to be moving toward God in loving delight, they are running and hiding in shame.

Sin destroys ones ability to see clearly, contrary to what was promised in the temptation.

Here is the insanity and irrationally, the madness sin causes. How is Adam going to hide from omniscience? Where will Adam run from omnipresence? The most blinding affect of sin is that we are blind to it.

Exposes through Questions (v.9-13)

God exposes Adam and Eve through questions. God is not asking in order to learn what He does not know. He is asking penetrating questions in order to give Adam self-knowledge. The soul is poised to answer questions even if the answer is not spoken out loud. God causes Adam and Eve to face their own sin by exposing it through carefully crafted questions aimed to expose the heart.

Notice the categories of questions:

Questions around broken relationships (v.9-10)

These are questions that ask the “Where are you” around life and life's relationships. They are designed to show how sin alienates and turns friends into enemies, love into fear, walking with one another into running and hiding from one another.

Questions examining evidences of guilt (v.11a)

These are questions which probe how guilt is working itself out. They are designed to expose the foolish words of counsel, the fake pleasures and false promises. It exposes our exposure.

Questions about the facts of sin (v.11b-12)

These are questions that gather data about what one did or how one responded. It is meant to get the story straight. They are direct, centering on the precepts. Did you do? Did you say? What happened? It makes the response of Adam even more terrible that in the face of the great wonderful Counselor he attempts to deflect the questions and shift blame.

Questions requiring self-accusation

(v.13).

These are questions which draw out admission of sin. They are designed to expose how one is culpable and how one has contributed. They help us see us as being responsible, responsible for our own sin and responsible for being the means to tempt, provoke, contribute, be the occasion of someone else's sin.

For all of us as brothers and sisters, or in our roles as spouses or parents, or in our spheres of relationships in church, home, community or work, here is how we help people change. Our counsel uses God's kind of questions to help people see. And often they will not. Even here, we find Adam and Eve not repenting when counseled by God Himself.

Applying to Counseling

How do we connect the Scriptures to the sins, struggles and suffering of people? How do these texts shape our approach to the ministry of counseling?

Some Illustrative Responses

Look at how Moses relates the universal sinful responses to sin and guilt.

Denial – We will cover the effects of our sin.

How do we tend to cover our sins? Draw out a list...

Escape/Avoid – We will hide from our accusers.

How do we tend to avoid or escape our sin? Draw out a list...

Blame-shift – We will place blame on others.

How do we tend to blame shift? On whom? On what?

This how we tend to respond to having sinned ourselves. We try to cover our sin, to hide from counsel, to shift blame. We refuse the Word of God and the Spirit of God and the people of God. How we need to be humble and receive the grace of God to grant repentance so that we will not respond like Adam and Eve. (Consider 2 Timothy 2:24-26).

Engaging the Person

How do people experience, express and present these kinds of issues? How does the Bible understand the person and their place? What does the Bible

Pay close attention to the Word of God.

Read it carefully. Learn it well. Handle it accurately. Obey it completely. Satan's surrogates will question its accuracy and authority. You must not add to it or take away from it. You must be clear from it who God is and what He promises and provides.

Reject all forms of false counsel.

Eve listened to the quiet, compelling questions and denials of the serpent. Adam listened and obeyed the tempting voice and example of Eve. Eve needed to hold the line and not listen to Satan. Adam needed to hold the line and not listen to Eve. We all need to hold the line of the Scriptures and not listen to false counsel of the world.

Watch over your heart with diligence.

Out of your heart, you act. Out of what you believe and what you want, arise all affections, emotions, choices and actions. Over the patterns of sin in your life, ask the "what was I thinking" questions. What do you believe to be true? What do you want? What appeals to you and why? What pleasures and promises does sin hold out to you that your heart moves toward?

Respond in humble repentance when confronted with godly counsel.

Do not hide your sin, run from counsel or shift blame. We are a culture of skilled blame-shifters. While our families, our childhood, our bodies, our brains, our spouses, our children, our situations, our jobs even our churches may contribute, tempt, test, provoke, be the occasion or the context for sin, they never ever cause sin. Be humble and receive grace to change and grow.

Accept the consequences of sin.

When you have dealt with sin and repented of sin, be willing to live with its consequences. Rejecting the results of sin often is a sign that there has been worldly sorrow, not godly repentance.

Bank your hope on the Redeemer of our souls.

In the darkness and difficulty of sin, turn to Christ. Turn to Him for salvation. Turn to Him for transformation. You are saved and transformed by a Person, by the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the fulfillment of the promises and prophecies begun in Genesis 3. He is all you need. Trust in Him, O sinners and saints today.

Lesson 15-16

Hearts in the Wilderness

Deuteronomy 8; Matthew 4; Numbers 11

Tested through temptation to see if we will obey God from the heart

Introduction

Statement of Topic

The Bible speaks with authority and clarity on...

The wilderness is a hard place and a testing place; but it is a transforming place. Through the situations of life, God's providences are designed to give us opportunities to obey Him from the heart or to expose a sinful heart.

Exposing the Issue

What are the issues, concerns, difficulties that Christian people face? What false wisdoms and perspectives keep them from responding in ways that please God?

How do people tend to respond to the following?

When they are suffering, particularly bodily suffering...

When others sin against them...

When some unexpected financial setback happens...

Expositing the Bible

What does the Bible say about this topic and its related issues?

Heart Exposing Work of the Wilderness ***Deuteronomy 8***

Background: Deuteronomy is three messages preached by Moses just before dying. In these messages he applies the Law and interprets their wilderness experience calling on them to obey the Lord. Verse 1 reiterates the command/blessing system they lived under.

God's Providences in Leading Them (v.2a)

God has led them through the whole wilderness experience. This has been 40 years of chastening due to their disobedience at Kadesh-Barnea. They must understand that the hardships they have experienced are in God's control.

So must we. God is in control of our own wilderness experience. If we are going to have a transforming work done in our hearts, we must believe in the sovereign power and providence of God.

God's Purpose to Humble Them (v.2b)

God's primary aim is to humble His people. He is at work to expose our sin and to humble our pride. He will do whatever it takes to accomplish this aim. God will work to undercut boasting in anything except Himself.

God's Program to Expose Them (v.2c)

God was at work to test them, to expose whether they would obey Him from the heart.

The testing involves measuring their obedience.

Will God's people obey Him regardless of the circumstances? What does it take to get a person to disobey God?

The testing involves exposing their hearts.

God is testing the heart as the root and source of obedience. The sense here is that the outward match inward.

God's Provisions to Test Them (v.3-4)

God has done three important things to test their obedience and their hearts.

Brought them through humbling circumstances.

God humbles His people through their situations and their sins.

He is exposing and transforming a heart full of pride and self-congratulation.

Allowed them to suffer in the lack of basic needs.

God allows them to go hungry to see what they really crave for.

He is exposing and transforming a heart focused on the things of this world.

Provided for them in supernatural ways.

God provides them supernatural bread and sustains shoes and clothing.

He is exposing and transforming a heart that takes God for granted.

Taught them the importance of the Word of God for daily living.

God's people must learn that the Word of God is their daily food, more important even than physical food.

God's Principles to Guide Them (v.5-7ff)

What must we know so as to profit from this obedience testing heart exposing work?

Accept God's paternal child-training. (v.5)

God is doing this as a wise and diligent father. It is chastening in the best and broadest sense. He is not punishing us as a severe judge. He is transforming and training us as a good Father.

Walk in God's ways with holy fear. (v.6)

God delights in an obedience in relationship. This phrase "walk in God's ways" calls us to more than just doing what He says. It draws and demands that we obey and submit with joy in the context of fellowship (1 John 1).

God delights in an obedience with reverence. Obedience from the heart is one that is informed and inspired by an awe and respect for God.

Expect God's blessing in His own time and way. (V.7-10)

God's blessings cannot be demanded. The testing work of the wilderness is designed to weed out demanding hearts that carp and complain.

God's promises will be fulfilled. Make no mistake, He will accomplish what He promises. The ultimate fulfillment will be grander than we can possibly imagine.

God's Precept to Warn Them (v.11-16)

Their hearts are to be organized by remembering what they have been taught and desiring the good the God brings. God's method is to do this through a series of warnings.

Lest we forget God in the midst of plenty. (v.11-16)

A heart satiated with the blessings of God may turn away from being satisfied with God Himself. The good that God does for us may be forgotten with the effect that we turn away in our hearts from God.

Lest we deceive ourselves in the midst of pride (v.17-20)

A heart speaking lies to itself needs to remember truth, repent of sin and return to the Lord.

Notice here how the words remember, forget and say are all heart functions with grave or good consequences.

Heart Confirming Work of the Wilderness

Matthew 4

Matthew structures this section of his book to show that Jesus is the new Israel of God. He is the out of Egypt called son, baptized, pleasing to God and now tested in the wilderness.

Approved by God (3:17)

At the end of the baptism, the Holy Spirit descends like a dove and the Father speaks. In the Father's speech, Jesus is approved by God.

In His Identity

The Father declares that Jesus is the Son of God. His identity is established. This is parallel to Deuteronomy 7.

In His Purity

The Father is pleased with Jesus. God delights in Christ.

Led by the Spirit (4:1)

God is taking Jesus into the wilderness to test Him by exposing Him to Satan's temptations. Through the temptation, Jesus' identity and purity will be challenged.

Follows the Plan of God

Jesus' going into the wilderness follows the plan of God. This is not an accident. It is in accordance with the types in the Old Testament and with what the Scriptures declare.

Serves the Purposes of God

Jesus is led into the wilderness in order to be tested and tried. God's purpose is to vindicate Jesus' identity and purity through this testing.

Weakened by the Fasting (v.2)

It is almost certain that this is a religious exercise. He is fasting, not simply because there is no food, but because he has intentionally chosen not to eat.

Physical weakness is often the situation in which Satan will tempt us. It has the effect of heightening the physical temptations and weakening our spiritual resolve.

Tempted by the Devil (v.3-10)

The temptation is testing to see whether Jesus will obey God from the heart. Like Eve, He is tempted directly. Like Israel, He is tested to expose and exhibit what is in His heart. The Word of God is the bulls-eye in each of these temptations and all the testing.

The temptations are designed to challenge the identity of Christ. "If you are the Son of God" then you ought to be able to do these things. It has the "Come on, prove yourself" effect.

In the Pressing Needs of the Body

(v.3-5)

Jesus is hungry. The body surely is craving food. But the right, natural desires of the body, even at the “craving” level, do not excuse sin. Satan’s temptation frames heart issues for our own temptations:

To exercise His creative power to serve Himself.

His Divine power is not for His own, personal use. It is always to be subjected to the will of God, His Father.

To be impatient for the will of God

God will provide for Jesus in His own time. While Jesus may have the ability to do what Satan is suggesting, it is not the time now. He will wait on God.

To heed the forceful commands of the tempter

Satan offers this first temptation as an imperative. It is spoken as a command. It is meant to see if Jesus will obey Satan to satisfy His body.

To succumb to the demands of the body.

The wants, needs and even cravings of the body are to be in submission to the Word and the will of God.

Jesus’ response in quoting from Deuteronomy 8 is not just an answer to turning stones into bread to satisfy His hunger. It tells us what is actually going on here. He connects His own experience with that of Israel. The wilderness with its hunger is a place to hear and heed the Word of God.

In the Presumptive Misuse of the Scriptures

(v.6-7)

In this temptation, Satan takes Jesus up to the Temple and then, quoting a part of Psalm 91:9-13. Satan tempts Jesus in two significant areas.

By changing the meaning of the text (Psalm 91:9-13)

Satan is changing what the text means – the dwelling place of the Most high is not the building made with hands but the eternal habitation of God who is first the Lord Jesus and the heavenly city of Zion.

By seeking to test God

It is not faith to put oneself in unnecessary danger in order to see if God will do what He says. It is presumption, even in the promises of God, to take risks solely to prove that God will keep His Word.

By attempting to end Jesus’ life early

Satan does not believe that Jesus will be rescued. He thinks that if Jesus does this, then he will probably die. This is another attempt to destroy Jesus before He actually gets to the cross.

In the Perverted Worship of the Lord

(v.8-10)

Satan tempts in three critical areas:

By offering pleasure now instead of the pain now.

Jesus would be responding to the immediate gratification offered by Satan. Is Jesus willing to wait on God's time for the public acknowledgment and acceptance of the Kingdom? This is an issue of the cross. Why not receive all that was promised without having the pain and suffering entailed?

By making promises he cannot and will not keep.

Jesus would be recognizing the illegitimate authority of Satan. Satan has no authority to do this, even as the prince and power of the air.

By eliciting praise he does not deserve or is entitled to.

Jesus would be reverencing Satan instead of worshipping God.

Complaining from a Distorted Heart

Numbers 11

How many of you have gone to a doctor and asked for help with being addicted to grumbling? Do you attend Grumblers Anonymous?

The aim of this text is to show the direct effect of sinful beliefs and wants as it emerges in complaining about the difficulties of life. This is developed by material from Dr. Robert Jones and Dr. David Powlison.

Uncertainty and Danger

Numbers 11:1-3

This short cameo provides the structure to think through Israel's as complaining and grumbling before the Lord.

Situation – what is their life like?

Adversity and difficulty of the desert

Response – what do they do and feel?

Complain about their misfortunes

Heart Issues – what is in their hearts?

Don't believe God's promises

Don't want hardships, won't submit with joy to

Consequences – what is the result?

Lord's anger and judgment of fire around the outskirts of the camp

Provisions – how does God provide?

Moses who believes God's promises and intercedes

Mediator who stands between God's wrath and the sinner.

Boredom and Sameness

Numbers 11:4-35

Moses highlights how the heart is driving their complaining about God's supernatural provision for them (v.4).

Situation – what is provoking their heart?

Same old food over and over again, tasteless manna

Response – what do they do and feel?

They weep, complain, unfavorably contrast their present and past circumstances, diminish the difficulties of the past, and exaggerate the pleasures of Egypt and the pains of the present.

Teacher: draw out the tendencies in each of these responses and relate them to how we tend to do this as well.

Heart Issues – what are they saying to themselves?

Not speaking truth to themselves: Distorted view of Egypt's pleasures and a selective memory of Egypt's hardships

"craved a craving" – sinful craving for Egypt's varied and flavorful foods.

Consequences – what happened as a result?

Displeasure of their spiritual leadership tempting him to sin

Anger of the Lord against their sin

Failed the test of the quail

Sickened by a plague

Provisions – how did God deal with them?

Teaches them contentment by sickening satiation of their craving for meat.

Chastens them to prune and to purify

Stress and Demands

Numbers 11:10-30

Israel's sin is contagious – Moses now complains about his own lot.

Situation – what is the means of temptation?

The complaining of Israel and the righteous anger of the Lord

Response – how does he experience this and express himself?

Experience (feel) – frustrated, angry, overwhelmed, can't win

Express (say, do) – complains to about God, the people and his responsibilities.

Heart Issues – how does he view his situation?

Questions God's wisdom and goodness in giving him the job.

Sees himself as an overburdened parent with bad kids.

Says that the burden and responsibility is too great.

Agrees with the people's assessment of the problem (get meat)

Wants to escape so badly asks God to kill him (suicidal thoughts)

Craves an easy ministry and good people

Consequences – how does God deal with him?

Speaks to him to instruct his heart and re-organize his thinking

Sanctions the leaders he should have been helped by all along

Provisions – what has God provided for Moses?

God affirms the necessity of a plurality of leadership

God enables the leaders by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit

God humbles Moses to recognize the equal work of the Spirit

Applying to Counseling

How do we connect the Scriptures to the sins, struggles and suffering of people? How do these texts shape our approach to the ministry of counseling?

Principle: God may in a single set of circumstances be testing different people in different ways.

The situation here exposes Israel's dissatisfaction with God's provision and Moses' dissatisfaction with God's people. The very same situation is being managed by the exquisite wisdom of God to expose very different heart issues. Help the class to recognize this in all relational dynamics: home, school, work and church.

Summary

God is at work to expose what is in your heart.

He will bring particular times of testing, trial and temptation to show you what is going on in your inner man.

Your heart exerts an inescapable control over your behavior – your actions and emotions.

You live out of the flow of words in your heart. You do and feel what you believe and want. *Teacher:* illustrate this with an example of wanting, denied and anger, frustration, etc resulting.

Physical weakness and vulnerability are special times of testing and temptation for our good.

Our sin is not excused in these times. If anything, we are more accountable because God is doing an intentional work.

Complaining is both a sin and a symptom.

Like communication problems, complaining is an expression of a dissatisfied heart, one dissatisfied with God's providences and provisions, and thus with God.

There is neither task nor trial too great for us to bear; God has made provision for them both.

Israel's troubles in the wilderness and Moses' tasks as leader are carefully weighed out by God to be exactly what is needed. The experience of life as boring and overwhelming expose that our hearts are not organized nor oriented by God's Word.

It is important to note that Israel does not want manna because of what they believe about Egypt. Moses struggles with craving a different kind of ministry or people than God gave him partially because he has refused to recognize the proper role of the elders in Israel, despite Jethro's counsel earlier. This *already exists in their hearts before the situation which exposes it.*

Our great and merciful High Priest has been t e m p t e d just as we are and is able to come to our aid.

Matthew 4 and Hebrews 4 ought to motivate us to come to Christ for help.

Lesson 17

Heart Exposing Questions

Using Questions to Illuminate the Heart

*By Russ Kennedy,
Adapted from Dr. David Powlison*

Introduction

I'm sure that everyone in this room has experienced a parent asking their children questions when there is a fight between the siblings over who gets to play with a toy. In the other room is yelling, pushing, grabbing the toy from each other, and hitting among other things. The first question asked by the parent: "Did you hit your sister"? And the response is always, "No". Why is there a red mark on her cheek"? "I don't know". "Who had the toy first"? And there is the chorus from both of them, "I did". What did this interchange accomplish? Nothing. Surely there are questions that would be more effective in bringing out the truth and helping them learn what God has to say about what just went on?

The Biblical Need for Questions

(Genesis 3:8-23)

Adam and Eve lived in a loving relationship with God (v.8)

They lived in a loving relationship and enjoyed fellowship with God.

God initiated an active pursuit of these sinners.

Sin destroyed that relationship and fellowship because they were afraid of the situation they initiated.

The outcome of sin causes blindness of sin to those who sinned. The temptation did not deliver on all that was promised.

They Needed Questions because of their Sin (v.9-13)

God exposes Adam and Eve through questions. God is not asking in order to learn what He does not know. He is asking penetrating questions in order to give Adam knowledge of himself. The soul is poised to answer questions even if the answer is not spoken out loud. God causes Adam and Eve to face their own sin by exposing it through carefully crafted questions aimed at exposing the heart.

They needed questions around broken relations (v.9-10)

These are questions that ask the “Where are you” around life and life’s relationships. They are designed to show how sin alienates and turns friends into enemies, love into fear, walking with one another into running and hiding from one another.

They needed questions that exposed guilt (v.11a)

These are questions which probe how guilt is working itself out. They are designed to expose the foolish words of counsel, the fake pleasures and false promises. It exposes our exposure.

They needed questions to expose the facts (v.11b-12)

These are questions that gather data about what one did or how one responded. It is meant to get the story straight. They are direct, centering on the precepts. Did you do? Did you say? What happened? It makes the response of Adam even more terrible that in the face of the great wonderful Counselor he attempts to deflect the questions and shift blame.

They needed questions to admit their sin (v.13)

These are questions which draw out admission of sin. They are designed to expose how one is culpable and how one has contributed. They help us see us as being responsible for our own sin and responsible for being the means to tempt, provoke, contribute, and be the occasion of someone else’s sin.

They Needed Questions because of their Responses

Look at how Moses relates the universal sinful responses to sin and guilt.

They denied covering the effects of their sin

How do we tend to cover our sins? Draw out a list of what covering looks like for the students.

They wanted to hide from God – their accuser

How do we tend to avoid or escape our sin? Draw out a list of what hiding from accusers looks like for the students.

They shifted blame to others

How do we tend to blame shift? On whom? On what?

Questions are used to Gather Data

Use these questions to help illuminate the heart as the root of behavior.

Describe the situation?

Who was involved? Where did it happen? What time of day was it? Was anyone tired, especially if it's late at night?

What were you thinking?

I'm tired of ...? I get so mad when I'm around this person? If this happens again, I'm going to let them have it. I want them to hurt more than they've hurt me.

How did you respond?

I yelled and said things I never should have said. I left the room and didn't go near them until they were out of sight. I told all my friends and they agreed with me.

Why did you respond that way?

I can only take so much. Getting even made me feel so good. They deserved everything they got.

What were the results of your response?

It turned into a fight that the neighbors could hear. The things I said made it impossible to have any peace and caused my spouse to clam up. They haven't talked to me since.

What instruction does the Bible have for your response?

It will probably require you teaching and giving input to help them understand what the Bible teaches.

What needs to change?

Again, it will probably require you teaching and giving input to help them understand what the Bible teaches.

How are you going to do what the Bible says?

Again, it will probably require you teaching and giving input to help them understand what the Bible teaches.

Questions to Help Draw out the Heart (Proverbs 20:15)

The primary aim is to draw out what's in the heart.

Look for themes and patterns. The Scriptures give us many windows into the heart and what functionally rules it. Here are a few examples. These questions are meant to help you examine your personal heart themes of thought, motive, and desire so that you will begin to acknowledge the true treasures of your hearts and how those treasures have shaped the way you have responded to God, others, and the situations of life.

What do you fear? What do you worry about? What experience(s) produce anxiety? (Matthew 6:19-34)

When do you struggle with disappointment? What do you say to yourself? What do you say to others? How do you behave? (Proverbs 13:12,19)

When do you get angry? What situations bring out your anger? (James 4:1-2; Proverbs 11:23)

What relationships are difficult for you? How do you respond? (James 4:1-10)

What in your life is difficult and hard to understand or deal with? (1 Corinthians 10:13-14)

What or who do you do your best to avoid? What are the reasons?

In your relationship with God, what problems do you believe you are experiencing? What other things do you struggle with spiritually? (Psalm 73)

When do you doubt the truths of Scripture? What are those doubts? What have you done about it? (Romans 1:25)

What is your agenda for other people in your life? How do you define a "good relationship"? What are your expectations of other people in your life? What do you think and say in your heart about people around you? (James 4:1-2)

What situations bring out the bitterness in you? (Ephesians 4:31; Proverbs 18:19)

What have you regretted in your life? What brings you to say or think, "If I would have only..."?

What do you struggle with letting go of?

When do you envy others? Why? (Proverbs 14:30)

Questions for those who are Suffering (2Corinthians 12:9-10)

Where does God talk about suffering in His Word? Do you believe it, especially for you in your suffering?

Do you believe that God will provide you with all the enabling grace you need during this time of suffering, no matter what the issue, the trial, the pain, and all the other things that you can experience?

Do you believe God shows His power more when you are the weakest or the strongest during these times?

How do you respond, or deal with, your struggles – by putting your best foot forward; trying to do it on your own; or depending on God for his power and mercy?

Is your contentment determined by whether your situation gets better? Are you content even if your situation gets worse?

Do you believe that suffering and hardships are only corrective? Is it possible for suffering and hardships to also be preventative?

Applying to the Person

Use these questions to help illuminate the heart as the root of behavior.

Situation: What was going on?

Behavior: What did you do in response?

Motivation: Why did you do it? What did you want?

Interpretation: What were you thinking?

Consequence: *What was the result?*

Evaluation: *What does the Bible say about this?*

Transformation: *What is needed to be pleasing to God?*

What must I change in my **heart**? How?

What must I change in my **behavior**? How?

As You Counsel:

During your reading and study of Scripture, be aware of all the times that questions are asked. Then ask yourself these questions:

What is the situation?

Does the passage say anything about what someone is thinking, doing, or saying?

What did they want or desire?

What was the outcome for their actions, words, and desires?

How did others respond to the situation, especially to the responses they received?

Were there any spiritual responses? From whom?

Does the Bible have anything to say about the situation?

How could things have been done in such a way that God was pleased?

What questions would you have used in order to get to the heart of the matter for all involved?

Lesson 18

The Christian and their Body

A Foundation for Biblically Approaching Issues
Related to Our Physical Bodies

Tim Nixon

Introduction

God has designed the human body so that it is a finely tuned instrument that is the most resilient on earth. It can endure fractures and adhesions, constant pain and great stretches of abuse.

However, it is a fragile instrument because it is not built to handle excess, whether in the form of nourishment, fuel or additives. Unlike machines, it chokes on poisons when ingested in unending doses and mistaken for fuel. Though it has moving, feeling and thinking parts, they can be misused.

Statement of Topic

The Bible speaks with authority and clarity on these issues. In this lecture we will look at what the Bible teaches both directly and in principle when it comes to food and exercise as it relates to man's physical body.

Exposing the Issue

Food, exercise, and our view of our bodies are significant issues in our Western culture. We worship our chests and abs, but either eat junk food or organic vegetables. Last year Americans spent over 60 billion dollars on weight loss. These idols of food and body worship weigh heavy on the minds of Christians as well.

Expositing the Bible

You were Bought with a Price 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

The body is respected in the Scriptures.

Scripture repudiates the Gnostic idea that matter is evil. Gnosticism taught that spirit is good and matter is evil. Many harmful ideas came from this basic Gnostic teaching which early got a grip upon non-biblical thinkers. Gnosticism was already a problem in New Testament times. Two whole books were written just to refute Gnosticism - the book of Colossians and the book of First John.

The body of the believer is called the temple of the Holy Spirit.

"Don't you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God. You are not your own since you were bought with a price, so glorify God in your body." I Corinthians 6:19

Your body has become a means by which a Christian is capable of glorifying God.

This means that the body, which God calls His, is now to be used for God to do good. The believer has become a slave of Christ in order to be free to do good. The will of the slave is the will of another. Christian—slave of Christ—God wants to be glorified through your body. All of this is basic to our consideration of our physical body.

Use your body to benefit, not harm, God's people.

For example, lifestyle choices we make have both short-term and long-term consequences for our ability to be of service to our families and our church.

In exercising your freedom as a believer, do not become enslaved to anything but Christ.

We know from both Peter and Paul that no foods or beverages are off limits to the believer. However, when we become enslaved/addicted to certain kinds of food, or certain amounts of food, or we take part of such things to the harm of others, we venture into practices which may compromise our commitment to Christ.

What you do with your body, you do with Jesus.

There ought to be a continual awareness that what we choose to do with our bodies, we do with a body that Christ has purchased and redeemed at high cost. In fact, God has placed his Spirit into our bodies, designating them as temples. When standing in the mirror to either gloat over or despise our bodies, we must be conscious that what we do is done with the body that Christ purchased at high cost and died for... we are members of Christ's body.

Diet and Exercise

God has given us a variety of good food to enjoy to his glory.
Genesis 1:29-31, 9:3; 1 Timothy 4:3-5

God gives food to mankind as a common grace blessing. Acts 14:17

God brings people together in fellowship around food.

There is no biblical command to be thin.

The Bible also talks about exercise.

Bodily discipline does have some profit. I Tim. 4:8
Physical exercise is used illustratively of spiritual discipline. I Co. 9:24ff

When Diet and Exercise Become Sin

Gluttony and Overeating

- The excessive love for and use of food. Philippians 3:19
- Gluttony is the little fox of consistent overindulgence. Song of Solomon 2:15
- Gluttony is often associated with other sins. Deuteronomy. 21:20; Psalms. 23:20, 28:7, 23:21; Matthew. 6:25ff;
- Gluttony does not glorify God. 1 Corinthians. 10:31, 6:19-20
- Gluttony is associated with sin. Proverbs 23:19-21
- Not all gluttons are fat.

Excessive devotion to physical fitness can also be sinful

- One's quest to obtain the perfect body can lead to other sins. James 4:6; Ephesians. 4:19; Luke 21:34
- Making everything in your life revolve around your quest for the perfect body.
- Some are legalistic about food. 1 Timothy. 4:3; Colossians 2:16ff
- Those who idolize the perfect body sometimes become anorexic or bulimic.

Food and fitness is not the problem. The root sin is idolatry. Exodus 20:3-5; Philippians 3:19; Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 55:1-2; Ezekiel 14:1-11; Jeremiah 2:13

Food idolatry

Fitness idolatry.

You can be both a glutton and make fitness an idol - exercise bulimia.

Applying to Counseling

Helping the Counselee Seek Change

Our goal is not merely to be thin or to impress other people, but to please and glorify God. Col. 1:28; I Co. 10:31; II Co. 5:9

It is not what you eat which makes you a sinner, but what is in your heart. Mark 7:14ff; Js. 1:14ff; Jer. 17:10

The change we seek is not outward and physical but inward and spiritual.

Seek first God's kingdom and don't worry (think) so much about food. Mt. 6:33

Change takes place through the means of exerting effort and acting obediently. Romans 6:12-13, 8:13, 13:14; Titus 2:11-12

Some wrongfully stop with the indicative, declaring what God has done for us in Christ, while neglecting the imperatives of what God calls us to do.

Immediately after telling us to consider our identity in Christ, Paul exhorts us to take action against the lusts of the flesh.

Repent (put off). Isaiah 55:6-7, 1:18; 2 Corinthians 10:5; 1 John 5:21

- Stop blaming God for your failure. James 1:13
- Repent of food and body idolatry. I Co. 6:12-13, 10:12; Pr. 16:8, 11:2; Js. 4:6; Acts 12:22ff
- Learn to resist inward temptation. I Cor. 10:12-13; James 1:14ff; Mt. 26:41
- Take radical steps to remove outward temptation. Mt. 5:29-30
- Whatever cannot be eaten in faith is sin. Rom. 14:23

Put on glorifying God in your eating and how you care for your body. Titus 2:11-12

- Love the LORD and feast (spiritually) at His table.
Ps. 16:11, 1:2, 73:25, 42:2, 63:1; Prov. 9:1ff; Isa. 6:4, 26:9, 55:1-2; John 6:53ff; Ecc. 6:7
- Express prayerful dependence upon God for your food and health.
Mt. 6:11; Ps. 40:17, 69:33, 72:13
- Never eat without giving thanks for the food God gives you.
1 Timothy. 4:3-5; 1 Corinthians 10:30-31, 11:24
- Be content with the quantity and quality of food God provides for you.
1 Timothy. 6:6ff; Philippians 4:11
- Be content with the body God has given you.
Psalm 139:13-14
- Live a life of self-discipline/control.
1 Corinthians. 9:27; Galatians. 5:22-23; 2 Peter 1:5-7,9
- Honor God with your body. 1 Corinthians. 3:16-17, 6:20
- Your motive for obedience is crucial.
- Look forward to the day when these bodies will be perfected. Phil. 3:21

Summary

Food is important.

Food is a symbol of our need of God.

God wants us to change and to bear fruit for His glory.
John 15:8

The gospel is the key to change.
Romans 6:11; John 15:1ff; Isaiah 55:1-2

We are responsible to exert effort to change.
Matthew 14:22-33

Lesson 19-20

Basic Elements in Counseling Sessions

Counseling Basics for the First Session and Beyond

Russ Kennedy

Introduction

So you are ready to begin meeting with people to do Biblical Counseling. How do you begin with people? How are you going to start? What do you want to accomplish in the first session? How do you follow up sessions?

Some Cautions

We do not rely on techniques.

Too often new counselors want how to steps to get to an end product...

We do not rely on other's abilities or ways.

You must not mimic what I or other counselors do...

We do not rely on counseling issues manuals.

While we do produce helpful books and guides, you are engaged in a relational engagement...

We do share wisdom...

This lecture will help you with the practical process of meeting with people.

Guidelines for the First Session

How to get started...

Preparation

Have the following with you.

- Bible – basic tool for counseling
- Paper – to take notes. Do not use a spiral bound. Put loose leaf paper in binder.
- Pen or pencil – if you take notes in pencil, you will need to copy them to preserve them
- Notes – if you have notes or other written information, have them with you. Be diligent. You are a steward of the information you are given.

Love – Establish Relationship

I am here...

Explain to them that you are here to:

Listen to them...

Ask them questions...

They should expect you to ask them questions.

Clarify any confusions...

You may ask about the same thing many different ways.

Interpret the issues according to God's Word...

You will regularly be helping them to see things with new eyes.

Share with them what God says in their issues...

Notice “in” not “about”.

Represent God and His agenda...

You are not an advocate for someone in or not in the counseling session.

You do not have a personal agenda for them.

You will be honest with them.

They are here...

Explain what you expect of them.

They must be willing to talk...

The Word and words are the way God works in people. Without them talking you will NOT be able to help them.

They must be honest...

Most will not be truthful – most will initially try to minimize their faults and maximize the faults of others or their situation.

They will need their Bibles...

You will want them to turn to texts, to read texts, to mark texts.

They must be willing to change...

If they are here only to see someone else change, then they need to repent.

They must be willing to work...

This time with them will only start change. Real change takes place in life.

What they should expect of me.

I will love them enough to tell them the truth.

I will keep Biblical confidentiality

I will admit when I don't know something and will do my best to find out while keeping Biblical confidentiality

I will not knowingly or deliberately offend them

I will be faithful to the Word of God.

I will be taking notes, and at times, they will be detailed. I may ask you to stop while I catch up or ask you to repeat what you just said. I'm trying to make sure I understand your answers accurately.

God is here...

He has designed this moment...

He speaks in His Word...

He listens to our speech...

He wants us to be pleasing to Him...

He hears our prayers...

Pray...

Simple, short, to the point, about the session. Talk to God. Don't preach.

Know - Gathering Data

Getting started to know, understand and interpret the issue(s)

Always seeking to move toward the heart while being sure that you know what you need to know.

Halo data - Observe their body language

How are they carrying themselves? How do they sit? Do they look at you?

Watch as they answer your questions. Do they look away? Do they look at others in the session? Spouse?

Initial Questions

You want to open by getting them to talk...

Tell me about your problem...

Tell me your story...

If you have two people give both of them an opportunity to tell the story. Discourage interruptions but allow clarifications.

What have you done about it?

Who have you talked to? What have you read?

Did you pray about it? Have you asked God to help you? To give you grace? To give you wisdom? James 1-2

How can I help?

The point here is to determine:

What are their expectations?

How do they think about their problem?

Do they see their problem(s) as hopeless?

Follow up questions

Here are some things to think about in following up.

Ask questions on the issue they have presented.

You may discern that this is merely a presentation issue and all about fruit, but it is their experience of the issue.

Begin to ask questions that reframe worldly, psychologized language.

Only do it in order to shift the focus onto Biblical language.

“I think one of my real problems is with low self-esteem...”

“How does the Bible address the issue of self-esteem? Can you take me to Scriptures that would support your diagnosis?”

Ask questions that begin moving towards the heart.

Help me understand...?

Why do you think you...?

What would you say you wanted... expected... hoped for...?

Session Notes

It's a good idea to take careful notes and many of them during the first session. There will be many questions asked and answered during this first session. Ask them to be patient with you if you get behind on note taking. Let them know you are concerned to get all the information recorded so you can do your best to help them. It's very difficult to recall the details after that session ends.

If there is something the person says that is critical, you will want to write that as accurately as possible. It is good for you to record it in the words they use. It can help you in evaluating their word usage, as well as having the capability to quote them word for word when they deny that they said that.

I number the notes I take. I put what they say on one side of the paper. I put my notes about what they say on the other side with the same number.

At the bottom of the page I organize the information around the Data Organizing tool. I organize the numbers around the box depending on what I am hearing. I might also write a "Q" by something I want to ask about.

Speak – Giving Hope and Help

In the first session you will rarely begin solving the problem. You will want to do the following:

Giving Hope

It is important to give hope that God is at work and that He will work in their situation. Counselees are often hopeless at the beginning. They believe their situation is hopeless. It has been going on for so long and things seem to get worse instead of better.

"Hope is conveying an assurance that God is working good in our lives for His glory and our growth in Christ." (MacDonald, Kelleman & Viars, 2013). p. 332

All hope is found in the Scriptures

The hope that a Biblical counselor gives is in Jesus Christ, not from the world..

It is based on the unfailing promises of God given to us in the Scriptures.

God is the Counselor Who guides and directs through His Word.

Using Biblical terminology, going to the Scriptures for help with those situations, brings hope that the Scriptures really do have the answers.

Hope is given by teaching the 3 tree model.

Helps the person to see how the Lord is at work.

Hope is a Biblically-based expectation of good (Romans 4:18-21)

God is the source of all hope. (Romans 15:13-14)

It is the result of true salvation (1 Timothy 1:1)

God is faithful (1 Corinthians 10:13)

God says come and He will provide all that is needed in our time of need (Hebrews 4:14-16)

Other Scriptures that speak of hope: Psalm 42:5; Romans 15:4; Philippians 1:6; 2 Corinthians 4:8-9; Hebrews 10:23; Luke 1:35-37; Luke 1:37.

Giving Help

Here is how to start giving help.

Establish the primary goal – to be pleasing to God

No matter what happens, the aim is for each person to be pleasing to God.

Connect one bit of life to one bit of Scripture

Take one issue, statement, problem, piece of the problem...

Go to a paragraph or a verse of Scripture that speaks to that...

Deal with the most easily changed issue

Identify and work with an issue or a problem that the person can get victory over this week.

Teach the Three-Tree model with the presentation problem

You must master the Three-Tree model. Be able to draw it in your sleep.

Situation – the facts of the situation surrounding their issue

Fruit/Thorns – the responses in what they did (actions) and how they felt (emotions)

Heart – (1) What did they want? (2) What were they thinking, believing, treasuring?

Cross/Stream – (1) What scriptures? (2) What to believe? (3) How to bow?

Heart and Tree – What initial possibilities for pleasing God?

Identify and give homework on the most damaging issue

For the most difficult or damaging issue, give them an initial growth and change assignment using the guidelines for homework, below.

Do - Growth and Change in Life

How is God beginning to change them in the midst of real life and living,

Address

Are they ready to address the problem? Are they willing to continue?

Confess

Are there sins or offenses to confess?

Forgive

Are there sins and offenses to forgive?

Connect

Are they attending a good church fellowship? If not, then they should start immediately and even better if your own church. Counselees grow in the context of church life not merely in the context of counseling sessions.

This is a permanent part of homework. A counselee must be gathering with God's people. If they **refuse** then I will meet with them one more time and that is the subject of counseling for that next session. If they continue to refuse, then counseling is over.

Homework –

(See section on homework on p. 131)

Homework should be given each session, even this first session. It may be simple, but it must be something that helps them have some kind of success in their situation during the week.

Try to choose things are easily done, if the counselee really wants to do them.

Take into consideration their ability to read and comprehend. Perhaps his wife could help him by reading to him. This actually has some benefits. This may be one of the first times they have communicated civilly in a long time.

Before ending the session, talk to your counselees about the issues that need to be addressed in coming sessions. This lets them know there is an agenda, and there is a plan of action. This will probably come from your sessions notes – remember your red pen.

Follow-Up Sessions

Here are some guidelines for the follow-up sessions.

Prepare to Meet

- Based on homework given, prepare agenda.
- Based on notes taken, prepare topics for questions.
- Based on topics, prepare questions and possible Scriptures.
- Develop tentative homework
- Develop what you want them to journal
- Be prepared to change your agenda depending on what is doing.

Opening the Sessions

Welcome and note if they have Bible and homework

Prayer

Execute your Agenda

Love - Affirm loving relationship

Remind them of God's love for them...

Remind them that you are praying and hoping for them...

Know - Data Gathering

Review Homework

Homework is part of your counseling agenda.

Always deal with homework. If they didn't do it, then:

1. If is early in counseling, teach again on the value of homework and reassign
2. If is later in counseling, you can end the session and let them use the time to begin or complete the homework

Connect your present questions to:

- Their homework
- The last session
- The Word of God

Ask "What has God been doing in your life since we met?"

- Do not ask "How is it going?" What do you expect to hear from that question that will keep you on track and not let them seize control of the agenda?
- Can they begin to see God at work?
- Are they consumed with their issues and blinded to God's working?

Listening – What am I hearing?

Note these key issues as they become known. Explore them in more detail being sensitive to the timing and depth of your exploration.

Listen for issues that make the counselee angry or defensive

You will be exposing heart issues, heart idols, areas of Spirit conviction...

Listen for when the counselee is closed and self-protective

Note defensive statements...

Note deflecting statement...

Don't fill the silences.

Listen for instances when the counselee places blame for his own behavior at the feet of others.

They will vigorously justify their own sin in the face of another's mistreatment.

They hide behind the sins of others.

Listen for occasions when the counselee has clearly erected a logical defense of his viewpoint and actions.

Many times people come for help, but don't really want it. They want counsel, but reject the counsel they receive. They debate when questioned. They argue...

Listen for evidence of an inaccurate view of self.

They believe they are better than they really are. Pride is evident.

Sometimes they believe they are lower than a worm. Pride is also evident.

Listen for a functional distortion in the counselee's view of God.

They develop their theology from their experiences. They say they believe one thing (their confessional theology) and act differently from what they say they believe (their functional theology). They will defend this functional theology because there's a ring of truth that fits their view of life

Many fall into cynicism of God and He becomes someone who is not worthy of worship or respect.

Listen to uncover the distortions the counselee thinks about his situation.

They have their objective view of their situation. Everyone is an interpreter of life and they have made sense out of what has gone on. This makes sense to them. Listen for interpretations of their situation. Listen for the purposes and goals. What do they want? What do they want out of life?

Speak – Discuss, develop, declare

Using the Three-Tree model, discuss, develop and when necessary admonish, challenge, and correct. Always think in terms of the comforts and calls of the gospel.

Identify sinful behavior

Show what God says about their actions and emotions

Expose heart issues

Show how what they what and believe are the sources of their sin and folly

Call for repentance

Put off -> Change thinking -> Put on

Do – Practical steps for growth and change

How can change and growth be effected over the next few hours and days?

A Plan for Holiness

How will this person(s) avoid temptation, stop presenting themselves to sin and start presenting themselves to God to do what is right.

A Plan for Wisdom

How can this person(s) wisely reorient their lives so that they can stop being foolish and live wisely?

Assigning Homework

Journaling	gathering data between sessions
Memorizing	memorizing Scripture to encourage or exhort them in their situation
Studying	studying texts of Scripture which speak to their situation
Restoring	confessing to those sinned against, forgiving those who sinned against you, reconciliation, restoration, renewal
Connecting	attending church gatherings, developing discipling relationships

Homework – or Growth and Change Activities

The importance of homework

“From the very outset they [counselees] are required to do what God expects of them in the light of Scripture and in dependence upon the power of the Holy Spirit. The counselor does not do their work for them. He coaches them; he is a shepherd who leads his sheep. Yet they do the work. He insists that they learn to “work out their salvation” (solution) through obedience to God and dependence upon his aid. Homework puts the emphasis where it belong – upon the counselee’s responsibility to God and his neighbor” (Adams, Jay 1973, *The Christian Counselor’s Manual*, 1973) p. 306

- Homework keeps the counselee active
- Homework keeps him in Scripture
- Homework engages his heart
- Homework makes him responsible for his behavior
- Homework makes him participate actively during every phase of counseling.
- Homework is not an option. It is not an adjunct to the normal biblical counseling process. It is a vital part of productive biblical counseling.
- It says you believe things can be different, beginning right now.
- The homework assignments may become the subject of future counseling sessions.

Here are some of the benefits for homework. (Adams, pp. 301-310)

- Regular homework assignments set a pattern for expectations of change.
- Homework clarifies expectations.
- Homework enables the counselor to do more counseling more rapidly.
- Homework keeps counselees from becoming dependent upon the counselor.
- Homework enables both the counselor and the counselees to gauge progress or lack of it.
- Homework allows the counselor to deal with problems and patterns that develop under controlled current conditions.

The mechanics of homework.

It must be specific

It must involve the thinking level (heart issues) as well as the objective level (behavior issues).

It must be appropriate to the problems.

It is always assigned at the end of each session.

Prayer – for the counselor, counselees, others who are involved
Church attendance and sermon notes.
Bible verses – memorized and able to explain what they teach.
Bible reading – an everyday habit.

What about counselees who do not complete their homework?

Find out where the problem lies.

You, the counselor?

- Did the counselee understand the homework? Did I explain the assignment in enough detail?
- Was the counselee capable to complete the homework?
- Was the homework appropriate?

The counselees?

- Were there any legitimate circumstances that prohibited the time to complete it? What were they?
- What reasons were there given for not completing the homework? Asking questions will probably show areas of sinful habits or behavior that needs to be on the agenda.
- Is the counselee diligent in pursuing counseling?
- Get their commitment to complete the assignment. The first half of the current counseling session will be terminated. They are sent to another room to complete the parts of their homework that can be done. After the half-hour, they will return and the homework will be evaluated.
- Explain again the importance of homework and its place in the entire process. Reassign the homework, revising as needed.
- If the assignment is not completed for the next session and they weren't providentially hindered, explain again the important place homework has in their changing and becoming more like Christ. Terminate future counseling session. Tell them you would be happy to continue the counseling but not until the homework is completed. They are to call for another appointment as soon as they are ready to get completely involved again.

Summary

Counseling is an on-the-job training ministry.

Counseling requires preparation and flexibility. You believe you have insight. You prepare for your sessions, and your counselees will bring something up that happened that has nothing to do with what you prepared for this session.

There is much to learn and you are always learning more each day.

The enabling grace of God in your experience, abilities and gifts Biblical counseling profitable.

Continue to read. Continue to grow. Continue to lean on Christ and His Word. Pray much. Enjoy and thank God for His work in your life and in those with whom you work.

Initial Session

Preparation

Love – Establish Relationship

I am here...

Listen to them...

Ask them questions...

Clarify any confusions...

Interpret the issues according to God's Word...

Share with them what God says in their issues...

Represent God and His agenda...

They are here...

They must be willing to talk...

They must be honest...

They will need their Bibles...

They must be willing to change...

They must be willing to work...

What they should expect of me.

God is here...

Pray...

Know - Gathering Data

Halo data - Observe their body language

Initial Questions

Tell me about your problem...

What have you done about it?

How can I help?

Follow up questions

Ask questions on the issue they have presented.

Begin to ask questions that reframe worldly, psychologized language.

Ask questions that begin moving towards the heart.

Session Notes

Speak – Giving Hope and Help

Giving Hope

All hope is found in the Scriptures

Hope is given by teaching the 3 tree model.

Hope is a Biblically-based expectation of good (Romans 4:18-21)

Giving Help

Establish the primary goal – to be pleasing to God

Connect one bit of life to one bit of Scripture

Deal with the most easily changed issue

Teach the Three-Tree model with the presentation problem

Identify and give homework on the most damaging issue

Do - Growth and Change in Life

Address

Confess

Forgive

Connect

Homework –

Follow-Up Sessions

Prepare to Meet

Opening the Sessions

 Welcome and note if they have Bible and homework

 Prayer

Execute your Agenda

 Love - Affirm loving relationship

 Remind them of God's love for them...

 Remind them that you are praying and hoping for them...

 Know - Data Gathering

 Review Homework

 Ask "What has God been doing in your life since we met?"

 Listening – What am I hearing?

 Speak – Discuss, develop, declare

 Identify sinful behavior

 Expose heart issues

 Call for repentance

 Do – Practical steps for growth and change

 A Plan for Holiness

 A Plan for Wisdom

 Assigning Homework

Self-Esteem, Self-Image and Self-Worth

As Negative Self-Evaluations

BY DR. DAVID POWLISON

ADAPTED AND EXPANDED BY: RUSS KENNEDY

Introduction

The basic material which has become this lecture was given as a workshop at the 2012 CCEF Conference. It was taught by Dr. David Powlison. The following material is based on that discussion with my own observations, expressions, etc added in.

“How do you see yourself?” This is a crucial question.

This is process question – how is it that we do see ourselves? What enables us to have a self view and valuation?

Conscience is the ability of the soul to make evaluations

A function of the soul that observes, weighs, and responds to what is going on in the inner and outer man.

Part of the function of conscience is the declaration made according to how we are taught.

Old Testament uses metaphors around evaluating:

Before whose eyes to do you stand?

Tasting God and His goodness as a way of evaluating Him...

Tasting also reveals our appetites and our preferences...

We are constantly evaluating:

God

- weighing Him according to a value system

Others

- critiquing, judging others based on a value system

Ourselves

- weighing and evaluating ourselves

“Low self-esteem” is a serious problem.

There is a language of the heart that is labeled "low- self-esteem" which is essentially weighing ourselves in the light of a value system and finding ourselves wanting.

How can we explain it?

Take a moment to see how the class generally will respond to these three questions:

How does the world explain it?

How do Christians explain it?

How does the Bible explain it?

How do we diagnose it?

What are the symptoms of a negative self view?

Get a list of “symptoms” from the class.

Listen and point out how it is all hovering around a standard

Listen and point how it is all self-focused – “I am... I am not...” language

How can we solve it?

What is the world’s solution?

How do Christian’s merge the world and the Word?

Identify the value system

All evaluations are based on some system of values, treasures, what is considered to be precious, important

To what is the person comparing/contrasting themselves

“I am not...”

“I wish I were...” or “I wish I had...” – why?

Examine its validity.

Where does the value system come from?

Who is informing the value system?

Who is the champion/hero of the value system?

What authorizes/authenticates that system?

Trace its effects.

What does this negative evaluation produce?

Is it filled with good fruit or bad fruit?

**The world's answers seem plausible...
(IF there is no God).**

Life is evaluated in self-terms

I am my own god...

So why don't you worship me?

Worth is evaluated in horizontal terms

I am my own treasure...

So why don't you value me?

Others.....

I am my own glory, why don't I matter to you?

I am my own center, why don't you orbit around me?

And...

**A whole raft of self-_____ solutions which are all
horizontally oriented**

The devastating problem with the world's view of "self-esteem" is that it is entirely horizontally oriented and primarily self-oriented.

What are the "self-__" words actually describing?

self--esteem, self--worth, self--love, self--confidence, self--image...

Turns worship away from God to the self.

Tend to be "Hi - Lo" - I love/hate myself

These words are essentially words of worship.

The verbs of these nouns are what we do with God. We are to love, esteem, and have confidence in God.

What other language is used?

Self-image, Self-concept

Verbal and visual construction of ourselves.

That we do this is reflective of the Trinity where Christ is the image of God.
When God thinks of Himself, those thoughts are the Word.

Tendency to have "good and bad" as adjectives

What truth has been robbed from God?

Where did the idea come from? What truth has been co-opted by the world? What distortion, dilution or exchange has taken place? How does the Bible frame the issue of worth, value, self-view, self-evaluation?

What is better language?

Self-knowledge

True self-knowledge is implied and grounded in Scriptural indicatives and imperatives. You must know who you are and how you are doing.

Romans 12:3-8 – of our place gifts, ministry and place in the Body

Romans 12:16 —

¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight.

Philippians 2:3–5 —

³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,

Has an implicit moral aspect

Helps us remember that all judgment/evaluation is moral.

All moral judgment is loaded with temporal and eternal import.

Moves us towards "true/distorted/false" language.

It is not "good/bad" self-knowledge

It is true/real/false/distorted self-knowledge

Moves towards "accurate/inaccurate"

Speak the truth to ourselves...

Weigh and evaluate ourselves in the light of the truth.

Self-valuation then is weighed in the light of this self-knowledge. But it will still be weighed against a set of values

What is a better explanation?

Commend struggle - in our struggles are we struggling towards and with God?

Whose eyes evaluate you?

Whose eyes matter?

o-----o	vs	Δ
---------	----	---

When God's gaze is primary, then the gaze of others becomes a secondary good not a primary need.

What standards are you measured by?

We must remember who is behind all the mischief - the *liar* who is behind all lies.

What is a better solution?

What is your value system that you measure/evaluate by?

5 foot ladders leaning against 20 foot walls

Culture provides alternative ladders -

Ex. The high value of edgy, zinger put-downs...

Christianology provides weakened or short ladders

Substitute human law for Biblical commands

Substitute human advice for Biblical wisdom

What does it feel like to be evaluated?

Our response to evaluation reveals an aspect of our value system...

How you handle criticism...

People need the mercy and grace of self-knowledge...

What makes you "OK"?

We launch self-salvation projects

We inflate our own positive alignment to our values

We deflate our own negative alignment with God's values

We accurately assess ourselves in God's eyes as shown in His Word

How do we come to an accurate self-knowledge?

Self-knowledge is best developed in the context of community

Others help us to have accurate self-knowledge

Hebrews 3:12–14 —

¹² Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. ¹³ But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. ¹⁴ For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.

Others help us to inform our value system

1 Peter 1:22–23 —

²² Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, ²³ since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God;

What is the goal of fruitful personal growth and of counseling?

Granting of eyesight to have true self-knowledge

Giving of a Biblically informed value system

Cultivating a good conscience

Growing in an accurate self-knowledge about our graces and gifts, our strengths and weakness

Profiting from the evaluation of others

Weighing constructive criticism

Subordinating opinion of others

Encouraged by the right kind of Christian affirmation

How do we handle self-condemnation?

1 John 3:19-24

¹⁹ By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him;

²⁰ for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything. ²¹ Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; ²² and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. ²³ And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. ²⁴ Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.

The Triangle

God's evaluation is to be accepted over self-evaluation

Confidence towards God from a clear conscience

The Gospel

Believe in God - His evaluation

Love others - grace in relations to others

Getting down to cases

How does this work in helping people...

In what way do you show love and grace to someone who self-diagnosis is “low self-esteem”?

How do you reframe the problem?

What questions can lead to fruitful self-knowledge?

How do you interact with the pervasive cultural language?

How do you disconnect them from “self” and connect them to God?

Thinking it Through

How does this challenge you?

How does this change you?

What Scriptures have come to mind?

As supporting the world's view?

As critiquing/exposing the world's view?

Do you have accurate self-knowledge?

In prizing community?

In evaluating yourself by Scripture?

In believing and desiring along the trajectory of the Scripture?

Dealing with Guilt

Your Beliefs about Guilt Determine Your Philosophy for Counseling

GREG COOK

Introduction – Why is this subject important?

Guilt is one of the main subjects about which counseling philosophies are built. Why is this subject so important to counseling?

Because so many people say that it is not an important subject

We are so prone to shift the blame to others that we would say that someone who has murdered his friend is not to blame, he had a bad childhood. That's the real problem; his environment. But is it?

Because if guilt is not handled properly, it distorts other problems

Dealing with guilt is a pre-requisite for worship. Matt. 5:23-26.

God is more concerned that we are reconciled to our brother than His is about our worship.

Guilt hinders our social relationships

Guilt produces ungratefulness, resentment, bitterness, hatred, unreasonable expectations, and disappointments.

Your view of guilt will determine how you respond when:

You are wrong and are confronted about it.

Is guilt useful or not?

Your child is wrong and you are informed by his teacher.

Are you going to protect him from the consequences and shield him from the hurt?

You “feel” guilty even though you aren’t sure why.

Experts tell you that you are suffering from false guilt.

The World's Views of Dealing with Guilt

Man's views of guilt come from an unbiblical understanding regarding the nature of guilt.

People only see the “sense” or “feeling” of guilt, not the guilt itself. Guilt is defined as a “feeling”.

They do not recognize that the cause of guilt is an offended God.

They disregard the conviction of the Holy Spirit and their own accountability to God.

The experts suggest dealing with the symptoms or “feelings” of guilt by:

Explaining it away

Using a corporate view of sin – “We have a problem”.

By describing it as sickness.

By attributing it to a bad set of genes

Or by mislabeling it as anxiety attacks, panic attacks, etc.

Desensitizing the counselee to it

By encouraging the person to sin even more thereby turning the blisters of guilt into calluses of no guilt.

By masking the feelings of guilt with mind-altering chemicals

By using labels and terms that give the person excuses for their behavior.

By using shock treatments or conditioning.

Building up a good self-image in the counselee

Blame-shifting the guilt to someone or something else.

Individuals deal with the symptoms or “feelings” of guilt by:

Engaging in a pity-party, usually getting someone else to agree with them that they are right

Searing their consciences by sinning all the more causing a hardening of the heart.

Running, hiding, and staying busy (usually an excess of busyness).

Denying the fact of accountability to God and that they have sinned against Him.

The Biblical Understanding of Guilt

The definition of guilt:

Guilt is the liability or culpability to punishment for wrongdoing. This has nothing to do with “feelings” or “results” or “effects”.

All guilt is real

There is no such thing as false guilt. There are facts that are true with regard to God's standards. The primary fact is that a Holy God has been offended.

Guilt and feelings

A person may or may not experience “feelings” associated with guilt.

“Feelings” are produced by the conscience in order to warn the person that something is wrong and needs to be dealt with. (Ps 38:1-8)

Whether a person “feels” guilty is not important.

Guilt is when God's standards are broken.

There can be “feelings” of guilt even when no standard has been broken. These are defined by the world as “false guilt”.

They are not false guilt. Anytime someone goes against what they believe to be wrong, their conscience condemns them. Their conscience is doing its God-given job. They are going against a standard – albeit a wrong standard. The answer is not to convince them that they have false guilt, but to move them to a Biblical standard – to retrain the conscience.

When someone complains that they “feel” guilty, the counselor must move them from this presentation phase into the performance phase to determine the true reason why they feel guilty.

Facts and guilt.

Through the facts, the counselor or person can determine that there has been a breaking of God’s commands.

There is the objective standard of God’s written Word against which the facts of the behavior can be compared.

Through the facts, the counselor or person can determine if the standard against which they are comparing their behavior is truly a Biblical standard or a wrong standard. The remedy for each of these guilty conditions differs to some extent.

The Procedure for Dealing with the Guilt of Breaking God’s Commands

The first step is repentance.

There is an acknowledgment of sin. (Psalm 51:1-4; Proverbs 28:13-14; 1 John 1:7-9)

This acknowledgment is accompanied with Godly sorrow (a broken and contrite heart – 2 Corinthians 7:10).

The second step is confession of sin and asking for forgiveness.

Confession first to God seeking forgiveness (Ps 51).

Confession to anyone else against whom the person sinned (Matthew 5:23-24).

The procedure for confession is:

Acknowledge that you have sinned against the other person or persons.

As a general rule, you should confess your sins to every person who has been directly affected by your wrongdoing. Let them know that you realize what you have done and that it was wrong. Example: “I was wrong for not listening to you when you were talking to me.”

Avoid IF, BUT, and MAYBE.

The best way to ruin a confession is to use words that shift the blame to others or that otherwise attempt to minimize or excuse your guilt. Example: “I’m sorry if I’ve done something to upset you.” Or “I know I was wrong, but so were you!”

Identify your specific sin(s) by its (their) biblical name(s). Be specific.

The more precise you are when making a confession, the more likely you are to receive a positive response. Being specific will help you identify clearly the behavior you need to change. Make it a point to deal with attitudes as well as actions. Using biblical terminology, let the person know that you realize your sin was also a violation of God’s Word and therefore, a sin against Him. Example: “When I criticized you last night about your attitudes, I not only hurt you, but I sinned against God as well. I have disobeyed His command not to slander and not to attribute motives to others. Only God can see the heart.”

Acknowledge the harm your offense caused the other person.

Show remorse for the hurt your sin has caused. To be most effective, you should show how the other person felt as a result of your words and/or actions. Example: “You must have been terribly embarrassed when I said those things in front of everyone. I really am sorry that I hurt and rejected you.”

Indicate your willingness to accept the consequences for your actions/words.

Otherwise, the person against whom you have sinned may assume that you are simply trying to be released from your responsibilities. Example: “Beginning this evening, I will call everyone I talked to and admit that my statements were not true.”

Identify an alternative biblical behavior to demonstrate repentance.

One of the best ways to demonstrate to the other person that you have repented (changed your mind) is by letting them know you have thought through a more biblical option than the one for which you are about to ask them for forgiveness. Example: “I should have asked you what you were thinking and if you were trying to hurt me before I began to accuse you of trying to start an argument.”

Ask for forgiveness.

This step puts the ball in the other person’s court. (It’s as if you are saying, “Are you going to obey God and forgive me or aren’t you?”) Be careful that you are not using this question as a means to pressure the other person into a decision he or she is not ready to make. Some people can forgive an offense almost instantaneously, while others need some time to work through their feelings and thoughts.

Example: “Will you please forgive me? I know I have deeply hurt you, and I can understand why you would have a hard time forgiving me. I hope that you will soon be able to forgive me, because I want very much to be reconciled. In the meantime, I will pray for you. Also, I will repair the damage I caused as quickly as possible, and with God’s help, I will work to overcome my temper. If there is anything else I can do to make this right, please let me know.”

The third step is being reconciled to the person offended and to restore brokenness.

Paul agreed to pay Philemon whatever Onesimus owed after his conversion (Phile 1:18-19). Matt 5:23-24 teaches that not only is there the command for forgiveness, but there is the command for reconciliation, as well.

In the O.T., the offender was not normally allowed to enjoy the fruits of his sin.

Making restitution shows the lost world that sin will be dealt with.

Genuine conversion produces a willingness to make things right with the person offended.

The fourth step is making changes in your behavior.

True repentance brings about behavior appropriate to that repentance (Luke 3:8-14).

Making changes in behavior requires a change of heart (Matthew 15:17-20).

Making changes in behavior requires the put on/put off dynamic (Ephesians 4:22-24)

The Procedure for Dealing with the Guilt of Sinning Against Your Conscience

The first step is repentance.

There is an acknowledgment of the sin of not doing something or doing something that is not from faith. (Romans 14:23).

Even though what the person did was not against the standard of God, the person thought is was and did it anyway. That is the sin of rebellion against God.

This acknowledgment is accompanied with Godly sorrow (a broken and contrite heart – 2 Corinthians 7:10).

The second step is confession to God of the sin of rebellion against Him and asking for forgiveness.

The third step is to retrain the weak conscience which has a faulty understanding of God's standard with what the Scriptures actually teach in order to strengthen the weak conscience.

Forgiveness

Asking for forgiveness is not the same as apologizing.

An apology is an inadequate, humanistic substitute for forgiveness.

Saying, "I'm sorry" is a human dodge for doing what God commands – seeking forgiveness.

An apology elicits an inadequate response from the one to whom the apology is given.

Making an apology does not require any response from the person offended. There is no reconciliation established and guilt remains.

Granting forgiveness promises three things:

I will not bring up the offence to others;

I will not bring up the offense again to the offender for the purpose of injuring the offender;

I will not bring up the offense to myself.

The person offended is required to forgive

Just as Christ forgave them (Ephesians 4:32)

Without excuses or requirements (Lk 17:3-10)

Forgive him if he repents

Forgive him without requiring a period of time in order to see if the offender has really repented and changed

Forgive him whether you think you have enough faith or not

Forgive him whether you feel like it or not

Forgive him as many times as he repents and seeks your forgiveness

Forgiveness facilitates forgetting

We cannot will ourselves to forget.

Forgetting is a passive human response to the active response of not remembering.

We can make the promise that God makes in Jer 31:34 and Heb 10:17 to choose not to remember their sins any more.

In time, as we choose not to remember, and the offender has had a change of behavior, we will forget.

What are some reasons for not “feeling” forgiven

We do not believe God’s Word

We have not sorrowed over the sin

We are holding bitterness against God

We have not made any restitution or reconciliation

We have no plan for change and therefore, think that it is going to happen again.

We have failed to forgive others (Matt 6:15)

What are some consequences for not forgiving others

Self-pity

Anger

Bitterness

Guilt and depression

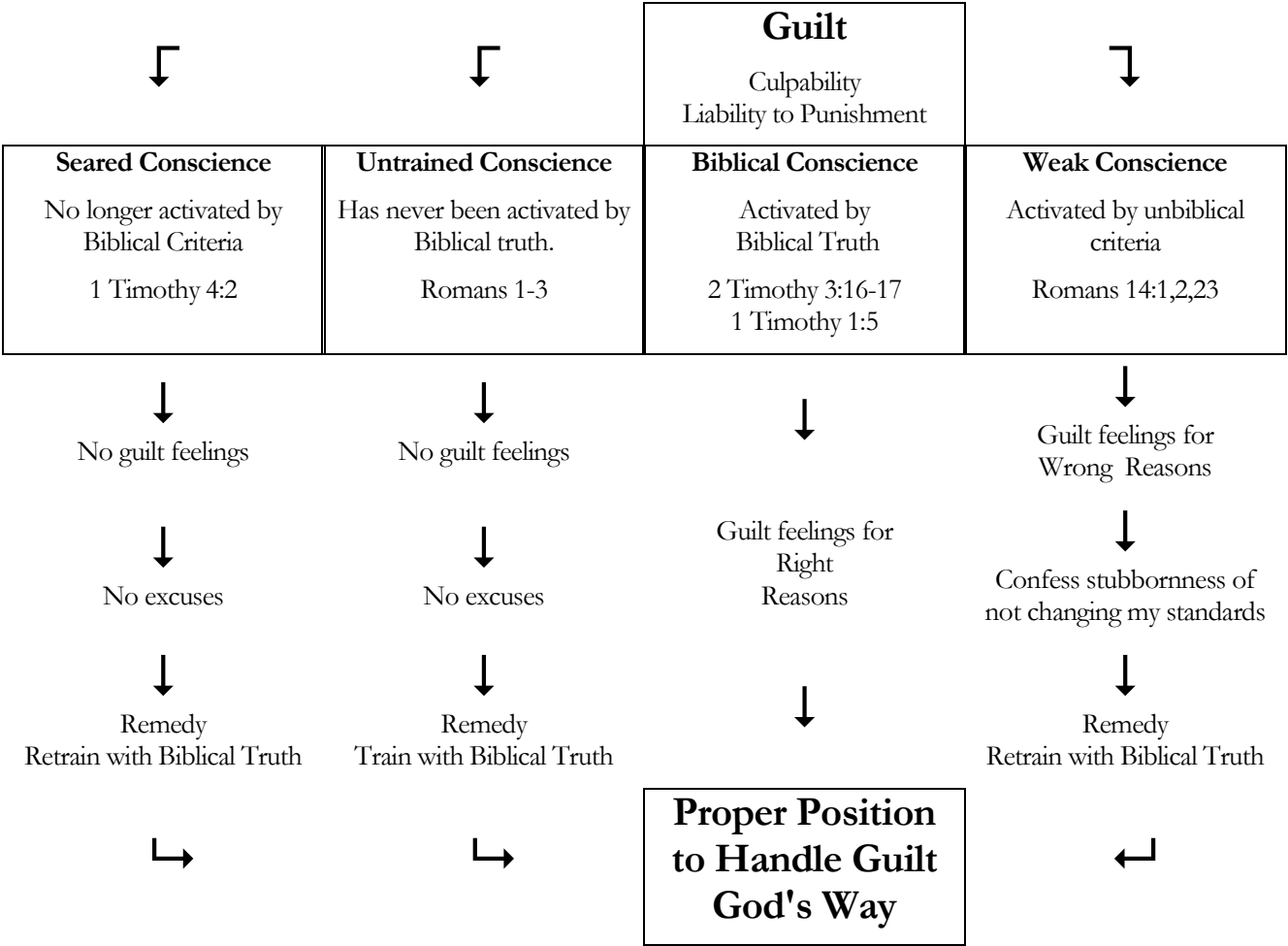
More sin

Conclusion

Guilt is one of the most misunderstood areas in life.

An unbiblical view of guilt leads to ungodly remedies and “cures” for guilt..

A Conscience that Functions Biblically



Lesson 23

Conflict Resolution

Being a Biblical Peacemaker

Adapted and Edited by Tim Nixon

Introduction

Most of this material is adapted from the works published by Peacemaker Ministries.

- There are three general principles of resolving conflicts. First, God calls you to pursue peace in all your relationships, with a realism that trusts God about the outcome.
- Second, God teaches you how to view conflicts: they are to be resolved, to be expected, to be seized as opportunities.
- Third, God directs you how to resolve conflicts. Your commitment to God, your repentance for contributing to conflict, and your love are the path toward concrete solutions.

Statement of Topic

What is conflict?

A difference in opinion or purpose that frustrates someone's goals or desires.

Is conflict good or bad?

The Bible does not teach that all conflict is bad. Some differences are natural and beneficial, while others can cause harm and estrangement. Our response to conflict often makes all the difference.

What causes conflict?

Misunderstandings (Josh. 22:10-34)

Differences in values, goals, gifts, calling, priorities, expectations, interests, or opinions (Acts 15:39; 1 Cor. 12:12-12-31)

Competition over limited resources (Gen. 13:1-12)

Main Cause:

Sinful attitudes and desires that lead to sinful words and actions
(James 4:1-3)

"What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? 2 You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. 3 When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures."

Exposing the Issues

The Heart of Conflict

Ruling Heart Idols

Ruling desires conflict with other person's ruling desires with conflict as a consequence.

The Situational Cause

Heat and Dew

The answer to that becomes the nexus where people's ruling desires cross and conflict emerges.

Illustrations of Dew

- Abraham and Lot with their flocks – Genesis 13:7-8
- Moses and water from the rock – Numbers 27:14
- Eudias and Syntyche – Philippians 4:2-3

Illustrations of Heat

- Cain and Abel – Genesis 4:1-8
- Esau and Jacob – Genesis 25:27-34
- Israel and the adjudication of their disputes – Deut. 1:9-15
- Paul and John Mark in ministry – Acts 15:36-41

Expositing the Bible

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.
(Romans 5:1)

If possible, as far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. (Romans 12:18)

Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.
(2 Corinthians 5:18)

A God Centered Approach to Conflict

Glorify God (1 Cor. 10:31)

How can I please and honor God in this situation?

Get the log out of your own eye (Matt 7:5)

How can I show Jesus' work in me by taking responsibility for my contribution to this conflict?

Gently restore (Gal. 6:1)

How can I lovingly serve others by helping them take responsibility for their contribution to this conflict?

Go and be reconciled (Matt 5:24)

How can I demonstrate the forgiveness of God and encourage a reasonable solution to this conflict?

Applying to Counseling

How do people generally respond to conflict?



Escape responses

The three responses found on the left side of the curve are directed at getting away from the conflict situation rather than resolving it. These responses are:

Denial

Pretend that a conflict does not exist, or refuse to do what you should do to resolve it properly. This is always a wrong response to conflict.

Flight

Run away from the person with whom you are having a conflict. This is a legitimate response only when it is presently impossible to resolve the conflict in a constructive manner (see 1 Sam. 19:9-10).

Suicide

A person takes his or her own life. This is always a wrong response to conflict.

Attack responses

The three responses found on the right side of the curve are directed at bringing as much pressure to bear on opponents as is necessary to defeat their claims and eliminate their opposition. These responses are:

Assault

Use force or intimidation (physical, verbal, financial, or otherwise) to compel an opponent to give in to your demands.

Litigation

A matter is taken before the civil authorities for a decision. At times this is a legitimate response, but it should be used only after exhausting the “work-it-out” responses (with rare exceptions).

Murder

Kill the person or persons who oppose you. Murder is always wrong.

Peacemaking responses — (aka “work-it-out responses”)

The six responses found on the top portion of the curve are directed at finding a just and mutually agreeable solution to a conflict. These responses may be divided into two subcategories:

➤ *Personal peacemaking responses, which involve only the parties:*

Overlook an offense

(Prov. 19:11; 12:16; 17:14; 1 Pet. 4:8; Col. 3:13): One person deliberately and unilaterally decides to forgive a wrong and walk away from a conflict.

Reconciliation/Discussion

(Matt. 18:15; 5:23-24.; Gal. 6:1-3; Prov. 28:13): Personal offenses are resolved through confession or confrontation, leading to forgiveness and reconciliation.

Negotiation

(Phil. 2:3-4): Substantive issues are resolved through a bargaining process in which the parties seek to reach a mutually agreeable settlement of their differences through an exchange of promises.

Assisted responses, which involve others in the parties' church or community:

Mediation

(Matt. 18:16): One or two other people meet with the parties to improve communication and facilitate a voluntary resolution. (Mediators can only suggest solutions and have no power to impose a solution.)

Arbitration

(1 Cor. 6:1-8): When the parties cannot come to a voluntary solution, they explain the matter to one or more arbitrators who are empowered to render a binding decision on the matter.

Accountability/Church discipline

(Matt. 18:17-20): When a Christian party refuses to do what is right and just, the church formally intervenes to promote repentance and reconciliation.

Trends

Private to public

As you go from left to right (clockwise), more people become involved in the conflict.

Consensual to coercive

In all of the responses on the left side of the curve through mediation, the parties decide on their own solution. From arbitration on, outsiders make the final decision.

Increasing losses

Every response to conflict costs you something; that is, you must give up one thing to gain another. Personal peacemaking responses generally produce the most "profitable" exchange (what you gain is worth more than what you give up). The further you move away from this zone, in either direction, the greater your losses will be, whether in time, money, effort, relationships, or a clear conscience

Contrasts

	Focus on:	Maybe called	Frequently results in:
Escape responses	ME	“Peace-faking”	KYRG *
Attack responses	YOU	“Peace-breaking”	KYRG *
Conciliation responses	US	“Peace-making”	Reconciliation

**Kiss Your Relationship Goodbye*

Engaging the Person

See that Conflict Provides Opportunities

“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks, or the church of God—even as I try to please everybody in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved. Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ” (1 Cor. 10:31-11:1).

To glorify God by believing, trusting, obeying, and honoring Christ

To serve others by bearing their burdens or by confronting them in love

To grow in Christlikeness by confessing sin and turning from attitudes that promote conflict

Follow the Steps of Conflict Resolution

Step #1: GLORIFY God.

Show who he is, what he is like, and what he is doing.

God is glorified when his people depend on and trust in him and obey his commands, even when it seems to put them at a disadvantage (see Ps. 37:5-6, John 14:15-31; Luke 6:27-28).

Key questions:

- “How can I please and honor the Lord in this situation?”
- “How can I bring praise to Jesus by showing that he has saved me and is changing me?”

Step #2: GET the Log Out

How can I show Jesus’ work in me by taking responsibility for my contribution to this conflict?

How have I made this issue an idol?

An idol is anything apart from God that we depend on to be happy, fulfilled, or secure. It is something other than God that we set our heart on (Luke 12:29), that rules us (Eph. 5:5), or that we trust, fear, or serve (Isa. 42:17; Matt. 6:24; Luke 12:4-5). Given its controlling effect on our lives, an idol may be referred to as a “functional god.”

The cure for an idolatrous heart:

- Confess your sin and trust in God alone for everything you need (Acts 3:19).
- Replace idol worship with worship of the true God (Ps. 37:4).

Step #3: GENTLY Restore

How can I lovingly serve others by helping them take responsibility for their contribution to this conflict?”

Step One: Overlook minor offenses.

“A man’s wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense” (Prov. 19:11; see also Prov. 12:16; 17:14; Luke 6:36; 1 Pet. 4:8; Col. 3:13).

Step Two: Talk in private to resolve personal issues. (Reconciliation)

- Go and talk when someone has something against you.
- Go and talk when someone’s sins are too serious to overlook.
- Restoring means more than confronting (see Matt. 18:12-14; 21-35).
 - Sooner or later, face-to-face (see Gen. 32 and 33; 50:15-16; Exod. 33:11; 2 Sam. 14:24; Matt. 5:23-24).
 - Bring hope through the gospel (see 1 Cor. 1:2-9; Col. 3:12).
 - Be quick to listen (see James 1:19; Prov. 18:13).
 - Breathe grace (see Prov. 12:18; Eph. 4:29).

Step #4: GO and be Reconciled

How can I demonstrate the forgiveness of God and encourage a reasonable solution to this conflict?

- Forgiveness is neither a feeling nor forgetting, nor is it excusing.
- Forgiveness is a decision modeled after God’s forgiveness of us.
- Make the four promises of forgiveness.
- In response to God’s love for me and in reliance on his grace, I forgive you. In particular, with God’s help,
 - “I promise I will not think on this incident.”
 - “I promise I will not bring up this incident and use it against you.”
 - “I promise I will not talk to others about this incident.”
 - “I promise I will not allow this incident to stand between us or hinder our personal relationship.”

Thinking it Through

Sande, Ken. "The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Conflict", Baker Books (2004)

Jones, Robert Dr. "Biblical Peacemaking". Clearcreek Chapel Family Enrichment Conference, (2011)

Jones, Robert Dr. "Resolving Conflict God's Way", CCEF Journal Volume 19, Number 1

Underlying Attitudes and Behaviors

Note to Instructor Just point students to the value of identifying these contrasting attitudes. Do not try to go through this whole chart.

Summary

God's response to our sin is the Gospel. God bears with our sin with great patience (Ps. 103:10-18; Rom. 9:22-24), offering and securing for us eternal forgiveness in spite of our many offenses against him. The cost for this mercy was immeasurably great, however. God sent his Son to serve both as a mediator (1 Tim. 2:5) and as our substitute to work out a resolution to the greatest conflict the world has ever known. Jesus willingly went on trial in our place, was convicted for our sins (2 Cor. 5:21), and suffered the flogging, death, and separation that we deserved (Mark 15:34). The Gospel is the most wonderful response to conflict that has ever occurred, but to bring it about, Jesus had to endure the most painful response to conflict that could ever be imagined.

Lesson 24

Open Discussion Session

Use this space to take notes.

Dealing with Anger

Tim Nixon

Introduction

This lecture is adapted from work done by Dr. Robert Jones.

“Anger is a universal problem, prevalent in every culture, experienced by every generation. No one is isolated from its presence or immune from its poison. It permeates each person and spoils our most intimate relationships. Anger is a given part of our fallen human fabric. Sadly, this is true even in our Christian homes and churches. The believer in Christ is not exempt from anger.”

Statement of Topic

The Bible speaks with authority and clarity on the topic of anger. As Christians we must put off sinful anger. When we are angry we are being foolish. This foolish behavior dishonors the Lord and it will cause great difficulty in marriage and other relationships. God has much to say about anger including:

“Cease from anger and forsake wrath; do not fret; it leads only to evil doing.” Psalm 37:8

“He who is slow to anger has great understanding, but he who is quick-tempered exults folly.” Proverbs 14:29

Exposing the Issue

What is Anger?

Working definition: "Anger is a whole-person response arising from one's negative moral judgement against perceived evil against oneself."

An activity. Not a thing, fluid or force. Something you do, not something you have!

- A response to something.
- Engages the whole person.
- A moral judgment we make.
- Anger = judgmentalism

Anger arises from our personal perception of evil.

Perception may be accurate or inaccurate

Done before God, and incurs his judgment (Matthew 5:21-22; Ephesians 4:30-31; James 1:20) coram deo

Three Biblical Categories of Anger

Divine anger

- Psalm 7:11, God is a righteous judge, a God who expresses his wrath every day.
- Isaiah 34:2, The LORD is angry with all nations; his wrath is upon all their armies. He will totally destroy them; he will give them over to slaughter.
- John 3:36, Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.
- Romans 1:18, The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness.

Righteous human anger

- Moses in Exodus 32:19-20
- Saul in 1 Samuel 11:1—6
- Jonathan in 1 Samuel 20:33-34
- Psalmist in Psalm 119:52-54, 103-104, 113-116, 127-129, 135-137, 139, 157-159, 162-164

Sinful human anger

- Revealed anger (Proverbs 12:18; 14:16-17, 29-30; 15:1, 18; 16:32; 19:11, 19; 22:24-25; 25:28; 29:11, 20, 22; Matthew 5:21-22; Ephesians 4:30-32)
- Concealed anger (Leviticus 19:17-18; Luke 15:25-30; Ephesians 4:26-27, 30-32)

How Can We Tell if Our Anger Is Righteous or Sinful?

Righteous anger reacts against actual sin.

Righteous anger focuses on God and His kingdom, rights and concerns, not on me and my kingdom, rights and concerns.

Righteous anger is accompanied by other godly qualities and expresses itself in godly ways.

Uprooting Sinful Anger from the Heart

Our culture's theories about the cause of anger:

- Past mistreatment
- Present hardships and unmet "needs"
- Physical factors
- Direct Satanic activity
- Unconscious psychodynamic drives

Biblical response:

Such factors exert enormous impact on people (thus the need for compassion...)
But they do not cause anger (without excusing brings true hope for change)

In other words, circumstances may be contributive toward our anger but are not causative.

Expositing the Bible

God's answer from James 4:1-3

James describes "angry people" (4:1-2,11-12)

James seeks to address the cause of anger [4:1]

Not behaviorism, moralism

Not psychodynamic notions

But biblically-diagnosed heart motives

James roots the cause in your heart beliefs and motives (4:1-3):

Entrenched desires (v.1,3)

Ruling wants (v.2).

Coveting (v.2)

Selfish motives (v.3)

Criteria for determining sinful desires:

You desire a sinful object

You desire a good object too much—an inordinate desire (v.1-2)—
or for selfish reasons (v.3)

When it consumes you

When you sin to get it

When you sin if you don't get it

Biblical examples of sinful desires as the cause of sinful anger:

Esau (Genesis 27)
Saul (1 Samuel 20)
Silver workers (Acts 19)
Balaam (Numbers 22)
Herod (Matthew 2)
Balak (Numbers 24)
Jews (Luke 4)

James offers God's grace to angry people who humble themselves
(v.6]

Believe in and embrace Him

Applying to Counseling

James calls angry people to thorough heart repentance:

- Reject worldly lovers (vv. 4-5)
- Repent of your sinful ruling desires (vv. 6-10)
- Resist the devil (v. 7; 1 Peter 5:6-9; Ephesians 6:10-18)
- Refuse God-playing and refuse to usurp God's prerogatives (vv. 11-12; Romans 12:19)

Engaging the Person

Ask the counselee simple questions such as:

- What do you want, desire, crave, lust, and wish for? What desires do you serve and obey?
- Who must you please? "
- "What I think I need, or desperately want, from you is?

Repent on both the heart and behavioral levels (James 4:4-12; Joel 2:12-13)

Joel 2:12-13, "Even now," declares the LORD, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning. " 13 Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity."

Refocus on God and his grace, provisions, and promises.

James 4:6, But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

Hebrews 4:16, Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Practical Strategies and Steps for Change

Repent of the evil desires that produce your angry behavior and receive God's pardoning, empowering grace.

Own responsibility for your angry behavior and identify it as evil before God and others.

Confess and renounce your angry behavior before God and others

Believe in Christ and his Gospel promises for angry people.

Commit yourself to active, concrete steps of replacing your angry behavior with Christ like words and actions.

Self-control

Godly speech

Biblical peacemaking and problem-solving

Establish and carry out a workable temptation plan

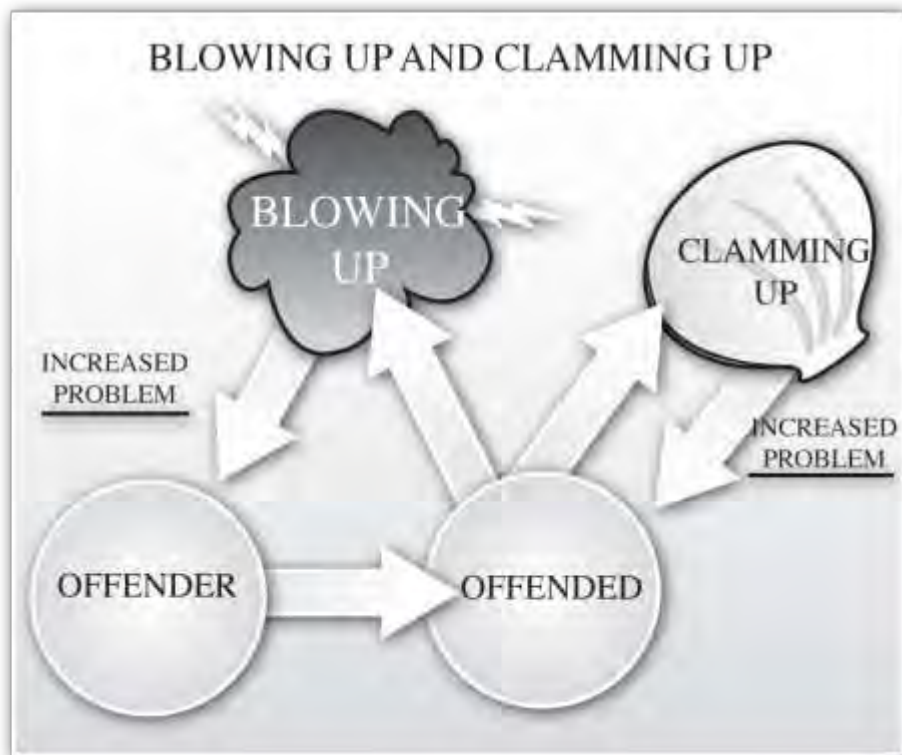
- Avoid unnecessary occasions and relationships that tempt you to anger.
- Remove yourself as quickly as possible from explosive situations.
- In the midst of the temptation, ask Christ for strength and meditate on key verses or biblical truths.
- Enlist mature believers to pray for you, counsel you, hold you accountable and be available during and after crises.
- Log or journal personal anger incidents
- See the sinfulness and the ugly consequences of your bitter heart and concealing behavior

Helping Angry People: 3 Phase Ministry Model

Understand the person and his situation, and reflect Christ's help and hope.

(Powlison: Angry people are incredibly defensive)

Help the person to uproot his heart beliefs and motives that cause sinful anger and to embrace the God of grace.



Summary

Why Must We Deal with Our Sinful Anger?

James 1:19-20, “My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man’s anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.”

Ephesians 4:30-31, “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.”

To avoid damage to, and to promote the health of, your body and soul

- Physical health (Psalm 32; Psalm 38; Proverbs 3; 14:29-30)
- Spiritual health (Acts 24:16; 1 Peter 3:17; Psalm 66:18; 1 Timothy 2:8; Matthew 5:21-22; Genesis 4:6)

To avoid damage to, and to promote growth in, your personal relationships.

(Ephesians 4:1-6; 4:25-5:2; Colossians 3:15-17; James 3:13-4:12; Luke 15:28; Matthew 7:3-5; Proverbs 22:24-25; Ephesians 6:4; Proverbs 16:17; Romans 12:18)

To avoid God's displeasure and to bring him honor and delight—the primary reason!

(Matt 5:21-22; 1 John 3:15; Eph 4:26-27, 30-31; Col 3:5-11; 1Tim 2:8; Jam 1:19-21; 4:11-12; Heb 13:20-21).

Resources

- Anonymous. *Anger and God's Grace: A Case Study*, Journal of Biblical Counseling 14:3 (Spring 1996), 21-23
- Arthur, Kay. *But I'm So Angry*, chapter in Lord, Heal My Hurts (Multnomah, 1989)
- Baxter, Richard (1615-1691). *A Christian Directory: Christian Ethics* (reprint, Soli Deo Gloria, 1990), 283-87
- Forrey, Jeffery S. *How to End the Eruptions, News to Use* (Biblical Counseling Center, Arlington Heights, IL, 1995)
- Jones, Robert D. *A Biblical Strategy for Ministering to Angry People*, Unpublished Doctor of Ministry Project, submitted to Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, 1996, available from author. Includes extensive bibliography
- Jones, Robert D. *Anger Against God*, Journal of Biblical Counseling 14:3 (Spring 1996), 15-20
- Jones, Robert D. *Uprooting Anger from Our Hearts*, unpublished article available from author
- Powlison, David. Series of articles on anger in the Journal of Biblical Counseling:
#1: *Understanding Anger*, 14:1 (Fall 1995), 40-53
#2: *Three Lies About Anger and the Transforming Truth*, 14:2 (Winter 1996), 12-21
#3: *Getting to the Heart of Conflict*, 16:1 (Fall 1997), 32-42
- Scott, Stewart. *Anger Anxiety and Fear*, Focus Publishing (2009)
- Priolo, Lou. *The Heart of Anger*, Grace and Truth Books; 4th edition (May 16, 2015)
- Priolo, Lou. *Keeping Your Cool*, P&R Publishing (October 12, 2014)

Dealing with Communications Issues

Tim Nixon

Introduction

One of the most common complaints you will hear in counseling is, “We just don’t communicate!”

Poor communication certainly makes a mess of things. Unbiblical communication produces hurt, anger, ignorance and disunity in the body of Christ and in marriages and families. Poor communication gives Satan a foothold, destroying the unity of the Body of Christ and disrupting the one-flesh relationships husbands and wives should be developing.ⁱⁱⁱ

Words communicate values, attitudes and intentions that intrinsically influence or seek to influence others. “The mouth speaks out of what fills the heart,” whether it be for good or evil, right or wrong. At the deepest level, all human interactions are essentially counseling interactions. Counseling, then, is either wise or foolish. Some words are rotten, destructive, misleading, un nourishing (Eph 4:29); other words are constructive, timely, true, loving, grace-giving (Eph 4:15, 29). No words are neutral.^{iv}

Statement of Topic

The Bible speaks clearly on the necessity for good, honest, God honoring communication. To say the least:

- Our God is a communicating God (Hebrews 1:1-2)
- God intends us to be a communicating people (Ephesians 4:29)
- We are to communicate truth (Zechariah 8:16-17, Ephesians 4:25)
- Our communication is to glorify God (1 Corinthians 10:31)

Foundational to godly communication are godly heart attitudes.

If you teach your counselees how to communicate biblically and yet ignore the heart, you will give them godly tools that they will use for ungodly ends.

Teaching counselees how to communicate is essential, however, ignoring the heart produces Pharisees who seek to use God to achieve their own ends and manipulate others.

There must be a concern to love God and to love neighbor (Matthew 22:37-40).

There must be concern for the unity of the Body (Ephesians 4:1-6).

Exposing the Issue

God's Word guides us in how to communicate in order to keep unity in our relationships. There is no clearer description than in the book of Ephesians. Ephesians 1-3 lays the foundation as it assures us of our vertical relationship and who we are in Christ.

- God has chosen us before the foundation of the world to be “holy and blameless in his sight” and that must find expression in our communication (1.4).
- God saved us to do good works, and those include our communication (2.10).
- Jesus died in order to break down barriers and produce a unified body, and that unity finds expression in our communication (2.11-22).

Ephesians 4:1 is transitional. "Therefore," because of who we are in Christ and because of our union with Him, we are told to walk worthy of that calling and relationship. Our vertical relationship with God makes a difference in how we get along with our horizontal personal relationships.

The attitude toward those horizontal relationships is expressed in Ephesians 4:2 (humble, gentle, patient, loving) and in Ephesians 4:3, we find the admonition to endeavor (as much as lies within you - Romans 12:18) to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Counselors must understand that godly communication is more than “techniques for a better life,” but a way of life for Christ’s disciples.

Expositing the Bible

Ephesians chapter 4:25-32 gives us concrete guidelines for communication that is effective and honors God.

Guideline #1: Speak the Truth – Be Honest (Ephesians 4:25)

You must not lie.

My honest speech is motivated by love and is not undisciplined speech. (Ephesians 4:15)

Speaking the truth requires careful thought. Your speech must be not only accurate, but free from ambiguity.

It is only your job to speak honestly and lovingly. It is God’s role so produce heart change.

Being honest means you speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15)

It is very easy to rip someone to shreds with the truth. Speaking the truth in love means that you speak with the other person’s benefit in mind, so you must be careful about the vocabulary you use, your facial expressions, tone of voice, volume, etc.

A Christian never has the right to say, “I just have to get this off my chest,” or “Let me give you a piece of my mind.” Those communicate, “I don’t care about you or what these words will do to you, I only care about saying this so I feel better.”

Guideline #2: Keep Current (Ephesians 4:26-27)

God expects you to resolve each day's problems that day.

You are guilty of sin because this is a command from God.

You may begin to feel bitterness and resentment.

When I am angry, I must not sin by having a sinful response to that anger.

The sun must not go down on my unresolved anger. To do so gives the devil a foothold, an inroad into my life.

Unresolved anger opens the door to all kinds of temptations and sin. (James 4:1-12)

You must learn the best way to resolve issues and at appropriate times. Sometimes, you cannot fully discuss an issue before bed simply because one or both parties are tired and unable to focus. In that case a quick, temporary acknowledgement that the issue needs resolved tomorrow may be your only course of action. (1 Peter 4:8)

Guideline #3: Attack Problems, Not People (Ephesians 4:29-30)

This is covered in more detail during the lecture on Conflict Resolution and Dealing with Anger, but here simple basic principles from Scripture.

Don't attack people with your words.

Labeling others with words like "stupid" or "slob" or saying things like "I wish I didn't have to be around you" or even things like "you always...or you never..." are attacks on the person or their character (as well as lies!).

This does nothing to help solve the problems, but rather makes more problems as those with whom God has called us to walk in unity become our "enemies" that we attack.

God loves all His children, none more than the others. So I should never attack any other creation of God's, either by corrupt (rotten) words or by lack of words.

Edifying - "what is helpful for building others up."

This does not mean "building others' self-esteem" but in this context it means "building them into the image of Christ." It zeroes in on the real issue - the solution. It gives "grace", that is, the desire and ability to do God's will, to those who hear.

Guideline #4: Act. Don't React (Ephesians 4:31-32)

When we react, we "bounce off" the words or actions of another. We let ourselves be controlled by what they say or do, giving over to anger.

By whom does God's Word instruct me to be controlled (Gal 5:16-26)? The Holy Spirit. Reactions make problems worse, not better.

God expects you to "put off" those reactions:

Bitterness - the inability to treat someone as if they never hurt you.

Rage - the explosion of anger.

Anger - abiding indignation or animosity that frequently seeks revenge; the "slow burn."

Brawling - harsh contention and strife; public quarreling.

Slander - talking critically about another person without the goal of helping or edifying him (what is said may or may not be true).

Malice - the desire to harm others or to see others suffer.

God expects you to "put on" Godly actions:

Kind - benevolent, helpful, courteous.

Compassionate - literally "of good heartedness"; tenderhearted, sympathetic.

Forgiving

To not bring up the offense again to the one who has asked forgiveness.

To not bring up the offense with anyone else (gossip).

To not bring up the offense with myself (brooding over it).

To work at restoring the relationship so that it can withstand the same offense again.

Summary

James 1:19 gives us the posture for beginning the process of Godly communication when he states, “quick to hear and slow to speak.”

Selfless communication is done with love. The love we exhibit with the church will have a promised impact and witness for, “All will know you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34,35)

Resources

Adams, Jay E. “Christian Living in the Home” P&R Publishing (1972).

Bettler, John F. “Make Every Effort: Ephesians 4.1-5.2.” - *The Journal of Biblical Counseling* (17.2; Winter, 1999).

Forrey, Jeffrey S. “Christian Communication.” - *The Journal of Biblical Counseling* (16.2; Winter, 1998).

Mack, Wayne. “Strengthening Your Marriage”. (New Jersey, P&R Publishing: 1977)

____ “Your Family, God’s Way”. (New Jersey, P&R Publishing: 1991).

ⁱⁱⁱ Jeffrey S. Forrey, “Christian Communication,” *The Journal of Biblical Counseling* (16.2, Winter, 1998), p. 37.

^{iv} Powlison, David. “Counsel True to Your Convictions – CCEF NOW” (2012)

The Heart of Fear and Worry

A Mild Case of Atheism

Tim Pasma

Introduction

You will counsel people sometime who are eaten up with fear or worry.

Many today do not enjoy the fullness of life in Christ because they worry - even reaching the point of what is typically called “anxiety attacks.”

There are people who, because of fear, move from city to city, friend to friend, lock themselves in houses, neglect to get physical care, will not travel by air, who flee from life itself - they are phobic in their reactions to life.

Fear and worry are closely related (worry is almost a “subset” of fear, i.e., a particular kind of fear).

Statement of Topic

We all must admit that not all concern is wrong and not all fear is wrong.

There is a concern that causes you to plan and make provisions for tomorrow.

There is a fear of God; there is a healthy respect of danger that keeps one healthy and alive.

Yet, God commands us at times not to fear (e.g., Isaiah 43.1; Proverbs 29.25) and he commands us not to worry (e.g., Matthew 6.25,31,34; Philippians 4.6).

Worry may be an “acceptable” sin to many since it is confused with concern, but it is a sin nonetheless.

We may rationalize our fears and say we “can’t” because of them, but it is a sin nonetheless.

Exposing the Issue

Determining When Worry and Fear are Sinful

Concern becomes sinful worry when:

- It damages the body (spasms, nervous stomach, spastic colon, asthma, skin rash, headaches, etc.).
- Thoughts become unproductive.
- It controls you rather than you controlling it.
- It causes you to neglect other relationships and responsibilities.
- You lose hope rather than finding answers.
- Thoughts are focused on changing the future.

Fear becomes sinful fear when it has a paralyzing effect.

- When you fear man rather than God (John 12.42-43; Proverbs 29.25).
- When you fear temporal things more than eternal (Luke 12.4-5; Genesis 26.7).
- When fear of things you cannot change keeps you from things you can change (Isaiah 8.12-13; Proverbs 3.25f).
- When it keeps you from God's goals (e.g., God's goal for our children is to bring them up in admonition and discipline and when you fear that you are doing it wrong and so neglect it, it is sinful) (Luke 19.20-21).
- When you manipulate by fear (a form of deceit - scream at mouse, draw attention to self, becomes habitual and a phobia).

Expositing the Bible

Understanding the Nature of Worry

Worry as idolatry (Matthew 6.19-24)

- Worry says that you seek and trust **competing treasures** (vs. 19-21).
“So many of your worries involve earthly things - your job, your marriage, your money, your possessions, your health, your children, etc.” rather than heavenly treasures.
- Worry says that you look at life with **competing eyes** (vs. 22-23).
- “When you fail to have a good eye - to set your sights on Jesus and His kingdom - you will be filled with the darkness of chronic worry or invaded by acute worries.”
- Worry says that you serve **competing masters** (v. 24).

Worry as unbelief (Matthew 6.25-31)

It is the fruit of remaining unbelief (v. 30).

Notice that Jesus says that the problem is “little faith” and he is talking to his followers and not pagans.

It denies God's power, wisdom and love for your situation.

Robert Jones writes, “[Jesus] also gives reasons not to worry, and those reasons center on the character and promises of God as your Father. To worry is to deny - in practical ways - God's power, wisdom, and love for you in your situation. To worry is to forget the full implications of your identity as one of God's chosen, adopted, and deeply loved children.”

Worry is unbecoming (Matthew 6.32).

It is like the pagans/unbelievers.

Worry is unproductive- it focuses on tomorrow not today and so becomes a thief of time.

What about anxiety attacks?

- Anxiety attacks normally happen when worry becomes habitual.
- Remember, whenever you present your body as a slave of unrighteousness, it will have a physical effect (see Romans 6.19).
- Remember that by using such terminology you rob people of hope.

Understanding the Nature of Sinful Fear

At the root of sinful fear is unbelief; a lack of trust

(see e.g., Isaiah 43.1-3; Proverbs 29.25; Psalm 56.3-4).

Sinful fear forgets the character of God

(Isaiah 51. 7-8, 12-13).

"Hear me, you who know what is right, you people who have my law in your hearts: Do not fear the reproach of men or be terrified by their insults. For the moth will eat them up like a garment; the worm will devour them like wool. But my righteousness will last forever, my salvation through all generations" (vs. 7-8).

"I, even I, am he who comforts you. Who are you that you fear mortal men, the sons of men who are but grass, that you forget the Lord your Maker, who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth, that you live in constant terror every day because of the wrath of the oppressor, who is bent on destruction?" (vs. 12-13).

Sinful fear is an absence of the fear of God.

(Psalm 112.1-8).

It is the absence of the love of God maturing in us (1 John 4.17-18)

The focus of fear is me, while the focus of love is others.

Fear is self-protection while love is self-giving.

Fear moves one to seclusion while love moves one to risk.

How to Handle Worry

Always deal with heart issues - what particular desire or idol is behind it?

What particular unbelief is behind this worry; what lie are you believing.

“Sin is what you do when your heart is not satisfied with God. No one sins out of duty. We sin because it holds out some promise of happiness. That promise enslaves us until we believe that God is more to be desired than life itself (Psalm 63.3). Which means that the power of sin’s promise is broken by the power of God’s. All that God promises to be for us in Jesus stands over against what sin promises to be for us without him.”

Remind yourself of God’s provision.

(Matthew 6.26,28.30; 10.29-32).

Redirect your energies - throw yourself into today’s opportunities for advancing the kingdom of Christ

(Matthew 6.33-34).

Attack problems today in a biblical manner (v. 34).

Remember that today has enough to keep you busy so that you do not have to think about tomorrow.

Plan for tomorrow and trust God to direct

(James 4.14-15).

Employ God’s dynamic for eliminating anxiety

(Philippians 4.6-9).

Pray right (vs. 6-7).

Think right (v. 8).

Do right (v. 9).

Applying to Counseling

How to Handle Fear

Deal with heart issues.

Deal with evident guilt (Proverbs 28.1).

Develop a proper fear of God.

Grow in love.

As you do that, putting on loving affections and actions, you will change the focus from yourself to others.

Know and believe the promises of God.

What about the extremes of anxiety and fear?

The intensity of fear and worry does not change the basic approach mentioned above.

But you must remember the physical effect of habitual sin and determine that God's will and not your body determines what you will do (Romans 6.19).

The more you give the members of your body over to righteousness, the physical effects will decline. But that will only happen as you continue to do what is right.

Counselees must understand that the physical reactions that accompany the "attack" or "phobia" will not kill them and they CAN do what God expects. As one counselee said to me, "I told myself that my body was not my boss."

God may not necessarily remove the physical symptoms of fear (heart pounding; sweaty palms), but he does deliver from the bondage of fear (2 Timothy 1.7).

Faith is essential - the counselee must step out in obedient faith, remembering the promises of God.

Resources

Jay Adams. *The Christian Counselor's Manual: The Practice of Nouthetic Counseling* (Zondervan, 1973).

Jerry Bridges. *The Joy of Fearing God* (Waterbrook Press, 1997).

Wayne Mack. *A Homework Manual for Biblical Counseling (vol. 1)* (Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Co., 1984).

John Piper. *Future Grace* (Multnomah Books, 1995).

Edward T. Welch. *When People Are Big and God Is Small* (P&R Publishing, 1997).

Edward T. Welch and Susan Lutz. *Running Scared: Fear, Worry and the God of Rest* (New Growth, 2007)

Edward T. Welch. *When I am Afraid: a Step by Step Guide Away from Fear and Anxiety*, (New Growth, 2008)

Biblical Basics for Marriage

Russ Kennedy

Its Purpose

What does the world say is the purpose for the family?

What does God say the purposes for the family are?

Its Biblical Priority

We were made to bring glory to God

Created to glorify God - Isaiah 43:7

Every person has been created for God's glory. Those who are called by His Name, Christians, are to live in such a way as to make that so.

Goal of life is to glorify God - 1 Corinthians 10:31

Everything that we do, we are to do it all for the glory of God. Our lives are to be lived in such a way that God is pleased. Others observing our lives should see a demonstration of how great God is to us.

Sin is falling short of God's glory - Romans 3:23

The huge problem is that this is not so of us. Everyone has sinned and this fallen short of the standard which has been set. When we sin, we do not glorify God. God is glorified by holy lives. But we are sinners, so we are not glorifying to God. The penalty for that is death (Romans 6:23).

Faith glorifies God - Romans 4:20

Believing God's promises by faith glorifies God. We glorify God when we hear His promises in the Word and we trust them and bank our hope on the God who will do what He says.

Its Great Comparison

The analogy of the Bride and Groom

Engaged to be married - 2 Corinthians 11:2

For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure **virgin** to Christ

Bride dressed for her husband - Revelation 21:2

And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a **bride** adorned for her husband.

Marriage ceremony and supper - Revelation 19:7

Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his **Bride** has made herself ready;

The wife of the Lamb - Revelation 21:9

Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, “Come, I will show you the **Bride**, the wife of the Lamb.”

Invitation to the Wedding (Revelation 22:17)

The Spirit and the **Bride** say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.

Its Marriage Purpose - Ephesians 5:22-32

We glorify God in our marriages as we show forth Christ and the church.

It is a glorious privilege for our marriages to “incarnate”, to flesh out, invisible spiritual realities.

Submission of Christ to the Church (v.22-24)

The wife’s submission to her husband portrays the submission of the church to Christ, our Lord.

Love of Christ for the Church (v.25-30)

The husband’s sacrificial love and leadership of the wife portrays the love of Christ for His bride.

Union between Christ and the Church (v.31-32)

Its Elements

Key concepts or categories of husband and wife relationships

What is necessary for a God-pleasing marriage to exist?

What does the Bible show us as necessary to understand God's design in marriage?

Marriage is a Covenant Bond - Malachi 2:13-15

Why won't God accept their worship?

Promise creating the Marital Union (v.14)

Pattern pointing to New Covenant Union(v.15)

Anticipating the Indwelling of the Spirit

Anticipating the Children of God

Problem exposing Faithlessness in the Union (v.14b,15b)

In heart separation - disloyalty

In physical separation - divorce

Precept calling for Watchfulness in the Union (v.15b, 16b)

Guard against all that would cause our hearts to stray from a single minded loyalty to our spouses.

Marriage is to provide Companionship - Genesis 2:18-23

Allusion to this in Malachi 2:13-15 as well.

Its God Declared Necessity (v.18)

Arising from God's Trinitarian community

Arising from God's Trinitarian communion

Its Man Discovered Reality (v.19-20)

Nothing is to substitute
No thing is to supplant

Its God Fashioned Provision (v.21-22)

God's design of the woman
God's presentation of the woman

Its Man Welcomed Delight (v.23)

Initial joy
Sustained delight
Guard against all the would substitute and supplant companionship with your spouse

Marriage is to Complement/Complete one Another - Genesis 2:18-25

Another element running through is text in Genesis is the fact that the wife is one who is our counterpart, our completer and complement.

Defined as a Helper

Primary role in the husband

Designed to be Exactly Fitting

Partnering role in the wife

Developed over Bible

Points towards Christ and the church

Practiced by Christians in the church

What does this mean for family?

What does this mean for spouses in marriage?

Its Relationship

Marriage as between a Christian brother and sister
As joint heirs of the grace of life...

Common way we think of our relationship to our spouse:

Marriage as primary and Christian as secondary...

How do you treat your spouse in the privacy of your home...

Why does the Bible say comparatively little about the marriage relationship?

Outside of the Proverbs, think of all the texts that speak directly to husbands and wives...

The Relationship Established - Ephesians 5:29-32

The pattern of Christ and the church establishes our relationship in marriage.

By a Doctrinal Statement (v.29-30)

Christ cares for the church because we are members of His body, therefore husbands are to care for their wives.

From the Old Testament (v.31; Genesis 2:24)

Showing that there is true union between husbands and wives...

With a Christological Center (v.32)

A profound mystery, indeed...

The Relationship Experienced - 1 Peter 3:7-12

In its Responsibilities

These are particularly important for a husband not to become a tyrant in the exercise of his authority, particularly when a wife is being submissive.

- Be gentle and understanding, recognizing her vulnerability.
- Show her honor and respect her, as a sister in Christ.

In its Reasons

We are to do this...

...Since they are heirs with you [joint heirs] of the grace of life...

Here it is – husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, respecting their femininity as more physically, spiritually and emotionally vulnerable sister.

Because of our Eternal Perspective

We are joint-heirs in heaven.

This language always points us to our being adopted and given full standing as heirs with Jesus. This is meant to focus our relationship in eternity. I am related to this woman in ways that transcend this moment in time and history. Esther and I will not be married in heaven – but we will always be brother and sister in Christ, standing together as full joint heirs with our Lord. Wives do not enter into their spiritual inheritance by virtue of their earthly union to their husbands in marriage, but by virtue of their spiritual union to the Lord Jesus in salvation.

Because of our Temporal Partnership

We are partakers in the grace of life. Notice the appeal here. It is not to the fact of our being partners in marriage, but to the fact of our being partners in grace. Brothers, in all respects in all ways treat your wife as your Christian sister. She is your temporal earthly partner and she is your eternal spiritual partner.

Why does the Bible think this way? Because the Bible sees the community of believers, the church, as the primary context in which all of your life as a believer exists. If you think of your home as the primary context and you add the church to it as appendage (and maybe even a very important addition), you will simply not understand why this is important nor how the Bible is thinking. 1 Peter 2 makes clear what a Christian is in relationship – in relationship to God and to brothers and sisters. I understand that for most of you this is a new concept – but, I believe this is what the Bible teaches. It is what has shaped Esther and I as a family.

I want to stress this to us. It will radically change the way you treat your wife. It will open wide ranges of Scripture to affect your walk with her in every area. Now instead of three major texts, every text that speaks to horizontal relationships now is clearly brought to bear. It is my observation that we are in deep need of repentance – many Christian men would NEVER treat another Christian lady the way they treat their wives. This, brothers, is terrible. This is evidence that you are not seeing your wife as your Christian sister. Imagine what would happen if you consistently treated the women in this congregation that way you treat your wife.

Because of Hindered Prayers

If we do not treat our wives as we should, our prayers will be hindered. We will not have freedom of conscience nor access. Wonder how much praying by men is snarled on the thorns of their poor treatment of their spouses.

The heart of a godly wife prizes meekness and quietness as God's treasures in her character and conduct. The heart of a husband values his wife as a treasure and honors her as a Christian sister.

In its Conduct (v.8-9a)

How many churches and homes would be very different if we just did these things. Reflect on what changes we all need to make in these areas.

Seek Harmony

We are to live, love and lead with an aim to produce harmony. Leadership intending to produce disharmony in order to gain power is wicked. Sometimes, those who refuse to follow leadership will be out of harmony, but godly leadership them must work to bring repentance and restore harmony through submission.

Be Sympathetic

We are to live, love and lead with a heart identifying with the struggles and sufferings of our spouses. Verse 7 is rooted in this heart attitude. Detached and distant spouses will never know others well enough to care for their troubles.

Love as Christians

We are to live, love and lead with brotherly love. This is a single adjective used to describe our relationship with others. Always we are to have hearts trusting and treasuring people as an expression of familial love. In our marriages, being related to one another as Christians means that brotherly love guides and guards our leading.

Be Compassionate Kind hearted

We are to live, love and lead with a tender heart. Spouses with callused, hear hearts will be unwilling to show compassion. We must have broken hearts before God so that we will have kind hearts toward our spouses.

Be Humble

We are to live, love and lead together with a lowly mindedness that looks like courtesy. The word here is an adjective that describes a way of thinking of oneself that causes us to be courteous. It is a lowliness of heart that will serve our spouses and not expect that we will be publicly acknowledged and announced.

Not Retaliate

We are not to respond to evil done to us by our spouses:

Not in evil deeds – repaying in kind

Not in evil words – returning insults

Bless

We instad are to speak to our spouses in a way that bless them

In its Cause (v.9b-12)

This is what you were called to which will end in eternal blessing. Quoted from Psalm 34:12-16. But the whole Psalm gives us the motivation for submission. We are free to submit when we understand the fear of God.

The Authority of Scripture

(v.10-11)

Peter connects what he has taught to the authority and direction of Scripture. As he quotes the Psalm, we are expected to think of the whole Psalm as governing the kind of people we are to become. We are also expected to locate his instruction and our own experience in the Psalm as well.

There is an appeal to our God-given (and often sinfully abused) desire for happiness (v.10a). Peter through the Psalmist re-wires what is supposed to make us happy. He does not locate happiness in our circumstances. He locates it in our response to those circumstances. If we are going to be genuinely happy, then we must be authentically holy. Those who want to love life and see good days must...

The call to holiness from the Psalm governs how we exercise Biblical leadership (v.10b-11). For this whole month, these three major precepts will be worked out in each sphere of life. You can easily see how what he has said is derived directly from what the Psalmist has written.

In our marriage, we must control our tongue.
In our marriage, we must do what is right.
In our marriage, we must pursue peace.

The Accountability of Spouses

(v.12)

We are living before the face of God. In whatever role you have in your marriage you live before the face of God. Living before the face of God means there are consequences now. God will hear your prayers or He may resist your efforts.

Note how this connects to verse 7. The Lord sees the quality of our relationship with our wives and He is either open to our prayers or sets His face against us. So Peter has not created a new notion that our relationship to our spouses affects our prayers. He has read this Psalm and applied to these situations, recognizing the roles and responsibilities entailed. So verse 10 connects to the first phrase of 9 and verse 11 to the second phrase of verse 9.

But don't miss it. God's ears are open to the righteous – the husbands who live with their wives according to knowledge, who respect them as weaker vessels, since we are all partners in grace, brother and sisters. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil – the husbands who are ignorant and insensitive of their wives, treating them as slaves or children, not honoring them as feminine expressions of the image of God in their womanhood, and little thinking of them as their sweet sisters in grace and partners in salvation.

When the Relationship does not Exist - Romans 12:9-21

What do I do if my spouse is not a believer?

In our Christian relationships - brotherly love (v.9-13)

This text reinforces our primary responsibility to our Christian spouses – look at this paragraph phrase by phrase and ask your self if this is how you treat your spouse?

In our non-Christian relationships - peaceable living (v.14-21)

The Symmetrical structure pointing to the key principle

A (v.14) With blessing

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.

B (v.15-16) With humility and empathy

Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be conceited.

C (v.17) With honor, not retaliation

Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all.

D (v.18) With a goal to live in peace

If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

C' (v.19) With trust in God, not revenge

Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."

B' (v.20) With doing more than expected

To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head."

A' (v.21) With doing good

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

The structure helps us understand the relationship between the parts and how Paul brings us to the core idea. In all our relationships with people in the world around us, as heaven's citizens, as much as it depends on us, we are to live peaceably with all.

As much as you can, live peaceably with your unbelieving spouse

So we move towards our unbelieving spouse with:

blessing (v.14),

empathy (v.15),

harmony and humility (v.16)

*and a public willingness to be wronged for
Christ's sake.*

And when our unbelieving spouse moves against us we respond with:

peaceableness (v.18),

no revenge (v.19),

goodness (v.20)

*and with victory defined by God's terms and
agenda (v.21).*

Biblical Roles in Marriage

Functional Family Roles in the Scriptures

RUSS KENNEDY AND CONTRIBUTORS

Wives submit to your husbands... Husbands love your wives...

Introduction

Formational Identity – Ephesians 1-4

Before we get to the roles of the husband and the wife, we must first examine what the Bible says about the ***relationship*** and ***companionship*** existing between the Christian husband and the Christian wife. Most of us know where to turn in order to find the roles of the husband and wife (Ephesians 5, 1 Peter 3, Col 3, etc.). But, if we are not careful, we will move quickly to the roles and ***ignore the foundation*** that we must understand in order to put these roles into the proper place. How foolish is it to build a house on a sandy foundation? Yet, this is exactly what we do when we begin with the building stones (roles) rather than a strong foundation (relationship & companionship with God & spouse).

Humbly undeserving of God's blessings

God has moved to glorify Himself by saving His people through His grace alone.

Equally honored in God's purposes

Christians are equally recognized and honored by God...

Fully justified in God's sight

Christians are equally declared righteous in God's sight...

Jointly responsible to make peace

We must view ourselves as ***prisoners of the Lord and thus make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace that must exist in the church and in the home where Christ reigns supremely in the hearts of both believing husbands and wives.*** We will no longer live as unbelievers do (given over to sensuality and lust). As sanctified ones, we will commit ourselves to ongoing, continual, humble repentance by being made new in the attitude of our hearts and minds so that we may put off the old self and put on the new. Thus, we will speak wholesomely rather than rottenly; we will not grieve the Spirit of God by being angry ones but will walk in the Spirit by being kind, compassionate, and forgiving one another.

Independently viewed as God's elect children

So, we can see quite clearly that the Spirit of God tells us, in His Living Word, that one must first understand this relational dynamic before we can adequately understand the roles of either a husband or a wife.

Foundational Relationship – brother and sister in Christ

Once again, most of what the Bible requires of us in marriage is not because we are married, but because we are Christians.

MUST GET STUDENTS TO UNDERSTAND THIS – a great deal of where marriages go wrong and the nonsense that fills even religious books on marriage is because of not understanding, considering or applying this important principle.

Functional Roles (Relationship) – husband and wife in marriage

Authority and submission function within our roles as husband and wife. It is necessary and both must be exercised in a way that is pleasing to God.

Our relationship and our roles must never:

- Be used in one to deny the other (equality does not deny submission)
- Confused as though they are just different ways of saying the same thing.

Establishing a New Family (Genesis 2:24)

Reflecting on the whole movement of the Bible in the “from the old to the new” this seminal text is an anchor for a number of themes in the Bible.

Required to Leave

To establish a new home: the man is required to leave his parents home. He does not bring a new wife into his parent's home and under their authority. Not his or her father, not his or her mother, **he** is to establish his own sphere of rule and governance. When we do this, we are effectively denying a massive body of truth in the Scripture relating to leaving the old covenant and moving into the new, leaving the old world and into the new, leaving the authority of the world into the authority of Christ, etc.

Required to Cleave

To hold fast to his wife: the man is to fully embrace, connect to, and cling to his wife. His old family ties take a second place. He is to intentionally point his whole heart, being and soul to his wife. Thus, he reflects Christ's unimaginable love for us and our response to go out unto Christ with all we are.

Headship in the Marriage

The Scripture has established that the husband is the head of the household. This is a declaration made by the Scriptures. It is a fact, in indicative not an imperative. So the questions then for Christians are:

- Do you believe that God has ordained the husband as head?
- Where is there a model, a pattern of headship to follow?
- How do you carry out that headship?
- How is headship related to the relationship and roles in a marriage?

The Foundations of Headship in Marriage

The Divine Order

1 Corinthians 11:2–3

² Now I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you. ³ But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.

Colossians 2:9–10

⁹ For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, ¹⁰ and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.

In the Church

Christ is the head of every man (in the church)

In the Home

The husband is head of the wife

In the Trinity

All persons in Godhead are equal
The Father is the head of Christ

The Exaltation of Christ

Ephesians 1:22–23

²² And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Ephesians 4:15

¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,

- Connection of headship with authority
- Because Christ has all authority He has been made head over all things to the church
- Develops the analogy of the head and the body

The Preeminence of Christ

Colossians 1:18

¹⁸ *And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.*

The Function of Headship in the Home

The New Testament works out the application of headship in the home.

Ephesians 5:22–24

²² *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.*

In the Authority of the Husband

- He has the authority and responsibility over the home
- He must lead and manage his household well
- He must exercise his authority as Christ exercises His.

In the Submission of the Wife

- She is to respect and submit to her own husband
- She is to counsel and advise her husband
- She is to be diligent in the work given to her

The Limitations of Headship in the Home

Of the Husband's Authority

- He must not be harsh or a tyrant (Colossians 3:19)
- He must treat his wife with honor and respect (1 Peter 3:7)
- He must not treat his wife like a child
- He must not command her to sin or to violate her conscience

Of the Wife's Submission

- She may disobey if ordered to do disobey God's commands.
- She may disobey if ordered not to do God's commands.

The Role of a Wife in the Family

Ephesians 5:22-24; Colossians 3:18

Its Command (v.22)

Submission – to bend one's will under the authority of another.

Standard – as to the Lord as both the ultimate authority over us and as limiting submission.

Wives are to submit to their husbands in all things except sin.

Its Cause (v.23)

The husband's headship is reflecting the Christ's headship over the church. Christ's headship has both leadership and liberty for the church.

FOR THE MEN: This does not mean that the wife is your servant to do your bidding or to bend to your every whim, preference or demand. You are to exercise this kind of authority only when you cannot agree on a necessary decision. You must not view nor treat your wife as being subservient.

Its Comparison (v.24)

This is an important comparison and command. But it does not exist in a vacuum. Wives are to look to the submission of the church to Christ as a model, a guideline for their own submission to their husbands.

DISCUSS: What would be some examples of when this would help in submission issues?

The Essential Training of a Wife in the Family - Titus 2:2-5

Instructions to older women in the Lord in essential training

Qualifications for the Older Women (v.3a)

Not just any Christian woman is to be training younger women but only those who have these character qualities in addition (likewise) to those of the mature men.

Content of their Training (v.3b-5a)

Teach what is good – instruct in what is true to the Scriptures and tested wisdom in their culture

Train in these categories – illustrative list establishing minimal instruction, but much more is often needed

Notice that it is expected that younger women will need instruction in these areas. Sin and depravity must be reversed by Biblical teaching in all these areas. The first two are critical: loving husbands and children. The sinful tendency is to confuse Biblical love with self-love in relationships.

Reason/Goal of the Wives' Godliness (v.5b)

Aim is maintain public respect for the Word of God and not bring it into disrepute because the wives conduct is not in line with the teaching of the Bible and not pleasing to God.

The Role of the Husband in the Family

- Ephesians 5:22-33; Colossians 3:19

Its Command to Sacrificial Love (v.25-27)

Statement (v.25a)

Simple command yet so often husbands struggle with loving their wives.

Standard (v.25b)

Christ-like, self-giving, sacrificial – these two words describe the love required

Process (v.26)

This is a love aimed at brining about her best good

Purpose (v.27)

For the glory and honor of God, to help her fulfill her identity and purpose in Christ

Its Practice in the Home (Colossians 3:19)

Do not be harsh with them – the tone of our talk

Its Command to Selfless Love (v.28-30)

Statement (v.28-29a)

Love her in a way that cares for her needs and is attendant to her troubles

Standard (v.29b)

Because this is what we do for ourselves – so, look to caring for her like Christ cares for us, His body

Give special attention to your wife's heart and physical needs. What are some ways that husbands can do this?

Principle (v.30)

Underlying our love and care for wives (roles) is our relationship as believers, joint members of Christ's body

Its Biblical Foundation (v.31-32)

Rooted in the Old Testament (v.31, Genesis 2:24)

Quotes from Genesis connecting the theme of true union in marriage as reflecting true union in Christ

Rooted in a Profound Mystery (v.32)

The mystery here is not that this is unknown, but rather that it is a theme hidden in the Old Covenant which is now revealed or illuminated in the New Covenant.

The Example in Biblical Maturity - Titus 1:5-8; 1 Timothy 3:1-13

The qualifications for office bearers become goals for maturity in our homes
Titus 1:5-8

1 Timothy 3:1-13

Standards for Men

Key – manage his household well, keeping his children submissive with dignity,

Standards for Women

Dignified, careful in speech, serious minded (not frivolous or flighty)

Summary - Ephesians 5:33

Core summary commands for the husband and wife roles...

³³ *However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.*

Love your wife

In your role as a husband, sincerely, sacrificially, and selflessly love because leading is the key...

Respect your husband

In your role as a wife, respect and respond to your husband because submission is the key...

Pleasing God with Sinning Spouses (1 Peter 3:1-7;ff)

Context: Living as exiles where we are serving and submitting in the midst suffering as we follow our great Shepherd

The Wife with a Disobedient Husband (v.1-6)

Exhortations for Godliness (v.1-5)

Her Actions

Submissive

Respectful and pure

Her Attitudes

Gentleness of heart

Quietness of heart

Her Aims

To win her husband without nagging

Example of Godliness (v.6)

Her Name and Situation

Sarah and Abraham in the Old Testament where Abraham was disobedient

Her Faith and Faithfulness

Hoped in God

Submitted to Abraham

Do good without fear

The Husband with an Unsubmissive Wife (v.7)

Understand her Situation

She is supposed to submit to you...

Honor her as a Woman

Her vulnerability as has just been expressed in verses 1-6 and therefore honor her...

Treat her as a Christian

Because you are both heirs of the grace of life...

Thinking it Through

Summarize and apply the essential teaching and have students respond to it.

Wrong Views about Love

(Taken from An Exemplary Husband, by Stuart Scott)

“Love is a feeling”.

Although love is accompanied by “affections” and “feelings”, one must not be so naïve as to believe that love “is” a feeling. Is God’s love merely “emotive” or does it express itself in many ways?

“Sexual conquest”

(tabloids, commercialism, etc.). Yet, while God Himself is revealed through sexual terms (noting masculine pronouns), nowhere do the Members of the Trinity look so selfishly upon the others. Sex can be nothing more than selfish lust.

“Merely commitment”

This is particularly popular in American Evangelicalism where people have reacted against “emotive” views of love and all but eliminated affections and emotions altogether.

“Physical attraction”

Liking the way someone looks or being physically attracted to someone’s body can be a result of pure selfishness. What happens when the appearance becomes significantly altered by age, event, or weight gain?

“Needing someone”

The person who feels that they cannot live without the relationship is really more selfish than loving. They are gaining something from the other person that they feel they desperately need.

“Benefiting”

They are in love because they receive great benefits from the other person. When they say that they love someone, what they are really saying is that they like what the other person does for them.

“Loving words alone”

It is OK to live by making consistently selfish and inconsiderate choices because they can quickly make up for it by having the talk of love.

“Loving actions alone”

This can be the closest thing to Biblical love. The commitment and awareness along with the actions is there, but the verbal expression of love is lacking. This is a very common problem in marriages. It could stem from an embarrassment to express love verbally. Or it

could stem from a selfish desire to keep what they have by keeping the other person “happy” at the expense of truthfulness, admonishment, and accountability. This is actually loving yourself more than the other person.

“Being in love”

This is a completely unbiblical term and concept. This refers to love as a state of being. There is no reference to love like that in the Scriptures. The emotions do come and go, but love does not.

Biblical View of True Love:

Christlikeness of a Biblical love

Love is initiated first by Christ – 1 John 4:9-11

Christ’ love is enduring – Psalm 106:1

Christ’s love is verbalized – Jeremiah 31:3

Christ’s love is compassionate – Psalm 112:4

Christ’s love is demonstrated by actions – Romans 5:8

Christ always does what is best for us – Romans 8:28

Christ’s love is self-sacrificial – Philippians 2:7-8

Christ’s love involves treasuring us, even though we are not worthy – Isaiah 42:1

Christ’s love is not based on performance – Psalm 103:10

Characteristics of a Biblical Love - 1 Corinthians 13

⁴ Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant ⁵ or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ⁶ it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

A working definition of biblical love:

A selfless and enduring commitment of the will to care about and benefit another person by righteous, truthful, and compassionate thoughts, words, and actions.

Wrong views of leadership

Leadership as dictatorial rule.

Leadership as chief, or only decision maker.

Men must remember that their wives are their helpers. A husband needs the insight and gifts of his wife. So, headship does not mean crushing a wife's talents or making all the decisions without reference to her or the children. It does not mean that the wife has no decision making ability or authority (Proverbs 31). A good manager will use his wife's abilities to the fullest, recognizing that God has provided his wife as his helper.

God is building his church (new temple imagery) and He has chosen to do the work through his bride, whom He has gifted to do the work as His helper.

Leadership as demanding.

Husbands, do not force their wives to submit, but learn from Christ who leads his often times obstinate church. Read John 10:27ff. Remember, men are not 'cattle herders' leading a stampede but are 'husbands' shepherding the sheep in their fold.

Biblical Views of Leadership:

Leadership as demonstration of concern for genuine needs of others.

Notice that Paul states in Ephesians 5 that husbands are to take care of their wives as their own body. Just as God affectionately cares for His bride, so too a man ought to passionately lead his wife. A husband must remember to minister to his wife's 'true needs' and not always her 'felt' or 'perceived' needs.

Leadership as the pacesetter.

Again, Christ sets the pace in his home, the church. Christ lived his life purposefully and God has his goal for his bride, – "Christlikeness". Likewise, men must 'lead' with purpose, with God's goals foremost.

Leadership as God honoring problem solver.

Instead of saying to his wife, "you will have to figure out how to get along with such and such a child", a godly husband will establish solutions to problems existing in the household – Eph. 4:29-31. Too many homes are in shambles today, in part, because men do not know how or follow the way of solving conflicts peacefully.

Again, God Himself solves our problems. Who gives hope to His bride? Who is faithful to His promises? Who gives us gracious instruction so that we will walk uprightly? Our Husband.

Leadership as teacher.

Every man, no matter what measure of the gift, possesses the responsibility to faithfully and joyfully teach his wife and family members (1 Tim. 2:11-12; 3:4,5,12; 1 Cor. 14:34).

Wrong Views of Submission:

Saying that the wife is inferior to her husband

The Trinity has submission, yet They are equal. 1 Peter says that the husband and wife are heirs together of the gift of life. As we discussed in the part on Biblical manhood and womanhood, a husband and wife are equal of essence but different in function.

Saying that her husband is infallible

Her husband's authority is derived, not deserved. He is the head because of God's design, not because he has earned it.

Saying that she is her husband's slave or doormat

A wife is never more free than when she is submissive. A train is free to operate most efficiently when it is running on the tracks. Also a wife is never to allow herself to be a doormat in the way our society uses that word, nor should she practice "tough love". She is to stand firm in the grace of the Lord and overcome evil according to God's methods.

Saying that she never opens her mouth, has an opinion, or gives advice

It is the wise husband who will solicit the opinions and advice of his wife. She is his completer – she is the one who provides him with the other part.

Saying that she is a wallflower and allows her abilities and intellect to lie dormant and undeveloped

The Proverbs 31 wife was developed to the fullest.

Saying that it is OK for a wife to manipulate her husband for her own ends

This would be evident from a comment like, "He may be the head, but I'm the neck that turns the head."

Biblical View of Submission:

The divine plan for function and order

The Greek word used is primarily a military word and signifies "to rank under". It is God's way for everything to function in an orderly fashion.

A way of life for all believers

God ordained submission in the Trinity, the church, at work, in society, in government, as well as in the home.

The basis for the wife's protection

1 Peter 3 describes how suffering under authority for righteousness' sake causes no fear. Many decisions are made for a wife who is submissive. When her husband makes a decision that is unwise, she allows him to suffer the consequences of his foolishness.

The way for true joy in the life of the wife (James 1:25; John 15:9,10)

As a wife submits to her husband's leadership, she is obeying God's command. James tells us that when we do what God commands, we are blessed in what we do.

A way to show love to her husband

Titus 2 describes the wife who loves her husband as one who submits to him.

Being obedient to God's command – showing love to God

John 14:15 says that if you love God you will keep His commandments.

An act of the wife's will – to make herself submissive

The construction of the Greek makes it the responsibility of the wife to make herself submissive. The verb is in the middle voice. Nowhere does Scripture command a husband to force his wife into submission.

A spiritual matter – “as to the Lord”

Refusal to submit is rebellion against God. Submission is a test of her love for God. Submission is an act of obedience to God. The context of the commands to be submissive indicates that it can only be performed by women whose hearts have been cleansed by the blood of Christ, who are being strengthened in the inner man by the Holy Spirit, and are being filled up to all fullness of God.

To be in everything that is not sin

Ephesians says a wife is to submit in everything. Yet the authority of a husband is a limited, delegated authority from God. It is beyond the limit of authority for the husband to ask his wife to sin. She is not under command to sin against God.. But even when she is to obey God rather than man, she is to do it in a respectful manner.

Even to an unbelieving husband

1 Peter is written to women who are married to unbelievers. The command is to submit to them in everything, as well.

Emphasizing what the wife should do instead of what she should not do

One person defined submission as, “the freedom to be creative under divinely appointed authority”. She is not her husband's opponent, she is a vital part of his team. She puts all of her talents, abilities, resources, and energy at her husband's disposal. She yields and uses all of her abilities under the management of her husband and for his good and the good of the family. She has ideas, opinions, desires, requests, and insights that she lovingly makes known to her husband.

A way for the wife to stay beautiful

The unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit in 1 Peter 3.

Respectfully reproving her husband when he is sinning

Galatians 6 is just as important in the husband-wife relationship as in the whole spear of Christianity. A husband and wife are brother and sister in the Lord before they are husband and wife.

One way the wife can make sure the Word of God is not maligned

Titus 2 instructs that a woman who is not submissive to her husband is giving an opportunity for outsiders to malign the Word of God.

Lesson 30

Biblical Leadership in the Home

Helping People with Unbiblical Models

Russ Kennedy

Introduction

Purposes

- To help men as leaders in their home
- To help Christians think in Biblical categories
- To help identify false teaching affecting the current Christian scene
- To help show the typical lies and lusts that drive men

Summary

This workshop will focus helping Christians develop the Biblical model of leadership for their homes. It will deal with some of the historic and prevalent models but will focus on the cross-cultural, Biblical models. We will discuss how to address the objections and issues that surround authority and submission while prizing and maintaining the brother/sister relationships foundational to marriage.

Defining Leadership

What is the definition of *leadership*?

World's Models

Authoritarian Macho-
Man Sweet Metro-Man
...

Common Christian Models

King?
Priest?
Sage (Prophet)?
Friend?

Mentor?
Others...
Family Influences
Poor Models
Failure to Leave and Cleave
Discouragement of not being followed...
Others...

Engaging Biblical Categories

A Surprising Problem

Where does the Bible talk about husbands leading their homes?

No direct text where it is a *verb*

No direct text where it is a *command*

So, what do you make of that?

Biblical view

Genesis 1 - 2

Genesis 1

Equal in personhood/humanity

Equal as image bearers

Genesis 2

Subordination in the roles

Adam was created first

Adam was given God's revelation

Adam was given the task

Eve was created second

Eve was a helper

1 Peter 3:7

⁷ Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

Man and woman are first brother and sister in Christ

Roles = Husband and Wife
Relationship = Brother and Sister

Bible language is Headship

1 Corinthians 11:2-3

² Now I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you. ³ But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.

- Christ is head of the man...
- The husband is head of the wife...
- God is the head of Christ...

Ephesians 5:23

²³ For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.

- The husband is head of the home
- The husband has authority over the home

Standards for Husbands

¹ Timothy 3:1-13 also Titus 1:5-9

¹ The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. ² Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³ not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. ⁴ He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive. ⁵ for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?...

Studying the qualifications for deacons and elders

God sets the agenda

God establishes the standards

Rooted in Christ's headship

Love and sacrifice are the primary verbs and commands...

Characterized by the qualifications for church office

Sets the categories

Normative for all men, not just Shepherds and Servants

Is both heart and behavior oriented

Sees leadership with:

Wife

Children

Finances

Vocation

Neighbors

1 Peter 5:1-5

¹ So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: ² shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; ³ not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. ⁴ And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. ⁵ Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

- Not lording it over...
- Humbly...
- For the good of others...

Modeled by Christ's Headship over People

Christ is the head of man

Establishes the moral framework

Establishes what must be accomplished

Gives freedom to choose wisely

Discussion

What challenges you the most?

What convicts you in this teaching?

What will you need to confess to God and spouse?

What changes will you commit to make?

How does the gospel affect your leadership?

Understanding Headship in the Home

The Foundations of Headship in Marriage

The Divine Order

1 Corinthians 11:2–3

² Now I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you. ³ But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.

Colossians 2:9–10

⁹ For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, ¹⁰ and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.

In the Church

Christ is the head of every man (in the church)

In the Home

The husband is head of the wife

In the Trinity

All persons in Godhead are equal

The Father is the head of Christ

The Exaltation of Christ

Ephesians 1:22–23

²² *And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.*

Ephesians 4:15

¹⁵ *Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,*

Connection of headship with authority

Because Christ has all authority He has been made head over all things to the church

Develops the analogy of the head and the body

The Preeminence of Christ

Colossians 1:18

¹⁸ *And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.*

The Function of Headship in the Home

The New Testament works out the application of headship in the home.

Ephesians 5:22–24

²² *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.*

In the Authority of the Husband

He has the authority and responsibility over the home

He must lead and manage his household well

He must exercise his authority as Christ exercises His.

In the Submission of the Wife

She is to respect and submit to her own husband

She is to counsel and advise her husband

She is to be diligent in the work given to her

The Limitations of Headship in the Home

Of the Husband's Authority

- He must not be harsh or a tyrant (Colossians 3:19)
- He must treat his wife with honor and respect (1 Peter 3:7)
- He must not treat his wife like a child
- He must command her to sin or to violate her conscience

Of the Wife's Submission

- She may disobey if ordered to do disobey God's commands.
- She may disobey if ordered not to do God's commands.

Practical Transformation

Heart Issues

Lusts

What wants and desires drive poor leadership?

Control

Peace

Lies

What false beliefs, trusts and treasures frame poor leadership?

Absolute authority

Total equality - 50/50

Functional Engagement

Gathering data

How does *this husband* with *this situation* and *this family* act wisely, foolishly, sinfully?

- Journaling - capturing the moment
- Narratives - telling the story
- Heart talk - what were you thinking
- Wife words - Focusing on the wife's perspectives

Identifying core issues

How does this man with this situation and this family think?

- Heart issues - what lies and lusts drive this husband?
- Idols - who is the functional god of this husband?
- Functional theology - who is God in this man's life

Calling for Repentance

How does *this husband* with this situation and this family repent?

In his thinking

Confession of sin

- To God
- To wife
- To children

Resting in grace, not law

Put on what is right

Strategic transformation

How does this husband with this situation and this family change?

Two pronged trajectories for change

Most easily dealt with immediately with short term goals

Most damaging dealt with immediately with long term goals

Restructuring for companionship, complementing and managing

Plan for building companionship and communication

Plan for decision making using Way of Wisdom model

Steps of decision making

Priorities

Delegated unilateral

Authority-submission decisions

Plan for restructuring household management

Building use of complementing skills, abilities, interests and resources of time and effort

Personal inventories

Financial development and management

Plan for ministry involvement

Believers should be practicing obedience and disciplines

Believers should be involved in ministry

Believers should be involved in the right ministries

Developing accountability

Initial implementation overseen by Biblical helpers

Secondary implementation monitored by shepherds or deacon

Regular checkups for on-going progress

Discussion

What challenges you the most?

What convicts you in this teaching?

What will you need to confess to God and spouse?

What changes will you commit to make?

How does the gospel affect your leadership?

Parental Attitudes and Wants

Idols of the Heart in Rearing Children

Tim Pasma and Jim Koerber

Introduction

There is an epidemic happening with some of our children. They are rebellious, frustrated, and disrespectful. They seem not to care about their behavior. They don't consider what consequences there may be or the severity of the consequences for their actions. They have given up any hope that their parents will really listen to them, or care about them. They believe the only people their parents care about is themselves.

Statement of Topic

Parents experience heartache and frustration when they have a child or children who are rebellious and disrespectful. Those parents are not left on their own. God has promised that all things that pertain to life and godliness are found in His Word. This includes parenting children who are causing family turmoil.

Exposing the Issue

What are the issues, concerns, and difficulties that Christian parents face? What are the false wisdoms and perspectives that keep them from responding to their children in ways that please God?

Parental Challenges

Evangelical churches lose 70% of their young people.

Children haven't bought into the faith of their parents. Some have been flying under the radar, and others have been playing church. What are the ways these kids leave the faith: going off to college, finding a way to leave home and support themselves, or staying at home and refusing to go to church. Anything to get out from under demands, threats, pressures, expected behavior, manipulation, increasing control, and punishment. It appears parents are failing.

The media and outside influences

Cartoons, music, magazines, movies, computer games, cell phones, and all the other kids with whom they hang out, glorify violence, foul language, lack of consequences, and fun that glorifies and tempts the desires of their sinful hearts.

Unsaved extended family members

They seem so happy and nothing really bad happens to them. They do as they please without restraints, and they seem to enjoy their lives with no thought about God or the church.

Confusion of how to rear children

There are many books, teachers, preachers, talk shows, experts, parenting retreats, as well as how other parents rear their children. Who's right? What's right?

Parental Aims

When parents are asked what their aims are for their kids, this is a sample of what you'll hear:

I want my children to be successful.

I want my children to make a good living.

I want my children not to embarrass me.

I want my children to appreciate and respect me.

I want my children to obey me without complaint or excuse.

I want my children to give me peace and quiet.

I want my children to go to college.

I want my children to be the best athletes at their school.

I want my children to excel in whatever they do.

I don't want my children to live as I did.

I want my children to avoid all the problems and heartaches I suffered growing up.

I want my children to be saved.

We want to be careful here. Wanting our children to be saved is a godly aim. However, parents think that all the child needs is to pray "the sinner's prayer" and all the problems of living will be solved. But parental work does not end with a profession of faith. There is still much to do.

God's Aim for Child Rearing

There is an answer for what is right and what is wrong. Here is what God says is the aim for parents:

Rear your children in such a way that they will glorify and enjoy God by becoming independent, godly disciples who love God, have biblical self-awareness, and handle God's Word in such a way that they can solve problems of life God's way.

Biblical evidence for His aim

Matthew 5:16 and Philippians 1:20 – glorifying God

Genesis 2:24 – being independent

Hebrews 12:10-11 – being holy and righteous

2 Peter 1:3-4 and 2 Timothy 3:16-17 – having the ability to handle God's Word being taught how they can solve problems God's way

Psalms 73:25-26 and Psalm 63 – finding pleasure in God

Matthew 15:1-20; Ezekiel 14:1-11; and Proverbs 4:23 – having a biblical self-awareness

Change in Parent's Aims

Instead of the aims they previously had, parents are now equipped to rear their children prepared for life and for God's glory.

God's Commands to Parents

Bring them up – Ephesians 6:4

Bring them up is an imperative – a command, not a choice

The command is in the active voice – Parents must assume control. Otherwise, the child will live an undisciplined life

The command is in the present tense – you do this over the long haul.

It is addressed to fathers

How many parents are addressed in verses 1-3? Both are involved, but Dad is ultimately responsible.

Why is this addressed to fathers?

Dads tend to ignore children – too many fathers believe that, because they work, they have earned the right to kick up their feet and not be bothered with their children.

This fits with the biblical teaching concerning headship (Ephesians 5:22-23; 1 Timothy 3:5,12)

Do not exasperate – Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:21

Exasperation does not mean you never upset, annoy, displease, or deny your child – 1 Kings 1:5-6

It does mean you avoid “doing those things that would tend to stimulate your children to a wrathful kind of living” ^v (Proverbs 19:19; Proverbs 22:24-25; Proverbs 25:28)

Proverbs 19:19 – “A man of great wrath will pay the penalty, for if you deliver him, you will only have to do it again.”

Proverbs 22:24-25 – “Make no friendship with a man given to anger, or go with a wrathful man, lest you learn his ways and entangle yourself in a snare.”

Proverbs 25:28 – “A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls.” This is a picture of a defenseless person – one who is controlled by all the people and circumstances around him.

Charles Hodge said that parents “are not to excite the bad passions of their children,” nor should a father “by his own ill conduct nurture evil in the heart of his child.” ^{vi}

It carries with it the idea that you do not bring them up in such a way that they are characterized by perpetual resentment or impulsive anger.

The Bible describes at least two kinds of anger.

Open rebellion, hostility, exploding, blowing up, displaying a hot temper. (Proverbs 14:29; Proverbs 15:18; Proverbs 19:19; Proverbs 22:24; Proverbs 29:11)

Passive resentment, apathy, indifference, withdrawal, silence, sub-par performance, suicidal inclinations – anger that is bottled up, held down. (Ephesians 4:26,27,31; Colossians 3:21)

This is the kind of anger often found in ADHD kids and quiet rebels. Many parents accept this kind of anger because the child isn’t bothering them. They have compliance, but they have lost sight of God’s aim. They have compliance, but they have not engaged the heart.

Counseling Parents

Foundational Issues

Parenting is not an issue of technique; it is an issue of obedience to God concerning parent’s hearts and aims for their children.

God’s ways of rearing children are not inadequate, they are simply untried.

Parents do not deal with problems in isolation. God has provided His aim for rearing their children. The Bible is sufficient for this issue.

Don't allow parents to dictate the agenda – you are the one who establishes the agenda.

Child problems start with the parents' hearts. They have aims that are contrary to God's aim for their children. Their hearts will, most likely, be exposed by their behavior, reactions, and words. That's why you must begin with the hearts of the parents.

Counseling

The initial session

This is a critical session for both parents and child. The child probably doesn't want to be at this session. They are probably sitting with their arms folded, their iPod in their ears, or are on their cell phone texting all their friends about what their parents are making them do. They have zero interest in what's going on and have no intention of participating in this forced meeting. They are slumped in the chair and have moved their chair as far away from their parents as possible. You, as the counselor, need to get this child to participate. It is obvious from what you observe, this kid is only there because his parents made him. And it's obvious the parents are in no way going to take any blame for what has been going on. The strategy proposed here is to try to get the child to participate and trust that you are going to be impartial in handling their problems.

Parents will present, as the reason they are coming, that they are having problems with their child or children.

Start the session with all those involved in the room at the same time.

Explain that you are going to meet separately with each group: child first, and then the parents. Your explanation for this is critical for everyone to be comfortable with the plan and understands the reasoning for it. The parents are asked to leave and wait in the waiting room.

The reason for this approach is to give the child freedom to talk openly with the counselor, without the interference of their parents, giving the child the opportunity to see that you're not on anyone's side.

The child expected his parents to talk first, thereby telling you their side of what is wrong. The child's reservations will have been confirmed. They believed you would listen to their parents first and they wouldn't have any opportunity to tell their side. Naturally you, the counselor, would believe their parent's explanation as being the truth. Therefore, you can't be objective. You will be partial to their parent's side with no intention of listening to their side of the problems.

This way of conducting the first session will hopefully put the child's mind at ease that the counselor is concerned about him and is not on anyone's side. They can now at least believe there is hope that the counselor will be impartial.

After your time with the child, the parents are brought in and the child is asked to wait in the waiting room.

Data gathering

All parties are brought back together after this individual data gathering has been completed. As part of your time with the child, ask him if he's willing to tell his parents what's going on with him and what he thinks and feels. Prepare the parents for what the next item is going to be and ask them to not interrupt, and to listen carefully to their child. Lay ground rules for how conversations are going to be done, cautioning both the parents and the child. Ask the child to explain his side of the issues. It will probably be the first time his parents have

heard it. This will take wisdom and discernment on your part for this to be done well, or if it should be done at all even with the child agreeing to do it. I suggest that you pray before this begins. You are also going to have to be prepared to step in and take control if and when it appears things are getting out of control.

Don't expect to get much more done than collecting data this first session.

Ask the parents to come to the next appointment without the child/children.

The biggest issue that needs to be addressed is the hearts of the parents. This next session will be the time you begin to help the parents understand their part in the problems.

Summary

When counseling parents, you must have an understanding of their heart motivations, attitudes, desires, and wants.

Parents need to see God's aim for their child rearing and discard the ones they have been pursuing.

Parents have a responsibility to avoid exasperating their children.

As you counsel parents, you must be aware and seek to understand if and how parents are provoking their children.

Lou Priolo, in his book, *The Heart of Anger*, has done a tremendous job of showing how parents provoke their children.

Resources

Mack, Wayne. *Strengthening Your Marriage* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing)

Priolo, Lou. *The Heart of Anger* (New York: Calvary Press Publishing).

Priolo, Lou. *Getting a Grip: The Heart of Anger Handbook for Teens* (New York: Calvary Press Publishing).

Tripp, Paul David. *Age of Opportunity: A Biblical Guide to Parenting Teens* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing).

Tripp, Tedd. *Shepherding a Child's Heart* (Wapwalopen, PA: Shepherd Press).

^v Wayne Mack, *A Homework Manual for Biblical Counseling (Volume 2): Family and Marital Problems*, (Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Co., 1980), p. 71.

^{vi} Quoted in Mack's *Homework Manual (Volume 2)*, p. 71.

Parental Responsibilities

Discipline and Instruction in the Scriptures

Tim Pasma and Russ Kennedy

Introduction

God has not left parents to their own devices for parenting their children. If that were so, sinful parents rearing sinful children would produce a world in which each person would be doing what was right in his own eyes. But, God has given specific instructions for parents to follow in rearing their children.

Statement of Topic

The Bible speaks with authority and clarity on parenting. But parents are not following God's commands and instruction. Families are living in chaos, not only at home, but in public places, including their church.

What God Has Given to Parents

Scripture is always sufficient. God does not leave parents to try to figure out what works in rearing children.

A destination to reach

God says that you must raise your child in such a way that you can reach His destination for families. But exactly how do you get there?

According to Ephesians 6:4, both training and instruction are required.

Training – strict discipline – Hebrews 12:11

'No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful ...'

The word translated as “discipline” is described as “painful.”

It was used for the training of an athlete.

God speaks of structured control or what we commonly call “discipline.”

Instruction (noutheteo) – Titus 3:10; Colossians 3:16; Romans 15:14

It is used to mean “correcting by word of mouth” or to “place into the mind.”

You instruct or admonish in order to gain personal commitment to truth.

You are not stuffing heads with facts, but building inner convictions. Take Daniel as an illustration. He found himself in a different environment, with a changed identity, and not one making sure he was going to obey. Yet he was committed to God’s law.

Two rails

The rail of discipline and the rail of teaching are the rails upon which you and your child travel in order to reach your God-given destination.

Don’t be fooled into thinking that as long as you are a strict disciplinarian, your child will do well. Nor should you think that teaching alone will accomplish getting to God’s destination. Both are essential in reaching your God-given destination

Training - Discipline

God’s command for discipline

The concept of discipline and corporal punishment has fallen on hard times in today’s society.

To say spanking is necessary is to admit that you are a child abuse, and in some states, a law breaker.

What is said in place of spanking is: we must “reason” with children; we need to propose “alternative strategies” to unacceptable behavior; or give them “time outs.”

However, God will not allow you to spare the rod, in spite of societal pressures and the psychologists’ false interpretations and conclusions.

Convictions necessary for Godly discipline

Children are a gift from God – Psalms 127 and 128

God calls them a reward (Psalm 127:3-5) and the man “blessed” who has many of them.

How do you view your children?

They are an inconvenience; a nuisance.

They only have value insofar as they make MY life better. Abortion is merely the fruit of this heart concept. Sometimes Christians adopt this view and the only difference between them and unbelievers is that the unbelievers kill their children while the Christians complain about them.

They are valuable and precious gifts.

It is a privilege to be their parents.

I don't endure them; I enjoy them.

If you're not convinced that your children are precious gifts from the Lord, your discipline will become selfish, even cruel.

God has put you in charge of your children – Ephesians 6:1-3; Ephesians 5:22-23; Genesis 18:19

You have the authority to act on behalf of God.

You are not exercising rule over YOUR jurisdiction, but over God's. ^{vii}

You require obedience not because you hate insolence; not because you're mad; but because God says you must require obedience.

You act under the authority of God, thus you exercise delegated authority.
You are to discipline for the purpose of correction not retribution in order to reach God's destination (Hebrews 12:5-11).

A Biblical view of the Rod

The rod is necessary because of the nature of children (Proverbs 22:15)

"Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far from him."

If children were ethically neutral, they would only need information and direction; not discipline.

"Foolishness" is a life that is run by its own desires, wants, and fears rather than a fear of God and leads to destruction.

Thus, God ordains the rod as an instrument of rescuing children from the death that certainly results from folly.

Rebellion and foolishness left unchallenged leads to spiritual death.

Children, in their natural state, resist correction.

The rod is ordained of God to drive out the folly and rescue the child from death.

The rod serves the function of imparting wisdom (Proverbs 29:15)

"The rod of correction imparts wisdom, but a child left to himself disgraces his mother."

A child not submitting to parental authority is acting foolishly – living a life that leads to death.

The rod brings wisdom by providing an immediate tactile demonstration of the foolishness of rebellion.

The atmosphere is created in a child so he is ready to receive life giving words.

The definition of the rod.

“The rod is a parent who, in faith toward God and faithfulness to his children, undertakes the responsibility of careful, timely, measured, and controlled use of physical punishment to underscore the importance of obeying God, thus rescuing the child from continuing in his foolishness until death.”^{viii}

The rod is a parental exercise – it is done by the ones who love and care for and have a relationship with the child.

Using the rod is an act of faith – parents use it, not because he perfectly understands how it works, but because God commands it.

This is important when people say, “It doesn’t work.”

This is important when experts say, “Studies indicate that corporal punishment produces violent, angry people.”

Using the rod is an act of faithfulness – it is an expression of love and faithfulness to a child by saying that parents will not be a willing party to his death.

Using the rod is a responsibility – it is the parent determining to obey God.

The rod is an instrument of rescue – if the child continues in his rebellion, his doom is certain and so this will rescue him from continued foolishness.

Use it first and quickly – don’t buy the theory of spanking as a last resort.

Many times a child gains great wisdom with one spanking than with one hour of talk or standing in the corner.

If you do not spank, you hate your child (Proverbs 13:24; Hebrews 12:5ff.).

It has achieved its desired result when your child obeys with the right attitude (not just when he cries).

Instruction – Teaching

Instruction must be based on understanding your child – Proverbs 20:5

You must listen to your children not just speak to them – Proverbs 18:2

Parents must have not only the ability to talk, but also the ability to listen.

“The finest art of communication is not learning how to express your thoughts. It’s learning how to draw out the thoughts of another. Your objective in communication must be to understand your child, not simply to have your child understand you. Many parents never learn these skills. They never discover how to help their children articulate their thoughts and feelings.” ix

You must observe your children.

How do your children respond in different circumstances?

If you study” your children, you will start to understand them.

Learn to ask questions of your children (Proverbs 18:15; Proverbs 20:5)

Learn to ask questions that will reveal the hearts of your children.

Get past the “yes” and “no” so that you understand their fears, desires, loves, hates, etc.

As you observe and see your children, learn to ask questions to find out why they do what you observe them doing.

Develop a loving relationship with your children (Hebrews 12:5-11).

Your children will receive admonition easier when they know you teach them because you love them.

Involve yourself in their lives, love them, pursue them, pray with them, etc.

Engage your children.

Try to understand what they are like in the differing situations of life.

Try to understand what is going on in their inner world.

Biblical content of instruction (2 Timothy 3:15-17)

Teach the Gospel from the scriptures. “Able to make you wise to salvation...”

Teach biblical truths from the scriptures.

These are the Ephesians 1-3 and Romans 1-11 truths. Teach children:

Salvation (Romans 3:21-25)

Election (Ephesians 1:3ff)

Sin (Romans 1:18 – 3:20)

Providence of God (Daniel 4:32)

Attributes of God

Teach practical truths from the Scriptures.

These are the Ephesians 4-6 and Romans 12-16 truths. Teach children:

Attentiveness, obedience, honor of parents (Ephesians 6:1-4; Proverbs 1:8; Proverbs 4:1; Proverbs 5:1).

Proper standards and values (Jeremiah 9:23-24)

How to be good stewards.

How to solve problems, make decisions biblically.

How to love and serve others.

How to respond to trials (Hebrews 12:5-11).

How to return good for evil (Romans 12:17ff).

Teach concerning the heart issues that surface.

When issues arise (fear of man, lust for acceptance, easy life, etc. etc.), you need to teach what God says about those lusts.

Teach concerning the actions that you observe.

Suppose you catch your child stealing some candy, telling a lie, hitting his sister, lazy with his schoolwork?

You teach what God has to say about those things.

How To Teach Your Children (Deuteronomy 6:6-7)

With question and answer (Joshua 4:6-7).

Asking questions to draw out the heart.

In normal life situations

Crises	Term papers, projects
Decisions / choices	Honor of work
Complaining vs. contentment	Births
Communing with God	Not making the team
Courtship	

By personal example (Philippians 4:9 – discipleship!)

Your sensitivity to God's Word	Handling trials
Your value system	Loving the unlovely
Example of Christ's love	Knowing God's will
Church attendance	View of self
How to communicate and solve problems	View of truth
Handling mistakes and failures	

By formal instruction.

Teaching to the heart through the mind with the aim of shaping your child's beliefs and desires.

Summary

Godly discipline along with teaching is necessary to reach God's destination for our children.

If you will raise your children effectively, you must teach.

Resources

Fitzpatrick, Elyse and Thompson, Jessica. *Give them Grace: Dazzling Your Kids with the Love of Jesus*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2011.

Tripp, Tedd and Marcy. *Instructing a Child's Heart*. Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd Press, 2008.

Tripp, Tedd. *Shepherding a Child's Heart*, Revised and Updated. Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd Press, 2005.

^{vii} See Tedd Tripp's discussion in *Shepherding a Child's Heart*, (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd's Press, 1995) pp. 45-54.

^{viii} Tripp, *Ibid.*, p> 130.

^{ix} Tedd Tripp, *Shepherding a Child's Heart* (Wapwallopen, PA: Shepherd Press, 1995), p. 97-98.

Lesson 33

Biblical Change through Counseling

Supplemental Worksheet for Counseling Sessions

Russ Kennedy

See supplemental handout.

