

Study Guide

Introduction to Christian Counseling

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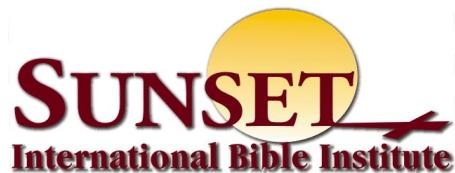


SUNSET
International Bible Institute



Introduction to Christian Counseling

**A Study Course in Comforting, Instructing,
and Healing People Who Cry out for Help**



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Lubbock, Texas**
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Introduction to Christian Counseling

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The Holy Bible, The New International Version (NIV). Grand Rapids:
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DISCLAIMER

The textbook used in this course was selected because it is considered to be one of the most complete and the very best available. Its indepth coverage of counseling ways and methods will be a treasured volume for your library. “***Christian Counseling***” by: Gary R. Collins, Ph. D. contains a wealth of knowledge which will increase your understanding of counseling approaches. As with all books written by men, there may be some things with which you and I would not agree. The principle, “use what is good and discard what is not good” applies to all textbooks used with our courses. Please be wise enough to discard any and all teaching that is not biblical.

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Course Instructions

You are beginning an exciting study to further enable you to be a better servant in comforting, healing, and instructing people who cry out for help. In subsequent courses in this Christian Counseling Certification series, you will gain insights, discover resources, and add to your competency in specific areas of counseling. This course is to focus your attention on some basic principles in Christian Counseling.

Course Format

1. The course consists of twelve video or audio lectures of about thirty minutes each in duration, divided into Part One and Part Two. There are six lessons in each part.
2. This **Study Guide** contains the lecture for each lesson, plus a self exam at the close of each lecture and some assignments for self-growth.
3. You may study alone, with a small group, or in an organized class of a Sunset Satellite School.
4. There are in-class discussion assignments at the end of each lesson.
5. The course may be taken for personal and group growth in churches, para-counseling programs, or in the SIBI certificate program.
6. If the course is taken for credit, there will be two exams to be taken. One at the end of lesson six (6) and the other at the end of the course. These will be returned to the SIBI office for grading and recording. In preparation for the exams the student will need to review the material in the study guide including the self-exam questions at the end of each lesson.

Course Procedure

1. Listen attentively to each lecture on audio or video cassette or on DVD, repeat listening to each lecture several times, returning for additional hearings until the material is deeply imprinted in your mind.
2. If in a group, a discussion period should be considered a valuable part in learning. If you study individually, invite a mature person with whom to share the contents of the lecture and invite discussion.

Course Preview

This introductory course is divided into two parts of six lessons each. The first part focuses on basic principles in Christian Counseling from secular counseling. The second part will focus on practical concerns that, when applied, will enhance the mission of Christian Counseling.

Throughout the course you will be encouraged to determine if and how you could apply these principles that are characteristic of competent and correctly motivated, servant counselors.

Preview of the Course Lessons

Counselors who are effectively helping people have given considerable attention to acquiring sufficient understanding and application of some basic principles. The twelve lessons of this course define those principles.

Part One

Fundamentals of Christian Counseling

Lesson One presents Guiding Principles in maximizing the course, helping people, and building a counseling approach.

Lesson Two affirms the Distinctiveness of Christian Counseling.

Lesson Three discusses the Nature of Christian Counseling by giving major attention to the five paradigms employed in Scripture.

Lesson Four discusses the Basic Needs of People in three parts:

An Overview of the Nature of Man

Basic Needs as a Growth Process

The Response of Christian Counseling to Basic Needs

Lesson Five considers the Qualities of a Christian Counselor by clarifying who should dedicate his/her life in the ministry of counseling and by defining the Biblical anatomy of a Christian Counselor.

Lesson Six outlines the Preparation of a Christian Counselor by looking at four specific areas of preparation, by defining seven stages of spiritual growth, and by looking at ten preparation choices available to those who have a passion to help people.

Part Two

Practical Guidelines in Christian Counseling

Lesson Seven introduces the value of scheduling a Pre-Counseling Interview to better understand the counselee.

Lesson Eight emphasizes the importance of developing a healthy Counselor and Counselee Relationship through establishing and maintaining integrity throughout the encounters.

Lesson Nine proposes some ways by which Christian counselor can make the counseling enterprise one that is Productive and worthy of the choice of serious people.

Lesson Ten affirms that counseling can be no more productive than the level of seriousness of the one being counseled. The Christians counselor must be prepared to teach and urge the counselee in accepting The Responsibilities of a Counselee.

Lesson Eleven takes the reader on a visit of the varied approaches being used today to broaden and deepen the scope of helping people. A Christian counselor should stay on the edge of Advances in Christian Counseling.

Lesson Twelve leads the reader through Questions That Counselors Ask in five areas of counseling concerns: personal, counseling and family concerns, counseling logistics, and specific counseling situations.

Instructions and Assignments for Level II Students

(Secondary Certificate Only)

(Level II does not transfer to the resident school)

Each lesson is built around the instruction on DVD or CD. Listen to the lecture as you follow along in the course Study Guide book.

Reading: You must read and meditate on the individual written lessons in this Study Guide book and answer all the questions at the end of the lesson.

Tests: There is a Self Exam at the end of each lesson. Preview each lesson by reading these questions first. There will be only two tests to complete for this course. One test is to be done at the end of lesson six (6) and the final test will be done at the end of the study and will cover lessons seven (7) through twelve (12).

Instructions and Assignments for Level III Students

(Ministry Certificate and Bachelor Degree)

(Level III will transfer to the resident school)

Each lesson is built around the instruction on DVD or CD. Listen to the lecture as you follow along in the course Study Guide book. The following assignments must be completed and turned in by the final test. Failure to meet all requirements could result in not passing the course or being dropped to a Level II status.

Reading: You are required to read one (1) book during this course: *Christian Counseling* by: Gary R. Collins, Ph. D. This book will also become your reference book for solving problems while counseling people. Write a three (3) page evaluation of this book and turn it in with your final exam. You must also write a two page evaluation of this course and turn it in with the final exam. **The reading and two (2) papers will be worth 30 % of your final grade.**

Tests: You must complete all the “Self Exam” questions in your Course Guide. **This will be 20% of your grade final grade.** There will be two exams for this course. One exam will be taken at the end of lesson six (6) and the other will be taken at the end of the course, covering the material in lessons 7 through 12. You must receive a grade of 70% or above to pass this course. In the event you would have to do a re-take of an exam, the highest grade you may receive will be 70%. **(The exams will be worth 50 % of your final grade.)**

Notebook: You will keep a notebook of material gained in this study for future reference. All the assignments in the “Out of Class” assignments will be included in this notebook as well as any other material you may accumulate during this study.

Grading schedule:

Reading and papers	30 %
Self Exam questions	20 %
Two Sectional Tests	50 %

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Part One

Fundamentals of Christian Counseling

- Guiding Principles of Christian Counseling
- The Distinctiveness of Christian Counseling
- The Nature of Christian Counseling
- The Basic Needs of People
- The Qualities of a Christian Counselor
- The Preparation of a Christian Counselor

LESSON ONE

Guiding Principles of Christian Counseling

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to this introductory course on Christian Counseling. We will spend many hours together and share many things of common interest. In this introductory lesson we want to consider some guiding principles of Christian counseling. Many of these introductory principles will be developed in the subsequent lessons. We will be looking at guiding principles in three areas:

1. Guiding principles in maximizing the course.
2. Guiding principles in helping people.
3. Guiding principles in building a counseling approach.

Listen carefully and take good notes to enhance your learning and to get the most from your work in the Study Guide discussions that follow the twenty-seven minute presentation.

LESSON AIM: To present to the student some fundamental principles of effective Christian counseling.

LESSON PREVIEW:

- ❑ Study three principles which will help you get the most benefit possible from this course of study.
 - ❑ Preview twenty principles to clarify the best avenues in helping people solve their crisis.
 - ❑ Learn four principles that will resolve confusion in the counseling field and give direction to effective counseling.
-

PART ONE: GUIDING PRINCIPLES IN MAXIMIZING THE COURSE

I really want this course to make a contribution to your helping ministry. For that to happen we must honor some guiding principles.

A. Principle One: Focus on the material being presented, both in content and in attitude.

We can honor that principle in the following ways: **Become of one mind:**

1. In seeing the immense good that can be accomplished in helping people through effective counseling.
2. In seeing the ever-present dangers, the frightening damage that can be caused through incompetence and godless, philosophical approaches.
3. In clarifying different perceptions that we bring into this course.

Some of us may begin this course with positive anticipation about counseling because we have been helped by counseling, have seen good results in dear ones around us, or we are gifted helpers and have seen how much we can help others. Some of us may have been hurt by incompetent counseling, have seen its negative results, have equated any kind of counseling with humanistic psychology, or perhaps we are more gifted in other areas of ministry. As this course progresses I hope we all can see the good that competent and godly Christians can do through biblical counseling. And, how Christian counseling provides one of the most opportune teaching situations with people who recognize and express need in their coming for help, acknowledging a desire to be helped, and displaying a trust in the counselor.

B. Principle Two: Focus on a useful definition of Christian counseling.

A definition sets the perimeters; it describes the content and can determine the desired results. The working definition of Christian counseling in this class emphasizes the teaching role of the counselor. Christian counseling is teaching someone to think, feel, and act like Jesus. This definition affirms that Christian counseling concerns itself with the mind, the will, and the emotions of people.

1. Christian counseling concerns itself with the mind. The counselor teaches people to think biblically, soundly, morally, and lovingly.
2. Christian counseling concerns itself with the will. The counselor teaches people to have a regard for truth, to submit their wills to the will of God, and to make Christ-minded decisions.
3. Christian counseling concerns itself with the emotions. The counselor teaches people to understand and constructively express their feelings and to recover from damaged emotions.

C. Principle Three: Focus on personal growth.

Let's commit ourselves to acquiring the basic skills and growing in spiritual maturity in order to meet the needs of the people we serve. Some of us are specifically gifted in counseling and will desire to go far beyond this course. However, all of us need to know what to do, how to give positive help without hurting people, and when to refer a difficult situation to others when it is beyond our experience and skill.

What I have just said in these guiding principles is that we are by definition and choice teachers and helpers – Christian counselors. The issue is not, "Will we teach or help people who are in need?" The question is, "How competent and how involved will I become?" Even this introductory course will raise us above an excuse of ignorance or incompetency or refusal to help at an appropriate level. In this course we all begin on some common ground: no one of us is self-sufficient, all need some instruction and guidance, some correction and healing, and some motivation and encouragement.

PART TWO: GUIDING PRINCIPLES IN HELPING PEOPLE

Let's turn our attention to twenty statements about helping people. Each statement is a counseling declaration setting before you a vital principle in meeting the needs of people.

A. Principle One: People need help.

1. Helping people, through counseling, has never been sought by as many people as now.
2. The reasons are clear. The stress, the anxiety, the hurts, the bitterness, and the resentments experienced by so many people have shaken marriages, families, and churches.

3. More clearly, fewer people are being taught character values and life-management skills to confront the overwhelming demands of the cyber-space, valueless age.

B. Principle Two: Counselors must be competent.

1. Helping people is urgent, but it is not easy. To counsel well, one must be competent.
2. Competency results from a careful, soul searching of motives, finding an effective counseling approach, and developing the knowledge and skills to respond to the varied needs.

C. Principle Three: Christian counseling is not for everyone.

1. Helping people, through counseling, may not be for everyone.
 - a. It is not for someone who resists change and growth in his/her own life.
 - b. It is not for someone whose motives for helping are not overwhelmed by a genuine concern for the person to be helped and a settled hope for the resolution of the difficulty.
2. It is for someone who has the potential to become a very knowledgeable, sensitive, skilled, correctly, motivated counselor.

D. Principle Four: The counselor must have a strong value system.

1. Helping people can be damaging if the values of the counselor are flawed.
2. There must be some foundational, absolute values that can define the perimeters of right or wrong and can measure the substance as excellent or mediocre.
3. The number of people being helped in a measurable way and equipped to cope in the future rests solidly on the counselor's values.

E. Principle Five: The counselor seeks the highest good of the counselee.

1. Helping people to maximize their human potential holds one of the surest promises of effecting life-lasting change and wholeness.
2. Counseling that holds a person dependent on the counselor with a never ending need for counseling, in most cases, violates the person and the purpose of counseling. Such control does not seek the highest good of the one to be helped.

F. Principle Six: The counselee must desire to be helped.

1. Helping people can hardly be accomplished without the correct desire of the one to be helped.
 - a. A defensive and resistant person will make little commitment to change.
 - b. A manipulated or coerced person sees the counselor as part of the unwanted plan.
2. People can be helped if and when they want to be helped and have sufficient trust in the counselor.

G. Principle Seven: Most counseling help is given by non-professional people who care enough to gain basic skills.

1. Helping people is not limited to highly trained specialists. There are human needs that do require such professional assistance.
2. For the most part, more people are helped by those who cared enough to gain the basic knowledge and counseling skills.
3. Most people can identify more easily with a caring, non-professional who is a competent, people helper.

- H. Principle Eight:** Counseling is a choice to help effectively.
1. Helping people is not a choice to help or not to help. Everyone can help some in most situations.
 2. The amount and quality of help depends on many factors such as sensitivity, motives, knowledge, and skill.
 3. There is a choice one does make:
 - a. A choice to help as effectively as is possible or to offer mediocrity or indifference.
 - b. Neither of these last two responses are Christian choices.
- I. Principle Nine:** Both counselor and counselee must trust in God.
1. Helping people goes beyond what a counselor may bring to a situation.
 - a. Helping people depends more directly on a trust in a “Can-Do” God by both the helper and the one being helped.
 - b. Offering help without God is offering help that is secular and vulnerable to damaging flaws.
 2. The counselee must be led to believe in God and trust Him before the problem can be addressed.
- J. Principle Ten:** Christian counseling is redemptive.
1. Helping people is redemptive because it knows there is a dimension deeper than the difficulties in relationships, problems in financial mismanagement, feelings of fear, anger, loneliness, and guilt.
 2. There is the dimension of human sin and what it has done to the relationship with God.
 3. Helping people only to resolve their human problems and not their relationship with God is helping them but little by comparison.
 4. People may become stable and productive and still finish their lives with the ultimate God/man problem unresolved. The deeper dimension is the eternal dimension.
- K. Principle Eleven:** Every person being helped is a person of value.
1. Helping people values the person being helped.
 2. Control of the person, using the person for one’s distorted desires, drawing personal benefit at the unwarranted expense of the person is devaluing the person. Helping the person with a sense of regard and purpose opens the relationship to one of dignity.
- L. Principle Twelve:** The best of counselors has limitations.
1. Helping people thrives on a counselor’s honest and realistic understanding of his/her limitations.
 2. It is not easy or soon that anyone can respond effectively to all kinds of people, in all kinds of situations.
 3. Playing an all-knowing God, or even playing doctor, blocks learning skills and the purifying of motives.
- M. Principle Thirteen:** Effective counselors are good communicators.
1. Helping people takes flight on the wings of effective communication.
 2. The ultimate communicator is one who knows the value of significant, well chosen words.
 3. He/she knows how to clothe the words in the tones that inspire growth and knows how to employ the power of language.
- N. Principle Fourteen:** A good counselor limits the duration of counseling.
1. Helping people keeps watch over the calendar. Good counseling helps people toward productive self-reliance.

2. Good counseling is intentional in limiting the counseling relationship to a basic response to the needs of the one he/she has agreed to help.

O. Principle Fifteen: A Christian counselor honors the confidentiality of the counselee.

1. Helping people is honoring the trust and protecting the vulnerabilities a person has shared in confidence.
2. In a world of distrust and abuse, the one being helped needs to find a zone of security and a freedom to be open and honest with self.
3. Freedom to be open and honest with another, caring person is the first step to self-awareness and a honest acknowledgment of a need to change.

P. Principle Sixteen: The counselor must be an authentic model of the principles he teaches.

1. Helping people is living an open, convincing, and inspiring model of the changes that the one to be helped wants to experience.
2. An accomplished model affirms that what is being discussed is real and can bring about positive changes.
3. It says that the results are worth the pain and discipline. And, the results are not necessarily a long time in coming.

Q. Principle Seventeen: A counselor must remember other priorities.

1. Helping people remembers one's own needs, one's family concerns, and one's concerns for others needing help.
2. A counselor can get so consumed in helping a person that his/her own needs for rest, spiritual renewal, family companionship, and fulfilling other responsibilities could suffer.

R. Principle Eighteen: Effective counselors are good listeners.

1. Helping people is best done by those who listen well, who place a high priority on an exact understanding of what is being communicated.
2. Both listening skills and a helping attitude make it possible for one to be a good helper.
3. To be regularly and accurately understood encourages the one being helped to confront the necessary changes being indicated in the counseling.

S. Principle Nineteen: The counselor must be flexible.

1. Helping people is not limited to a place or a schedule. The telephone, e-mail, letters, an unscheduled visit, all can be useful counseling means.
2. Genuine concern thinks of the needs and the schedules of the one to be helped. Reaching out says that one is concerned and available to help.

T. Principle Twenty: Counseling is pointedly verbal instruction

1. Helping people, at its most helpful, is verbal instruction. It consists of a spoken message that brings about a thoughtful, purposeful change.
2. Helping someone with hands and heart conditions a person to consider asking for help to make a needed change. But, a verbal message provokes and gives direction to the necessary change.

In thinking over the comments just shared, you will note that twenty principles were stated about helping people. Each principle is important if a helper of people is to be ready to answer a **call for help**. Sometimes it is wise to refer a person to someone else to get the needed help. It is usually right to promise to pray for one needing help. Some professional help and all Divine help are prime sources to help one resolve problems. Yet, a **call for help**, most frequently, is directed to one who is perceived to be near, available, caring, and competent. Referrals to God in prayer

and to professional helpers in scheduled counseling are appropriate. But who supplies the bridge, and perhaps, even the beginning of the solution leading to stability, productivity, and wholeness? **It will always be the one who anticipates the call for help and prepares to answer the call.**

To conclude our first lesson let's consider some guiding principles that must be evaluated to make any sense at all of the whole field of counseling.

PART THREE: GUIDING PRINCIPLES IN BUILDING A COUNSELING APPROACH

A quick survey of the modern counseling field will likely leave any person confused by the more than 250 differing, and even vastly contrasting, approaches to resolving the same human issues. How does one claim any confidence in counseling when published and internationally known therapists are so diverse and their counseling results are so contradictory? Is the diversity caused by the complexities of the human person? Perhaps, in part, but the real problem lies in determining the guiding principles one adopts in counseling.

Let's look at some proposed principles that will resolve the confusion in the counseling field and give direction to effective counseling.

A. Principle One: The whole universe, including man, is an ordered, structured system.

1. Chance or random are not characteristics of the universe around us.
2. When understood, there are reasons and predictable results for all parts of the universe.
3. This principle affirms that the problems of man are understandable, predictable, and can be systematically resolved.
4. It affirms that the potential of man can be identified and developed by goal setting and discipline.
5. It affirms that man is responsible to discover the structure of the universe and develop responses that are in harmony with the order of the universe.
6. Particularly, this principle renounces the thought that any person has no accountability for his disordered, random behavior. Order and structure demand responsible and accountable behavior. Responsibility and accountability presuppose that there is a standard for conduct, a measure for excellence.

B. Principle Two: There must be a singular, intelligent explanation for the origin of the ordered and structured universe.

1. The continuing unity and ordered design of the universe and man himself argue for a singular, intelligent explanation for the origin of the material universe.
2. The more detailed one's observation of the universe is the more it appears that personality, individuality, and unilateral choice were involved.
3. When understood, this principle affirms diversity, definable purpose, and perimeters of acceptable and productive activity.
4. Man, then, is not to be a moral law to himself or a "loose cannon" in his relationships and choices and unaccountable for his actions.

C. Principle Three: Man is unique in the material universe.

1. The high level of human development affirms that man is unique in the material universe, bearing a singular and inseparable relation with the origin of the universe.
2. This principle speaks to a specific purpose, value, and destiny of man.
 - a. It would seem, then, that man must know his origin, understand his purpose, and foresee his destiny.

- b. It would follow that any system of thought that denies the origin, the purpose, and the destiny of man ignores the realities that surround it.
- c. Out of that ignorance would come a diminished view of man, a less hopeful expectation of the potential of man, and a bleak view of an uncertain future.

D. Principle Four: Any counseling approach must be consistent with the realities that are self-evident in the universe.

Conclusion:

The order, the unity, the origin of the universe, and the long, documented uniqueness of man demand a search for an adequate explanation. Wherever that search leads, it must end with agreement with the above principles. There will be an ordered beginning and continuance of the universe, a guiding standard, a meaningful and accountable purpose for man, and a unique relationship with the explanation of these realities.

Where the search ends has everything to do with the counseling definitions, purpose, approach, the regard and vision for the counselees, and the results of therapy. The major counseling battle is over identifying the adequate explanation of the above, proposed principles.

Christians have concluded what Paul affirmed to a group of scholarly philosophers in Athens in Acts 17:22–31:

... “Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects. For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, ‘TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.’ What therefore you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; neither is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all life and breath and all things; and He made from one, every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times, and the boundaries of their habitation, that they should seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we also are His offspring.’ Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man. Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead” (NAS).

God is the explanation for the origin, ordered structure, and uniqueness of man. Therefore, He has a standard to which He holds every person responsible and accountable. Every person has value, purpose, and destiny. A counseling approach must be in harmony with these principles to accomplish the purposes of God.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON ONE:

1. Write down the three guiding principles in maximizing this course.
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
2. List five of the twenty guiding principles in helping people.
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____
3. List the four guiding principles in building a counseling approach.
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
4. Christian counseling concerns itself with the mind. The counselor teaches people to think in what four ways?
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5. Christian counseling concerns itself with what three things in the person's makeup?
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____

In-Class Reflection/Discussion Assignments

The reflection questions should be asked and answered immediately after the thirty minute lesson.

1. Reflect on and discuss in class the three ways to maximize the course.
2. Reflect on and discuss how you are progressing in the twenty guiding principles in helping people.
3. Reflect on and discuss the four guiding principles in building a counseling approach.

LESSON TWO

The Distinctiveness of Christian Counseling

INTRODUCTION:

Jt is clear to all caring people, whether secular or Christian, that many peoples of the world need help and at different levels of counseling. The levels are:

1. Situational: "What do I do now?"
2. Educational: "How do I do it?"
3. Developmental: "What is hindering me?"
4. Clinical: "Why can't I overcome this problem?"
5. Psychiatric Therapy (out-patient and institutional): "When will I ever feel good again?"

All counseling seeks to answer these questions and others. While all counseling is to be applauded for the concern in helping people, not all counseling is secure and risk free.

Christian counseling is sharply distinct from secular counseling. Some data, some methodology, and even some principles may be common to both disciplines. However, the very nature, the purpose, the basis, the message, the counseling authority, the perspective, and the commitment of the counselor, all and more, make Christian counseling distinct from secular counseling. And resulting from the Christian distinctiveness are people reclaiming useful lives with fulfilling relationships, achieving the fulness of their creation potential, and being led to claiming their part in God's redemptive design for all peoples, tribes, and languages.

LESSON AIM: We will examine the relationship between Christian counseling and all other types of counseling.

LESSON PREVIEW:

- ❑ Find that a Christian counselor bases his counseling on the strong belief that there is an omni-capable God who has revealed Himself.
 - ❑ Learn that the Christian counselor has unique views of himself which make him/her much more capable of helping people.
 - ❑ Considers himself/herself an authentic model of what the counselee needs to be.
 - ❑ Know six negative approaches which the Christian counselor refuses to follow.
-

CHRISTIAN COUNSELING IS DISTINCT AND DISTINCTLY MORE HELPFUL TO PEOPLE IN NEED OF HELP

- A. **A Distinct Point of Reference.** The Christian counselor starts and builds the counseling on five different foundations.

1. An omni-capable God who has revealed Himself. A Christian counselor, based on evidential reasons, believes there is an omni-capable God who has revealed Himself, defined His expectations of human people, and has demonstrated His history-long intent to save all peoples.¹
 2. The awesome potential of every person. A Christian counselor sees beyond social and cultural conditions that rank people to confirm the intrinsic and eternal value and awesome potential of every person.²
 3. The violation of divine law strains and corrupts a right relationship with God. A Christian counselor understands that individual violation of divine law strains or precludes a right and saving relationship with God the Creator and God the Redeemer.³
 4. Helping people think, feel, and act like Jesus. A Christian counselor pursues a simply stated purpose and sees the greatest contribution that one can make to a person in need is helping people think, feel, and act like Jesus. The closer one comes to the thoughts, feelings, and actions of Jesus, the more one experiences healthy emotions, joyful relationships, and productive actions.⁴
 5. There is an inerrant, objective revelation: the Bible. The Christian counselor bases the above concepts on the conviction that there is an inerrant, objective revelation: the Bible, the Word from an inerrant God. This revelation provides a history-tested standard for human wholeness in every aspect of life and every relationship. It provides healthy motivation and a clear vision of the kind of person one can become.⁵
- B. A Distinct Self View.** Much of secular counseling and some Christian counselors view their advanced training in psychology and counseling, their honed skills and methodology, and their years of experience as the major measures of their value and place in counseling. All of these conditions can be valuable, but the Christian counselor honors other conditions more highly. The honored conditions distinguish him/her from secular counselors and contribute directly to the efficiency of the counseling process.

1. The Christian counselor believes that God will partner with the counselor, providing essential resources beyond the counselor, intervening to bring comprehension, conviction, eagerness to change, and healing to the counseled. The Christian counselor does not feel alone but feels supervised and empowered by a Master Counselor.⁶
2. The Christian counselor never forgets what he/she might have done or what kind of person he/she might have been had Christ not entered in his/her life. The active recognition of the power of temptation, the weakness of lustful flesh, and the regret and shame that follows seduction are daily reminders. This awareness is balanced and changed with the joy of one's salvation and the ever blossoming praises and gratitude to God for His saving and strengthening grace. This self-view prepares the Christian counselor to be understanding, patient, slow to judge, and eager to help those who have failed in life and relationships. The Christian counselor cannot look diminishingly at a person needing help, knowing that he/she would not be

¹John 10:10, John 3:16, 1 Peter 2:4, Psalm 134

²Acts 17:22–31; Psalm 8

³Luke 13:3; Romans 3:21

⁴Colossians 1:28; 1 Peter 2:21; Ephesians 4:13

⁵2 Timothy 2:15; 2 Peter 1:3

⁶Matthew 28:20

helping another person find sense or wholeness without the blessings of God.⁷

3. The Christian counselor knows that there are other God approved resources that can help people that he/she must not ignore through his/her own pride or self-sufficiency. The Christian counselor works in the context or with rapport with the Body of Christ. Whether in a para-counseling program in a local church, involving trained members, or focusing the counseling on members in a congregation, the intent is the same: using all the resources provided by others to help those in need. The Christian counselor knows that he/she does not know everything. In the congregation there are people who may know more on many subjects: financial management, conflict resolution, crises management, marriage, parenting, and so forth. The Christian counselor is constantly researching the publication field to learn of newly published materials that can be used to aid in the counseling experience. There is a partial list of resources in the Appendix.

C. A Distinct Model. The Christian counselor knows three things about the power and authenticity of modeling:

1. A Christian counselor must convince a needy person that the counseling being received will make a difference in his/her life. A counselor who models the thinking, feeling, and doing of Jesus best inspires another person to desire and commit to change.
2. A Christian counselor has searched the world over and found that the best model for personal growth in wholeness and for helping others is the complete life of Jesus, lived in the earthly circumstances of life.
3. A Christian counselor is committed to transfer a needy person's dependence to Jesus so he/she may find what the Christian counselor has found and joyfully has depended on for survival, growth, and excellence.

D. A Distinct Counseling Approach. The preceding three distinctions impact one's counseling approach, but there are more. The Christian counselor rejects an unnumbered amount of approaches used by modern counselors. The Christian counselor may not have the time to examine closely the 1500 "schools of thought" each with its own perspective, self-view, and purpose, but he/she refuses to follow any of the following approaches:

1. An approach that scoffs at God, the Bible, the reality of human sin, and the responsibility and accountability of a person.
2. An approach that offers no hope in reversing one's past, no sense of one's value, purpose, or dignity.
3. An approach that proposes a non-teaching role for the Christian counselor or that pictures the person in counseling as possessing all truth, just waiting to be discovered within.
4. An approach that denies the reality of guilt, that sets no perimeters or high expectations for human conduct, or that diminishes the distinct value and the lofty purpose of other humans.
5. An approach that lacks intentionally the eternal dimension of helping people, which counsels with the "now" view of time and the temporal realization of one's self-pronounced goals.
6. An approach that does not strike a balance, rather it balances personal sin and circumstance. It acknowledges that there are dysfunctions caused by sin in one's life, but there are dysfunctions resulting from a lack of knowledge

⁷Matthew 15:14

or skills and there are hurts and distortions caused by others in an unhealthy environment. Sin is not the explanation of all conditions of people needing help in counseling. The causes, defined or undefined, are not the focal point of the counseling process. The recognition and acknowledgment of a need to change and a personal, responsible commitment to conform to the model of Jesus and to His standard of conduct are the primary concerns of counseling.

- E. A Distinct Result.** The distinctiveness of Christian counseling is not as satisfactorily proven in writing as it is in the results of counseling. While we want for some thorough objective research to affirm or deny the distinctiveness of Christian counseling, there are five distinct considerations resulting from being helped in a Christian setting:

1. **Hope** characterizes the person. The past can be changed, the present can be purposeful and productive, and the future can be secured.
2. **Confidence** blossoms in all endeavors. One discovers gifted resources, one associates with encouraging people, one gains and employs skills for selfless purposes, and one knows he/she is a part of a much bigger picture, protected and empowered by someone much bigger and desirous and able to help.
3. **Freedom** replaces the burden of guilt, exposes the falsities of fear, breaks the gripping hold of compulsive patterns, and conquers the designs of the evil one.
4. **Gladness** sings again in the life of the person committed to a Christian change. Relationships stop being self-serving; valuing others bursts into praise, expressions of gratitude, and eagerness to serve.
5. **Intimacy** characterizes and purifies significant and healthy relationships. Intimacy is too often desired when its purposes are incorrectly motivated. When there is not, nor can there be, a covenant promise. The right expression of intimacy, made possible by the freedom in Christ and guided by Revelation of God, occurs in right and necessary covenant relationships. Such intimacy is seen in the spiritual intimacy with God, the domestic intimacy with a spouse, and the friendship intimacy with people of like values, with a commonality of interests and concern, and a mutual trust of sharing and serving.

Conclusion:

Any process that can regularly and predominantly produce the results of hope, confidence, freedom, gladness, and intimacy is distinctive and distinctively more healthy and productive in meeting human need and fulfilling heavenly objectives.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TWO:

1. List five areas that illustrate how Christian counseling is distinct and distinctly more helpful to people in need of help.
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____

2. Write down six approaches to counseling that the Christian counselor refuses to follow in his counseling approach.
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____
6) _____

3. Consider and write out five elements involved in the result of Christian counseling.
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____

In-Class Reflection/Discussion Assignments

The reflection questions should be asked and answered immediately after the thirty minute lesson.

1. Reflect and be able to explain each level of counseling.
2. Reflect and discuss each of the five distinct principles cited in the opening paragraph of the lecture that makes Christian counseling unique.
3. Reflect and exchange explanations of each of the five distinctive qualities of Christian counseling.

LESSON THREE

The Nature of Christian Counseling

INTRODUCTION:

 o many well intentioned and hard working people never achieve the maximum benefit of something they are using and feel strongly about because they do not understand the nature of the item. Christian counseling often falls short of its maximum potential to help because its nature is not fully or correctly understood. A correct understanding of the nature of Christian counseling starts with some basic considerations.

LESSON AIM: We will look at several things which point out the nature of Christian counseling.

LESSON PREVIEW:

- Learn four basic counseling considerations.
 - Examine five paradigms of Christian counseling with their various parts.
-

BASIC COUNSELING CONSIDERATIONS

A. The Desire to Help. Lying at the base of all counseling should be the desire to help people. Anything less than that desire will prove detrimental to those needing help to build healthy, whole lives.

B. The Desire to Learn. All counseling, secular or Christian, can share in some common resources. We can all be learners:

1. By research and observation of human behavior there is much useful data to be gained to assist counselors in understanding and helping counselees.
2. Through much practice there are some counseling approaches, methods, and materials to address specific conditions that have proven effective. Counselors do not need to “reinvent the wheel” or reduplicate effective methods that are already being used effectively. Through shared information and careful scrutiny, all counselors could enhance their effectiveness. This sharing, in the spirit of learning, could be fostered through publications, seminars, electronic mail, and Internet.

Since a Christian counselor is a custodian and a practitioner of truth he looks for truth in every counseling proposal. If the information resources are true he knows they can be useful regardless of the source.

C. The Desire to Have a Trustworthy Standard. Christian counseling, by its very definition, makes everything pass the demands of the Scriptures. Every counseling proposal, every method, and every counseling idea is determined to be true and, therefore useful, if it is in harmony with any related part of Scripture. Such resources are considered to be true only if they correspond to biblical data. The very nature of Christian counseling calls for biblical verification of anything that might be used in the helping process.

- D. The Desire to Have Clearly Stated Objectives.** The Christian counselor knows and fears what could happen if left to human purposes. He wants clearly defined purposes to guide his counseling practices and outcomes. Left without objectives the counselor, at best, will suffer from imbalance in helping people. At worst, he may fail entirely to help and even hurt needy people.

Let's note some paradigms that give direction to counseling, defining clearly some objectives to be accomplished. When accomplished the nature of Christian counseling will be well defined.

PARADIGMS OF CHRISTIAN COUNSELING

- A. Apostolic Paradigm.** One paradigm for Christian counseling is well expressed by Paul, a model counselor, in 1 Thessalonians 5:14. Look for the five objectives that are expressed in the following reading:

"And we urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all men" (NAS).

The nature of Christian counseling requires a balance and an opportune use of the five qualities stated by Paul:

1. **Exhortation** – (gr. *parakaleo*: to call along side of as a defense lawyer urging a certain result). There are times Christian counselors must “**urge**,” beg, and insist on certain behaviors. One acts contrary to the very nature of Christian counseling if he/she leads another to the truth but then fails to urge the person to act on the truth. One does not violate the autonomy or individual freedom of another by urging a specific response to truth. Only truth, clearly understood and responsibly and promptly followed, sets a person free.⁸ If a Christian counselor really wants one to be helped he must tell him in the most emphatic and clearly understood way possible. Directly urging and insisting on an appropriate response honors the nature of Christian counseling.
2. **Instruction** – (gr. *noutheteo*: to “**admonish**,” to confront, to warn). The Christian counselor is a teacher. He knows that truth is not resident in the human person and that man cannot be a self-sufficient guide.⁹ He does not assume that the counselee knows what the problem is, how he should rightly act, or how to correctly resolve the issue. If he did he would not be asking for help. For however much the counselee thinks he knows or even insists he has been taught, the Christian counselor is, by nature, a teacher and a teacher must be sure the counselee has learned. A teacher cannot live with the thought that his student may not have learned the lesson. The Christian counselor can do no better than make sure the counselee has learned the truth and knows how to apply the truth to his problem. The teacher/counselor cannot assume he has helped the counselee until he is relatively sure that the counselee has identified and confronted the problem and has committed himself to a purposeful course of action. As a Christian counselor he will then stay near by to coach the counselee until the new and right course of action has become expected and personalized behavior.¹⁰
3. **Encourage** – (gr. *paramutheomai*: to “**encourage**,” to cheer up). When a counselee identifies the problem, sees the obstacles that have to be

⁸John 8:32

⁹Jeremiah 10:23

¹⁰ John 8:32, 1 Peter 2:21–25

confronted and removed, and pales before the task knowing his past defeats and weak resources, he could be easily broken by discouragement. The counselor becomes a cheerleader, a believing encourager. At that point he may be the only one who sees what the counselee could become. He, alone, may believe in the powerful transforming power of the Holy Spirit working through the truth of the Word. He, alone, may feel the urgency of setting the counselee free from the grasp of the evil one. He, alone, may understand that victory and wholeness will glorify the Creator God. Out of those clear views, the Christian counselor encourages the counselee, despite the struggle, to persevere, to try again if he falls, to accept and combat the pain of change, and to envision the joy in the end result. The nature of Christian counseling is honored when the counselee knows that the counselor deeply cares about what happens because he goes beyond diagnosis and prescription to encouragement.

4. **Assistance** – (gr. *indicium*: take an interest in *helping* the weak). The nature of Christian counseling recognizes that knowing right behavior can be compromised or interrupted by human frailty. All people, at times in their lives, need help: someone to take personal, time consuming interest in their well-being; someone who, without diminishing them, helps them take a stronger hold on the things they know are right and good. The Christian counselor is that “someone.” Beyond words and acts of encouragement, he is not far away; he is easily found; he keeps himself ready to give a hand, an hour, a dollar. One who is counseled by a Christian counselor profits from the nature of Christian counseling. He never feels alone or fears being defenseless against surrounding, threatening circumstances. The Christian counselor watches from nearby and, like a shepherd, runs back to the threatened counselee until he can fight his own battles, using the provident resources of God to win his victories.
5. **Patience** – (gr. *makrothumeo*: to be or to have *patience*). The glue that holds together the nature of Christian counseling is the mature ability to keep one’s objectives clearly in view despite the reactive behavior of the counselee. That is patience. From the beginning of the counseling process, the Christian counselor is urging change, is teaching the content and process of change, is encouraging change and is stepping in and out of the person’s life to offer help when weaknesses threaten the changes that are beginning to take place. Patience, the readiness to stay committed and engaged, will give the Christian counselor continuing strength, clear purpose, and unshakable belief in the value of person and in the will of God. The best beginnings in exhorting, instructing, encouraging, and assisting fail if the Christian counselor loses his patience with the person needing his interest, belief, and competence.

- B. Shepherd Paradigm.** An ancient, time proven paradigm for Christian counselors and for all spiritual leaders is defined by Ezekiel in his indictment of the shepherds of Israel:

“...Should not the shepherds feed the flock? ... Those who are sickly you have not strengthened, the diseased you have not healed, the broken you have not bound up, the scattered you have not brought back, nor have you sought for the lost; but with force and with severity you have dominated them (Ezekiel 34: 2–4, NAS).

Like shepherds, Christian counselors do well to be concerned for the fullest well-being of the counselee. “Feeding” looks to every, basic need the counselee has, both to survive as well as to prosper and be productive. Restating the

indictments as objectives and reversing the negatives to positives is the nature of shepherding /counseling:

1. **Bring healing to the sick** – The nature of Christian counseling is to promote healing. There is no way for anyone to get through life without getting hurt. The less Jesus is at the center of one's life the more hurts there will be and the scarcer will be the resources for healing. The Christian counselor promotes healing by bringing Christ to the center of the counselee's life and pointing him to the resources of faith and wholeness. The Christian counselor is a capable diagnostician of sicknesses of the soul and an even greater therapist. He is dedicated to health. He finds no satisfaction in cursing the sickness or rejecting the sick.
2. **Binding the broken** – The nature of Christian counseling causes a counselor to recognize brokenness in the lives of others and to develop the skills to promote mending and healthy growth. One who has been robbed of a loved one in death, rejected by a faithless mate or friend, abused by a selfish predator, or manipulated by a valueless rogue is broken. The bones of the body must be quickly treated to insure healthy growth and renewed strength and productivity. So is brokenness in the human person. If neglected or treated poorly, inflaming resentments, bitterness, and revenge set in to create worse problems. Alone, without competent and correctly motivated help, most people struggle with self-healing. The Christian counselor brings all the faith resources of prayer, study, and the application of healing principles by caring and assistance.
3. **Recalling the wandering** – The Christian counselor is alert to the human tendencies that slowly lead one further from the center of faith. With concern he is sensitive to those around him who are unaware of their movement to the outward margins of wholeness and healthy relations. People get over committed in work or play and lessen their disciplines in building relationships. People experiment with new attitudes, new behaviors, and new friends, not measuring how far they are traveling away from past moorings. The Christian counselor keeps watch, knowing where a healthy, productive person should be and calls the wandering person back to health and wholeness, back from senseless and dangerous wandering. A Christian counselor can call the counselee back from being so lost, never to return to faithfulness and fruitfulness. The nature of Christian counseling lays a burden on the heart of a counselor to watch on behalf of those who become careless, exposing themselves to the dangers of hurt and lostness.
4. **Pursue the lost** – Despite the best efforts of the whole church: shepherds, ministers, and members, people do lose their way in life. To do so they fail to regard the urging, the instruction, the encouragement, the assistance, and the patience of many.¹¹ They still become lost. Secular thinking counselors might give up on them and regard them as deserving of whatever might happen to them, or consider that all has been done for the lost that can be done. However, Christian counselors will still pursue them. The nature of Christian counseling is to exhaust every possibility to save the lost, whatever the reasons for their lostness. The Christian counselor knows the defenselessness of the lost in the midst of danger. He knows the dangers surrounding the lost even if the lost one sees the pleasures in the hilltop as enjoyable. Putting himself at risk, at times, he pursues the lost. The nature of who he is and what he is all about will not permit him to do less. The concern for the lost is never far from his thoughts or actions.

¹¹ 1 Thessalonians 5:14

- C. The Father God Paradigm.** The nature of Christian counseling is best seen in the focus that Jesus placed on one desiring to be like the Father. Nothing explains the nature of Christian counseling quite like the desire to be complete in the love for all as does the Father. Jesus set impartial love for everyone as the hallmark of mature Christian love:

“But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous . . . Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matthew 5:44–45, 48 NAS).

John described the **extent** of the love of God as the giving of His only begotten Son for every person. He described the **intent** of His love in that all who would believe would have eternal life.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16, NAS).

Paul described the motivation of “*God . . . who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.*”¹² Peter restated God’s motivation as “. . . not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”¹³

The nature of Christian counseling is focused on doing for the counselee what the Father has done for all humanity: to love each one, impartially, sacrificially, absolutely. On the way to the ultimate goal of saving the soul and enjoying eternal life, the Christian counselor wants the necessary sun and rain to bless the life of each counselee.

- D. The Jesus Paradigm.** From a composite study of the Bible the ministry of Jesus is seen to be multi-fold. He is seen as a Priest, Prophet, the Savior, Messiah, Miracle Worker, Teacher, and the King. He is unique, incomparable, and superlative in each of these roles. No one dare usurp His divinely appointed roles. Yet there is a sense in which Christians continue His ministry, with all of the limitations that our human nature places on us. A Christian counselor exercises the nature of Christian counseling when he participates in the continuing ministry of Jesus:

1. **Priest:** leads one to God in worship and service.
2. **Prophet:** confronts people in their sins, calling them to submission.
3. **Savior:** guides people to the Savior, portraying what Jesus has done to save them.
4. **Messiah:** puts on display the fulfilled, messianic promises of God and the singular leadership of Jesus, the Messiah.
5. **Miracle Worker:** points people to the wonderful works of God, even in the ongoing work among the saints.
6. **Teacher:** instructs people in the truth, in submitting to the will of God, and rejoicing in their salvation.
7. **King:** speaks in the name of and with the authority of the King.

¹² 1 Timothy 2:4

¹³ 2 Peter 3:9

E. The Prayer Paradigm. The nature of Christian counseling can be clearly discovered in many of the prayers in the Bible.

1. In **1 Chronicles 4:10** Jabez prayed to God on his own behalf what a Christian counselor prays for every counselee. In this prayer the nature of Christian counseling is well accented:

Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, “Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain.” And God granted his request.

- a. **Bless:** The Christian counselor petitions God to give pointed attention to the counselee and rain down an abundance of blessings that even goes beyond what is seen as being needed.
- b. **Enlarge territory:** The Christian counselor petitions God to increase the opportunities for healing, growth, and service for the counselee, giving the needed resources for such progress.
- c. **Let your hand be with me:** The Christian counselor petitions God to lay his hand on the counselee in whatever way is needed: to comfort, to direct, to affirm, to correct, to discipline, or to assure the counselee of his presence.
- d. **Keep me from harm — Protect:** The Christian counselor petitions God to shield the counselee from any harm in this dangerous world. He wants the counselee to have every life opportunity to complete his efforts to grow to be like Jesus.
- e. **Do no harm:** The Christian counselor is determined to do nothing but good. He is aware of the fearful potential of hurting a counselee.

For further reflection you may want to study other prayers that accent the objectives of men who cared about people. These prayers express well the nature of Christian counseling.

2. **Philippians 1:9–11:**

And this I pray that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

3. **Colossians 1:9–12:**

For this reason, also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

4. 3 John 2–4:

Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers. For I was very glad when brethren came and bore witness to your truth, that is, how your are walking in truth. I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.

Conclusion:

There are many prayers like these. It just seems to me that the concerns expressed in such prayers well reflect the nature and the objectives in Christian counseling.

When a counselor honors the nature of Christian counseling, great good will result. People will receive the help that God wants them to receive and He will bless the counselee with healing and hope.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON THREE:

1. Write down four desires needful for effective counseling.
 1) _____
 2) _____
 3) _____
 4) _____

2. List five objectives expressed by the apostle Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5:14.
 1) _____
 2) _____
 3) _____
 4) _____
 5) _____

3. List four things which reflect the nature of the Shepherd paradigm.
 1) _____
 2) _____
 3) _____
 4) _____

4. A Christian counselor exercises the nature of Christian counseling when he participates in the continuing ministry of Jesus reflected in what seven areas?
 1) _____
 2) _____
 3) _____
 4) _____
 5) _____
 6) _____
 7) _____

5. The prayer paradigm is revealed in the prayer of Jabez in 1 Chronicles 4:10. List the five elements in his prayer which reveal this.
 1) _____
 2) _____
 3) _____
 4) _____
 5) _____

In-Class Reflection/Discussion Assignments

1. Reflect on four basic counseling desires, giving pointed thought to any personal need for growth in any area.
2. Reflect on each of the counseling paradigms in view of mastering one or more of the approaches.
3. Reflect on how the motivating desire of the counselor and his/her chosen counseling paradigm reveal the nature of Christian counseling.
4. Reflect on what it would require of you to become knowledgeable and proficient in the use of each of the five counseling paradigms.

LESSON FOUR

The Basic Needs of People

INTRODUCTION:

The discussion on the basic needs of people begins with an accurate understanding of the nature of man. Too much of secular counseling sees man as mere physical or primarily physical. Many others see man as physical and psychological and base their counseling approaches on those two dimensions. A Christian counselor not only sees man as physical, emotional (psychological), and spiritual but sees all these dimensions integrated in one nature created by God. Thus when we speak of man's basic needs we must speak of a holistic being who needs fulfillment at all three levels. A Christian counselor must be aware and know how to respond to unmet needs whether they may be physical, emotional, or spiritual. Perhaps, it may be more important to know how interrelated they are.

- A person may be experiencing severe emotional or physical problems because of guilt from unrepentant sin.
- A person may be experiencing physical problems because of poor emotional response to stress or personal significance.
- A person may be collapsing spiritually because of deteriorating health problems or emotional dysfunctions.

All three of these results are well expressed as David described how he was affected physically, emotionally, and spiritually by unresolved guilt.

When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer (Psalms 32:3, NIV).

How does the Christian counselor relate to human nature in meeting the holistic needs of man?

LESSON AIM: We will overview the nature of man, review his basic needs, and see how the Christian counselor supplies those needs.

LESSON PREVIEW:

- Learn that there are three areas in man's nature which must be addressed by the Christian counselor.
- Discover four basic needs of people.
- Know the three areas which the Christian counselor builds the counselee's welfare upon: a Christian home, church family, and a relationship with God.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE NATURE OF MAN

A. The Physical Nature of Man and Its Needs

1. The physical nature of man is well known and its needs are well documented in many sources.

- a. Many physical needs are better treated by trained therapists in the vast medical field.
 - b. The Christian counselor could well respond to hunger, clothing, and lodging needs along with helping people find employment, learn how to manage money, manage time, manage relationships, manage conflict, and gain additional life skills.
 - c. Even in regard to health problems, the Christian counselor can encourage a person to seek the appropriate help, working to remove barriers of inadequate money, travel or lodging problems, care of dependent people, or helping cope with paralyzing fear.
2. All the while the Christian counselor must be alert to the impact that an unmet physical need may be having on the other two dimensions. He asks, "How is he handling the physical issue emotionally or spiritually?" Resolving a physical problem may lessen the strain on a person at the emotional or spiritual level.

B. Spiritual Nature of Man and Its Needs

When it is recognized that man by his created nature is fundamentally spiritual much about him becomes clear.

1. **God created man to be in communion with his Creator.¹⁴**
Man's problems begin and escalate as he draws further away from God. Relationships more easily collapse, stabbing the person with bitter pain. Moral choices are made that hamper, hurt, and finally ruin the person in many ways. Weighty emotional and physical threats have no inner core to sustain them because of the steady approach of spiritual bankruptcy. The Bible calls this falling short of God's design and objectives – **SIN**. It is well described as a spiral in Titus 3:3:

For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another (NAS).

The Christian counselor must teach a person to know God, seek God ,and find the ever present God by means of Christ.

2. **Man is lost, needing a Savior.**
If a child is not known to be lost, no one begins a massive search effort. If a man is not considered to be spiritually lost, no one sees him in need of help – saving help. God saw him to be lost and mounted a long tortured effort to save him. The Christian counselor cannot help a counselee unless he recognizes him to be spiritually lost and needing Christ to save him. The counselor can help him solve his physical problem, even help him develop skills and values that will improve his emotional life, and in the end, fail to help him find the answer to his primary need.¹⁵
3. **Man is incomplete, needing a source of guiding strength.**
People who have lived without Christ know the vast difference of living with Christ. The Christian counselor reading the Word with the counselee can help him marvel at the incompleteness of his past efforts. He marvels more at the approaching beauty of wholeness.¹⁶ He has found a compelling

¹⁴Genesis 1–3; Acts 17:27

¹⁵Romans 3:21

¹⁶Colossians 1:28; John 8:32; 1 Corinthians 3:16; Ephesians 3:16; Romans 8:14

standard for life and relationships. He opens himself to the transforming leadership of the Spirit. He smells the aroma of the victory over sin and death.¹⁷ He enjoys an inner calm and peace even if surrounded by worse enemies than seen before.¹⁸ He sees in the sovereignty of God his dependency needs being met. He drinks deeply of the spiritual truth of His superlative greatness and finds real meaning and connective-ness in worshiping God.¹⁹

4. **The saved cannot live independent of God.**

A bird leaves its birth nest, a man leaves his father and mother, but one never arrives at a level of spiritual independence or autonomy from God, the reason being because of his spiritual nature. Man cannot sustain himself long.²⁰ He too easily forgets his standards.²¹ He cannot renew his strength. He is always vulnerable to the resurgent attacks of the evil one who is more formidable than any one saint. He must have someone to help him fight or flee and the wisdom to know the difference. He can be strong, productive, and unmoveable, but he knows the source of his strength and avails himself of the spiritual strength from his dependent relationship on God

It is not hard to see the impact of the spiritual core of man on the emotional and spiritual dimensions. No wonder secular counseling frequently fails to help the counseled. The emotionally dysfunctional especially finds no lasting solutions if the spiritual problems remain unresolved.

C. The Emotional Nature of Man and Its Needs

1. Man has feelings that are frequently and clearly expressed. Feelings of love, warmth, and understanding can add so much to a relationship, communicating love, need, appreciation, esteem, and approval.
2. Feelings of disapproval, diminishments, and disdain can demand change, threaten, or abuse. Try to imagine a person who does not express emotions of any kind. Emotions can be healthy or wounded. Wounded emotions can be healed to feel again and enrich relationships.
3. It seems that the solution to most of the emotional problems of a person are met when three conditions prevail:
 - a. If physical and spiritual needs are being regularly addressed.
 - b. If the basic emotional needs are being identified and met.
 - c. If there is an absence of emotional defects at the clinical level.
4. The Christian counselor must understand the emotional nature of people, in order, then to help them find an answer to every emotional need.

A REVIEW OF BASIC NEEDS

Aside from cultural, generational, group, and personally defined needs, there are some basic observable needs common to all people. A person's happiness, fulfillment, and ultimate productivity is inseparable from the reasonable supply of these needs. Most of a person's problems in life grow out of a lack of these needs

¹⁷1 Corinthians 15; Romans 8:2

¹⁸Psalm 23:5; Romans 8:28ff

¹⁹Isaiah 6:1ff

²⁰James 2; 1 Timothy 5:11–16

²¹Philippians 4

being supplied or one trying to supply these needs in a counter-productive way. With help a person can identify basic needs and distinguish between needs and desires. He can learn to correctly appropriate the supply of needs and learn the mistakes he made in a pursuit of needs. Or he can learn how to accept the level on which needs can be supplied and be free of resentments and unfair expectations.

The Christian counselor provides a valuable service when he helps a counselee identify valued needs, learn to correctly pursue them, and develop fair expectations of self and others. With this growth a person learns how to serenely accept the level at which needs can be supplied.

A. Basic Needs as a Growth Process

For decades counseling researchers and writers have patterned the basic needs discussion on the secular but reasonable conclusion of Maslow. He saw people progressing from primal survival needs through secondary levels to fulfilling realization needs. In one form or another writers have described these basic, human needs as follows:

1. **Level One:** Physical, survival needs are supplied by breathing, eating, drinking, and sleeping. Many intense human problems result when the supply of these needs is threatened. Desperation fills the void.
2. **Level Two:** Relationship needs are supplied by companionship, acceptance, affection, and sexual response. Man's deepest hurts occur at this level of frustrated or unmet needs.
3. **Level Three:** Developmental needs are supplied by recognized achievements, peer acknowledgment of competency, and measured progress. Common mistakes of hurting, using, and disregarding others in a rush to the top are frequently seen in this area.
4. **Level Four:** Completion needs are supplied by realizing one's life-long dreams, seeing the fruition of deeply held purposes, having the satisfaction that life has been worthwhile. Many people push toward this level, doing all the wrong things to survive, and spend their last years in resentment and bitter accusations.

Many counseling opportunities result from people not being free to progress as people, frustrated by obstacles, having skipped a level to go forward, and leaving a gap in their development. The Christian Counselor has something significant to offer to help people at every level but, increasingly so, as one is released to progress from level to level. Paul, the Rabbi turned Christian, portrays his arrival at level four:

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award me on that day . . . (2 Timothy 4:7).

Perhaps there is rooted in the statement of Jesus in John 10:10 the call to the Christian counselor to help people meet their basic, created needs: ". . . I came that they might have life and might have it more abundantly."

B. Basic Needs as a Composite of Wholeness

People either hurt or rejoice at four levels of wholeness, depending if or how basic needs are met.

1. **Every person must have a growing sense of value** — He must be honestly and richly affirmed by the significant people in his life, especially by his father. When the basic sense of value is not created in a child, growth is blocked, problems of passivity, anger, and resentment crowd into the un-

- affirmed areas of a person's emotional life. An incredible number of problems are consequent to failed parenting affirmation.
2. **Every person must have a realistic sense of competency**— He must feel that he has the ability to make measurable and appreciated differences in his area of activity. Learning new skills, applying his knowledge, and repeating successes help, but the affirmation of others confirms that he is regarded as one who can make an impact on others. In the vacuum of perceived failures there seeps in all the destructive forces of self-doubt.
 3. **Every person must have a sense of belonging, a sense of family** — Loneliness, the sense of separation, the sense of not being needed, not being missed, not being loved, and not being able to love someone breaks people in pieces. Family unity, family loyalty, family purpose, and family togetherness give strength to every endeavor.
 4. **Every person must have a source of purpose, valid, reasonable explanation of his direction and activities** — The purpose must have the motivation to get a person up and going and pursuing his objectives all day long. The pursuit of a well-defined purpose, most often, ends in fulfilling results.

How does the Christian counselor exceed what a secular counselor can do or say to address these needs?

THE RESPONSE OF CHRISTIAN COUNSELING TO BASIC NEEDS

A. Christian Homes

The development of a strong, healthy family responds to all four of these basic needs. In such an environment a child is affirmed as a worthwhile person, given training and encouragement to grow with a sense of competency, is made to feel he belongs in the family, and is motivated in choices of disciplined purposes. Some secular parents can raise such children. However, most secular parents have such unresolved issues that they only pass their dysfunctions on to the next generation. To the extent that a set of Christian parents can find freedom from any crippling experiences in their own development and can gain parental skills, then they can enhance their children's fulfillment of needs. The Christian counselor can help parents gain wholeness and train them in identifying and meeting every child at the point of need.

The place that a Christian counselor begins in strengthening a home is with the personal growth of the husband and the wife:

1. Several choices of personality or trait profiles can be made to help each person identify where he/she is in need of growth. One profile measures:
 - a. How well one handles stress or confronts anxiety.
 - b. How open and transparent one is and able to comfortably communicate.
 - c. How sensitive or self-confident one is in relationships.
 - d. How well one manages anger and is able to forgive.
 - e. How disciplined one is in planning and getting things done.

You can see how each of these traits would contribute strongly to a marriage or threaten a marriage if deficient. Once the area of growth is identified, the Christian counselor can teach a ready person how to remove any condition that blocks growth and teach the person the life management skills to accelerate growth. Sometimes it may be important to go even deeper to free one from personality dysfunctions.

2. The husband and wife may need instruction and encouragement in developing their marriage covenant. The foundations of marriage as taught in Genesis 1–2, the qualities of a marriage covenant as taught in Hosea 2:19–20, the instruction in Ephesians 5: 21–33 and 1 Peter 3:1–7 will need to be at the center of teaching by the Christian counselor. This material will be developed later in another lesson of this introductory series.
3. As early as possible a Christian counselor must provide instructions to help couples become effective parents. That instruction must begin with the five biblical foundations of parenting found in the Old and New Testaments and continue in a study of the six pillars of parenting and the life management skills with which children need to grow to maturity and to adult productivity.

One of the richest and most needed works of Christian counselors is encouraging the development of homes that provide a healthy environment for parents and children to grow to their designed potential.

Just imagine the joy you and others could experience and the glory you could bring to God if you, as a Christian counselor, could make a difference in more and more families. Just imagine the growing strength of a church with more and more families in which:

1. The couples and maturing children could be whole and free to grow.
2. The marriage was being built on biblical foundations and guided by biblical principles.
3. Parenting honored the clear teachings of Scripture and was experiencing the results promised by God.

With purpose, preparation, and patience a Christian counselor could be used by God to transform lives, churches, and communities. The prospect is worth the commitment and the careful preparation.

B. Church Family

The Church was designed as a family where the needs of each member are met:

1. Loving each other as Jesus loved each one gives one a **sense of belonging**²²
2. Encouraging each other in every effort gives one a **sense of value**.
3. Helping each other discover, develop, and employ ministry gifts gives one a **sense of competency**.²³
4. Learning together the purpose of the Church of God gives one a **sense of purposeful direction**.

The Christian counselor has a vital ministry in the Church to lead in the development of an environment in the local church where the needs of every member are fulfilled. In a broader application, the Christian counselor works so that what was said about physical needs being met in the Jerusalem church can be said about his congregation — “***For there was not a needy person among them . . .***” (Acts 4:34).

C. Relationship with God

Both healthy homes and mature churches are outgrowths of a deeper level of meeting human needs. In the relationship with God the basic human needs are

²² John 13:34

²³ 1 Peter 4:10

met at their deepest level. There are Gospel facts that responds to man's basic needs:

1. God created an incredible universe and honored man as its crown jewel. Creating man in His own image emphasizes the value, place, competency, and purpose of man.
2. God redeemed man by the sacrificial mission of His dear Son. The price of the mission underscores God's assigned value to man.
3. God called man to Himself and to the Family of believers by an awesome message of grace, faith, and loving obedience that emphasizes a sense of belonging.
4. God sets believers as lights in the world to call all men to Christ, giving the Church a lifelong purpose.
5. God has enhanced the abilities of every believer with gifts to be used in church ministries, affirming a member's purpose, place, value, and competency.

Conclusion:

With all of these divine provisions, God has given man promises and a destiny that are beyond human superlatives. In healthy families, in mature churches, and in a right relationship with God all of the basic needs of man are fully met. The Christian counselor is uniquely placed to help people receive the fullest in all three areas of a complete life.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON FOUR:

1. List three areas of the nature of man which the Christian counselor must address.
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
2. Name four basic needs as a composite of wholeness.
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
3. Three foundational relationships upon which the Christian counselor bases the counselee's wholeness upon are:
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____

In-Class Reflection/Discussion Assignments

1. Reflect on the fundamental importance of accurately understanding the basic needs of people.
2. Reflect on the dangers of having only a partial view or a distorted view of the basic needs of people.
3. Reflect on an assertion that any one of the three basic aspects of man (physical, spiritual, emotional) is the most important.
4. Reflect on how one's secular family, one's spiritual family, and one's personal relation with God relates to the fulfillment of basic needs.

LESSON FIVE

The Qualities of a Christian Counselor

INTRODUCTION:

Like a teacher in a classroom or a preacher in a pulpit, the qualities of a counselor/teacher are of vital importance to the positive outcome in a counseling situation. This lesson will consider two major points:

- ▶ Who should focus on counseling?
- ▶ The biblical anatomy of a Christian counselor.

This study will help you determine where you are in your development, both to measure your growth and to set goals for the development of needed growth areas.

LESSON AIM: We will attempt to discover the nature and character of a competent Christian counselor.

LESSON PREVIEW:

- ▶ Discover who should focus on counseling? Five guidelines in determining who will be competent as a counselor.
 - ▶ Examine the anatomy of a Christian counselor, the quality and actions evident in those who want to be Christian counselors.
-

PART ONE: WHO SHOULD FOCUS ON COUNSELING?

One of the guiding principles we considered in Lesson One was that counseling is not for everyone. Everyone can help at some level of counseling, but not everyone needs to focus on counseling as one of his/her major areas of service. What are the major questions we need to ask to answer, “Who should focus on counseling?”

A. “Are You Becoming More Whole in Christian Virtues?”

The counselor, prior to any other concern, is a model of what he/she teaches. Everything that is taught is either enhanced or diminished by what the counselor is becoming. A fuller study of the necessary virtues would explore the following biblical texts:

1. The temple experience of Isaiah in 6:1–13. The prophet was overwhelmed by the majesty of Jehovah, high and lofty and lifted up.
 - a. Out of his awe of the holiness of God he was convicted of his own sinfulness and those around him.
 - b. He confessed his lostness and was cleansed of his iniquity. He was cleansed by an act of God.
 - c. Fully free, he urged God to use him in God’s redemptive mission to mankind.

- d. A person who becomes a good counselor has gone to the temple and has come out free and compelled to become a part of God's redemptive mission to lost people.
- 2. The mountain experience of the early disciples in Matthew 5:1–12. Jesus proclaimed the constitution of the Kingdom, beginning with eight promises of fulfillment to people growing in spiritual maturity. People growing in these "mountain top" virtues will become increasingly more effective in helping people:
 - a. Lovers of simple life styles (poor in spirit).
 - b. Sensitive to the needs around him/her (mourn).
 - c. Committed with a sweet, uncomplaining spirit (meek).
 - d. Highest priority on being right before God (hungering and thirsting).
 - e. Builder of caring relations (merciful).
 - f. An open relation with God (pure in heart).
 - g. Committed to bringing harmony and completeness to others (peace maker).
 - h. Courageous and convinced in faith (persecuted).
- 3. The qualities of Galatians 5:22–26; Ephesians 6:1–20; Colossians 4:1–6; and 2 Peter 1:5–11 must be added to a list of qualities that will characterize a person who wants to focus on helping others in counseling.
- 4. More specifically, as related to helping people grow, a person who focuses on counseling must give priority attention to personal growth in the following virtues:
 - a. **Forgiveness** – up to 60% of the people who a counselor will help will struggle with resentments coming from unresolved hurts. The issues remain unresolved because people do not know how to manage their anger leading to forgiveness.
 - b. **Reconciliation** – building positive relationships begins with knowing how to manage conflict, leading to resolution and reconciliation. Communication skills must be strong.
 - c. **Affirmation** – building people to reach their fullest potential depends heavily on the ability to perceive worth and possibilities in counselees and to affirm them honestly and frequently.
 - d. **Discipline** – Few virtues result where there is a poverty of personal discipline. A person must be able to determine what is most important, commit to effective plans, and complete what he starts.

The Christian counselor must be well on his way to mastering these virtues to enhance what he/she will teach in the crucial areas of anger management, conflict resolution, affirmation, and discipline.

B. “Have You Discovered, Developed, and Employed Your Ministry Gifts?”

From 1 Peter 4:10, the Bible student learns that every member is a gifted member. Studies will help one determine the extensiveness and depth of that giftedness. Consider the following giftedness outline:

- 1. God has given to every believer the power to become a Christ like, whole person.²⁴
- 2. God has determined what kind of people and in which kind of circumstance each person can best serve.²⁵

²⁴Colossians 1:28

²⁵Romans 12:4–8 “according to the grace given us” from God .

3. God has determined the ministry priority of each member by the specific potentials He has given.²⁶
4. God has given differently to each member a way that he/she can effectively approach a ministry assignment.
5. God has raised up models of dedicated servants who inspire us according to our giftedness.

Incumbent on each member is the responsibility to discover all of the five areas of giftedness, develop each area, and employ them in the growth of the Church. All members are gifted and God-assigned to work in the Church. Some are especially gifted to be superb counselors. The Church is particularly blessed when their counseling gifts are developed and employed.

C. “Are You Becoming Adequate in Your Biblical Knowledge?”

An effective counselor must have a sound and comprehensive knowledge of Scripture. Every value decision, every point of instruction, and every thought that is rejected must be guided by the mind of God as revealed in the Scriptures. The following is an outline of the primary areas of biblical studies:

1. **Exegetical studies:** developing the skills and acquiring the tools to determine accurately the intended message in the biblical text.
2. **Expositional studies:** bringing the biblical truths across the bridge of the centuries and applying them to meet the needs of modern man.
3. **Devotional studies:** plumbing the depths of Scripture to grow closer and more intimate with God through worship, piety, and service.
4. **Biographical studies:** meeting the people of the Bible and learning the intended messages from their lives.

Each of these areas of study is enhanced with a growing knowledge of the original languages (Hebrew and Greek), of biblical geography, of world history, of ethnic culture, and knowing the different kinds of literature found in the Scriptures.

D. “Are You Progressing in the Development of Counseling Skills?”

While most of us will not become professional counselors, deriving our livelihood in the helping profession, we can become well trained counselors or para-counselors. The pressing needs of people who want to be helped and the great good that can be done in counseling demand that we welcome training opportunities. Your willingness to read and build a growing, Christian library of counseling material, your readiness to take courses in counseling, and your intention to develop a supply of counseling tools indicate your desire to progress in the development of counseling skills.

E. “Are People Coming to You for Help to Cope with Their Problems?”

One of the best indications that one should focus on counseling as a ministry is the number of people who ask for help. People ask help from those whom they regard as understanding, caring, capable, and available. Take note over the next three months how many come to you for help and what problems they present. Thus, you can measure how much you are seen as one who could help and in which areas of need you are recognized as being able to help.

²⁶Romans 12:4–8, Ephesians 4:11–12

PART TWO: THE ANATOMY OF A CHRISTIAN COUNSELOR

The Apostle Paul expressed his view of teaching to the brethren in Rome expressing what must be true for all those who would teach today in a counseling ministry. He emphasized three areas that must characterize an effective counselor. Consider the individual qualities of a Christian counselor as outlined in Romans 15:14:

Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another (NKJV).

A. Advancing Qualities of Goodness

The word “goodness” could embrace so many of the great virtues advanced in Scripture and exemplified by the heroes of the faith. Consider these qualities of “goodness” that particularly strengthen the Christian counselor in his/her work of helping others:

1. **Compassion** – the Christian counselor must be able to feel what another feels, understand through the eyes of another, and see oneself where the other person is with all of the perceived pain, frustration, and fear.
2. **Belief** – the Christian counselor must believe in the human potential to change, especially as it is strengthened by faith. Man can be regenerated by the power of God. Man was created with a purpose and a destiny. What we see is not always what must be. People can and will change to think, feel, and act like Jesus.
3. **Hope** – the Christian counselor works with a vision of the person being changed, becoming all that God designed him/her to be. He/she patiently prays, teaches, and serves in hope of a positive result, a joyful change.
4. **Love** – the Christian counselor focuses on what would be best for the counselee, works to that end result, and rejoices as good begins to emerge.

These qualities of “goodness,” so necessary for the counselor, really are results of other conditions. They grow out of a healthy recognition of one’s own needs, limitations, and vulnerability to sin. They grow out of one’s sense and belief in one’s worth as determined by God. They grow out of one’s confident reliance on God’s power, purpose, and presence in his/her life.

B. Advancing Knowledge

Good men and women are the strength of any congregation or nation. “Goodness” is the beginning of humble service and towering greatness. However, increasing “knowledge” gives direction, purpose, and stability to every good work. There are so many fields of knowledge, but the specific areas of knowledge that the Christian counselor must master are as follows:

1. **Knowledge of God in Scripture.** Through a study of the nouns (names) and verbs (action) used in Scriptures one can best know God as He has revealed Himself. Knowing God is a key to making Him known and loved by the counselees. This knowledge of God can be the beginning of the desired change in the counselees.
 - a. The nouns or names of God reveal his qualities and identify His nature.
 - 1) **He is One.** He does not permit any rival or peer. He is without equal, unique among imposters. He is united in Himself without contradiction, entirely intact, and integral.

- 2) **He is Holy.** He is unique, set apart from any others, incomparable, superlatively above all.
 - 3) **He is Spirit.** He is independent of the material world, above time, space, and circumstance, not controlled, limited, or even influenced by any force, He is autonomous and sovereign.
 - 4) **He is Light.** He is absolute in all of His qualities: knowledge, power, virtues.
 - 5) **He is Love.** He is committed to good, wanting what is best for everyone.
 - b. The verbs that describe God's actions grow out of who He is. His unity, His holiness, His sovereignty, His absoluteness, and His love give strength to all His actions. As a counselor one can give direction, comfort, and assurance based on who God is and what He has done across the ages.
2. **Knowledge of People.** Jesus knew what was in man.
- a. To the extent a counselor can understand the nature, the needs, the purpose, and the destiny of man, then he can become more like Jesus, the Great Helper.
 - b. Knowing people helps the counselor to see them realistically as they are, understanding the environment they live in, and valuing them as individuals.
3. **Knowledge of Self.**
- a. To get in contact with another, one must be in contact with oneself, in contact with one's feelings, needs, limits, and possibilities.
 - b. This self-awareness requires honest self-disclosure, resulting in commitment to excel through discipline and change.

C. Advancing Skills

- 1. Good and very knowledgeable men and women are few but valuable to the progress of any activity. These qualities are given an outlet to accomplish much good through advancing development of skills.
- 2. Differing skills are required to respond to the many kinds of people and conditions.
- 3. Different needs (marriage preparation, marriage development, grief and loss issues, depression, compulsive behaviors, and so forth) require different skills. The use of the many methods or developing new methods require advancing skills.
- 4. The value and urgency of counseling demands that a counselor study and adapt the best counseling methods to the circumstances of the counselee and to his/her own personality. He/she must keep current with the rapid development in the counseling field.

Conclusion:

These matters will be treated more fully in the following study lesson. In this study we have introduced the qualities of the counselor. We looked first at the kinds of people who should focus on counseling as one of their major contributions to the growth of the Church. Second, we looked at the qualities outlined in Romans 15:14. Take some time to look at yourself. I hope that you are already well on your way in being the counseling person this lesson has described.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON FIVE:

1. There are five (5) questions one should ask concerning who should focus on counseling. List these five questions.
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____
2. Priority attention to personal growth for the counselor must be given in what four virtues?
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
3. Paul emphasizes three areas that must characterize an effective counselor. List these:
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4. What are three areas wherein knowledge must be advanced?
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

In-Class Reflection/Discussion Assignments

1. Reflect on each of the five questions each person must ask in order to pursue the ministry of counseling.
2. Reflect on the critical importance of advancing in goodness, knowledge, and skill in becoming a competent counselor.

Out-of-Class Research/Meditation Assignments

1. Based on your response to Reflection Question One, conduct a self-evaluation in each of the five areas of focus.
2. Determine which of the three parts of the counselor's anatomy you are at your most vulnerable and design a growth plan.
3. Set aside a block of time to lay before the Lord the areas in which you know He has freely empowered you and the areas that show less evidence that He has intervened. Praise Him for the former; beg Him to break into your life should there be any attitude or practice that resists His Grace.

LESSON SIX

The Preparation Of A Christian Counselor

INTRODUCTION:

The immense good that can be accomplished in helping people through effective, Christian counseling urges us to be as well prepared as is possible. The immense hurt that results from poor preparation should sober us with the necessity and urgency of adequate readiness to help people.

We have viewed Christian counseling as “teaching people to think, feel, and do like Jesus.” **Counseling is teaching.** Thus, the admonition of James 3:1 speaks forcefully to anyone who counsels another: *“Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly”* (NIV). The consequences of misguided instruction, the influence of unhealthy suggestions, and the damage of unchristian conduct are often irreparable.

Let us begin this lesson with the mutual and settled conviction that the Christian counselor must lay a solid foundation and spend the rest of his/her life building on it with sound principles, effective methods, and adequate tools. The preceding lessons have summarized some of the vital aspects of the solid foundation. This lesson will address continuing preparation one must make to become an effective counselor.

LESSON AIM: We will investigate some very important aspects of training necessary in becoming a Christian counselor.

LESSON PREVIEW:

- Learn of some various methods of preparation and training for becoming a competent counselor.
 - Discover seven stages of spiritual development necessary in the life-growth of the counselor.
 - Investigate ten elements involved in continued preparation through counseling.
-

SYSTEMATIC TRAINING FOR THE COUNSELOR

There is a wealth of books and training programs readily available today. With discipline, one can pursue a self-help plan of preparation, but it would be far better to enter a systematic program with stated goals, measurable evaluations, and accountability.

A. Formal Training Counseling Programs

There is a wide selection of on-campus and distant learning programs in Christian counseling from which to choose. A select list is given at the end of the Study Guide of this lesson. There is wisdom in choosing a Christian oriented program to avoid the secular and damaging influences of most of the available counseling programs. It would be best to choose a program of a school or counseling group that you know well and in which you have confidence. What

are some of the questions you need to ask before entering any program? You need to be well informed on the following areas:

1. Does this program begin with the primary fact that a God exists who created the universe, overrules with sovereign authority, and holds its destiny unilaterally?
2. Does this program affirm and insist on the Bible being the most trustworthy standard and guide in counseling? Do the leaders in the program submit all of their teachings to the Bible messages as the inspired and inerrant revelation of God's will for man?
3. Does this program understand the purposeful creation of humanity, the intentional relationship between God and man, and the personal responsibility that man must assume for his conduct, for which he is personally accountable?
4. Does this program set a priority on man's spiritual relationship with God over his temporal happiness and the fulfillment of his human potential?
5. Does this program see the Church as the intended context for redemption, rehabilitation, and renewal and the counselor as a yielded servant, an exemplary model, and a prepared guide to those who want to grow to be like Jesus?

A program that is deficient in any one of these areas will be compromised in helping you to be prepared to teach others to think, to feel, and to act like Jesus.

B. Focused Studies

One needs to determine very early what kind of needs touch him/her most deeply and for which kind of people he/she feels the most passion to serve. A servant profile will reveal these concerns. See the appendix for a discussion on Sunset's Servant Profile. Knowing these answers reveals where God has assigned the person in building the Church by equipping believers for greater service. Once one knows the assigned places of ministry he/she can focus much study efforts in those areas. Counseling in those specific areas will be more helpful to the counselee, resulting in building a more fruitful life, and is more fulfilling to the counselor who sees how God is blessing the counseling. Likewise, knowing one's ministry assignment saves trying to counsel in lesser areas of giftedness, resulting in diminished effectiveness and fulfillment. Some are drawn to work with children, youth, families, or the elderly. Each person is particularly passionate about serving people in a given situation of need: the emarginated, the lost, the spiritually hungry, the dysfunctional, the distressed, the unchallenged, or the uninformed, to name a few. Happy is the person who knows who he/she can best serve and what needs are most inviting. Happier is the person who prepares specifically to be available and skilled to help such people in a timely and competent way. Few counselors are so gifted and trained that they can be competent in all counseling needs of all kinds of people. By God's design of each of us we can serve doing great good and enjoying every minute of our counseling, knowing that God is being glorified by the growth in the counselee.

With the knowledge of one's giftedness the formation of a bibliography can begin in the specific areas of counseling. A growing library of books, audio and video tapes can be developed. Subscription to periodicals that are focused in the areas of giftedness will further counseling competence. Exploration on the Internet will expand one's horizon of available resources in the key areas of one's giftedness. Time and selectivity are major concerns in the focus on specific areas of counseling. A person could be overwhelmed in this information age and be distracted from a passionate study of the prime source of our counseling knowledge: the Scriptures.

C. Congregational Para-counseling Programs

Some congregations may have prepared counselors available to develop a congregational training program. This is called para (along side of) counseling or a lay counseling program. Its intent is not to prepare counselors on a professional or employed basis. It prepares people to help in specific areas, along side the more experienced and trained counselors. Most counseling can be effectively done by gifted people focusing their counseling in specific areas. With training the para-counselor can achieve a high degree of competency and can know the areas of needed referral to others. All trainees are instructed in the foundation principles, general methods, and the desired outcomes of Christian counseling. Then each one is guided in a focused study to gain expertise in the gifted areas. Purposely, in time, most counseling opportunities can be skillfully met by a trained member of the congregation with limited referrals in cases of needed clinical or critical care.

D. Shared Preparation

Whether in Christian counseling, in any systematic program, or in continued studies, one could profit from a study partnership with like-minded persons. Regular meetings for mutual encouragement, accountability, shared advice, and exploration could provide motivation, raise new horizons, and correct errant tendencies. If openness permits, help can be sought for the threats that Satan will plant along the way: manipulation, self serving approaches, sexual attractions, lax regard for the needs of people, signs of counselor burn out. Such encounters should be on a regular basis, be contributed to out of the growth of every member, and pointedly dedicated to the highest intents toward the people being helped. Confidentiality of cases should be scrupulously guarded that nothing said or done in the sessions violate the sacred trust of the counselee. Each session is valuable to the extent that it helps each participant grow in motivation, competency, and commitment to serve people.

STAGES OF SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

A. We Can Hardly Say Enough About Growth in Knowledge, Attitudes, Methods, and Counseling Skills

We have already discussed the qualities that characterize a Christian counselor. However, continuing preparation to counsel effectively is inseparable from what is happening in the personal life of the person in his/her quest of intimacy with God. More important than all the tools of counseling is the progression in the spiritual stages of development. It is out of one's spiritual wholeness that the best instruction, the best modeling, the best caring, and the best healing comes to the benefit of the counselee.

B. As There Are Distinct Stages of Learning and of Human Development There Are Stages of Spiritual Growth

Christian counseling would blossom if a counselor could identify the stage that he/she has achieved and could discover the stages that remain and take advantage of the known resources to reach the highest potential of spiritual development. The successive stages leading to intimacy with God are:

1. **Knowledge** – the foundation for all growth is adequate and healthy knowledge. The beginning of Christian counseling is knowing the essential truths of Scripture, the needs of humanity, and the God-given assignments of the servant.
2. **Obedience** – knowledge, to be worth anything, must lead to submission to God's will, purposes, and means. Little good comes until one desires to

- obey God and begins doing what is right because it is right. A disobedient person is of little help to people needing help. Contradictions in a counselor's life only confuse a counselee.
3. **Conscience** – doing what is right must become a personal value, pursued with personal passion. It is something more than knowing what is right and doing what is right. It is wanting to do what is right because of personal commitment. The counselee needs to know that what the counselor urges is deeply felt and personally experienced. His/her values are internalized.
 4. **Discipline** – the acts of faith that grow out of knowledge, obedience, and conscience must be sharpened by discipline. Prayer begins early. Bible study is among the first steps of the Christian. The necessity of forgiveness emerges in the first stages of faith. Christian thinking must characterize the Christian, but all must be disciplined to become real, effective, and fruitful. The counselee must see that the counselor is a disciplined person in all aspects of his life, bringing all parts of his life into control to the principles of Christ and is increasingly exemplary.
 5. **Devotional** – as one grows the hunger for intimacy with God increases. It is seen in the fervency of his/her study of Scriptures, in the eagerness to pray, and in the evidence of joy, peace, and love. The counselee who is in such need for meaning, purpose, direction, and substance in daily living and in relationships finds hope and motivation to confront the limiting problems in life by seeing the evidence of devotion in the life and practices of the counselor.
 6. **Surrender** – in the crucial quest for intimacy with God, one must come to grips with the necessity of a final surrender of every thought, of every action, and of every resource. A search must be made to the depth and width of one's soul to see if any part remains unsurrendered to God. A counselor's loving but radical determination to belong only and fully to God is the best authentication of the guidance he/she gives.
 7. **Intimacy** – to be one with the Creator of the universe, to be joyfully transparent and comfortable in His presence, to long for what concerns Him, to rejoice when He is glorified, to be saddened by anything that is less than His beauty, and to yearn to be like Him in every way is intimacy that every Christian must deeply desire. A counselor who has achieved this level of spiritual development can have the most incisive influence in the lives of those who, too, are searching for such a relationship with God.

One who progressively grows through and builds on each successive level of spiritual development enjoys the freedom for which God has created each person. This commitment to freedom growth is the essence of the Christian life and among the greatest dynamics in Christian counseling.

PREPARATION THROUGH COUNSELING

- A. **There Are So Many Possibilities to Do Harm in Counseling Before One Is Ready.** There is so much to learn about any area of counseling that one must invest carefully and adequately in preparation.
- B. **A Person Must Start Counseling Because Counseling Is Best Learned Through Counseling.** Instruction in any form only aims at pushing a student into the main stream of counseling. Here are some suggestions about continuing one's preparation through counseling:
 1. **Choose counseling opportunities carefully** – the needs are many and often complex, requiring training and experience beyond early levels of counseling. In the early stages of preparation, one should say no, confidently

and without shame, to areas that are uncharted by personal experience or training. One can say yes to areas in which he/she has had some personal experience and learned results and can more easily identify with the feelings and needs of the counselee. One cannot counsel with everyone who needs or asks for help. Neither time or expertise permit one to give indiscriminate help. While selective counseling is always true, it is especially wise as one prepares for effective years of counseling.

2. **Choose to always be a student** – one would do well to determine to read ten select books a year on counseling or related subjects and subscribe to several periodicals in Christian counseling. One must avail him/herself of cassettes, video materials, Internet entries, published counseling programs, and seminars on Christian counseling.
3. **Choose to judiciously select a mentor(s)** – there is no necessity to meander aimlessly through a counseling situation, running the risk of damaging, not helping a person, or discouraging the person to ever seek counsel again. Not when there may be some trained and experienced mentor a telephone call or visit away. While respect for the mentor's time must be considered and the confidentiality of the counselee must be guarded, counseling suggestions can be of immense value as one moves forward in learning to counsel effectively in a widening range of needs.
4. **Choose to record and evaluate each counseling opportunity** – one needs to take note of any difficulty in a session, anything that was learned or that was reconfirmed, and any new horizon or idea to be developed. One needs to be attuned to feelings, especially to any negative or distractive feelings about the person, the course of the counseling, and the desired results. Accumulating a backlog of unprocessed or unevaluated feelings can impede the positive or healthy preparation one is making through counseling.
5. **Choose to cautiously pace oneself in counseling involvement** – with experience and progressive preparation one can increasingly help a larger number of persons. However, it is wise to work with only one or two in the early stages of preparation. One must guard against running ahead of his/her level of preparation. Early counseling successes can often deceive one to throw caution to the wind and make too many commitments.
6. **Choose to avoid counseling contradictions** – one's life situation must not leave him/her vulnerable in dealing with the needs of the counselee. A counselor having marital trouble needs to refer marital counseling to others. One struggling with sexual desires needs to be careful or even avoid counseling with the opposite sex until sexual values mature. Counseling with close relatives, some friends, close acquaintances, employers, or employees could place one in a compromised or ineffective counseling relationship.
7. **Choose to keep all counseling centered in God** – counseling preparation must hold such a focus on the central role of God that it becomes normative and natural to the counselor in every counseling situation. The context of all guidance must be in Scripture. The references for all suggested action must be centered in the authority of God. The expressed needs of the counselee must be viewed by what is right. External wisdom gained by observation must be measured by biblical standards. Prayer for the counselee, self, the counseling process, and the outcome must accent the relationship. God must be applauded for all help given, all solutions experienced, and all healing gained.
8. **Choose to be persistent in doing good in counseling** – not all counseling sessions or counseling cases will end well. No counselor knows everything or how to do everything well. Counselees do not always rush to do what they should. Some are not able, at the point of counseling, to do what they know or want to do. Despite partial successes or even failures, the Christian

counselor must persist in his/her preparation, learning to do better each time in teaching, motivating, and confirming the counselee in the quest of human intimacy with God.

9. **Choose to prepare as a model for those that follow** – time passes fast. Soon one will be watched by others who are in their beginning steps of helping people through counseling. Careful, purposeful, and wise preparation gives one the joy to help others who have just recently discovered their giftedness to help people. One of the most meaningful contributions to the ministry of counseling is to pass on the torch of mercy and healing to others.
10. **Choose to prepare with the vision of making a difference** – seeing people change directions in life, rebuild relations, become a loving servant, and grow to spiritual freedom is full reward for every effort to prepare to be at one's best in counseling. To look back over years of serving people is a joyful foretaste of God's final invitation to sit with the Great Physician and the healed of all ages.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON SIX:

1. What are the seven distinct stages of spiritual growth?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____

2. A person must start counseling because counseling is best learned through counseling. List ten (10) suggestions which your instruction gives for preparing one to counsel.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____
- 8) _____
- 9) _____
- 10) _____

Summary of Part One

Part One has considered the Guiding Principles, the Distinctiveness, and the Nature of Christian Counseling. We have discussed the Basic Needs of People and looked at the Qualities and Preparation of the Christian Counselor. There are many other topics that could fit well into such an introductory section that you may want to pursue:

1. The Tools and Methods of a Christian Counselor
2. Counselor Approaches — Secular and Christian
3. Ethics in Christian Counseling
4. Models in Christian Counseling
5. Modern History of Christian Counseling

In-Class Reflection/Discussion Assignments

1. Other than the four, systematic opportunities for counseling training, think of other opportunities you know about.
2. Reflect on the principle of specific spiritual growth stages, noting especially the seven stages discussed in this lesson.
3. Reflect on the ten suggestions to learn through counseling experiences.

Out-of-Class Research/Meditation Assignments

1. Evaluate at which of the seven stages of spiritual growth you seem to spend most of your time. If you are not yet at the seventh level of intimacy, note what seems to be your most evident need to promote growth.
2. Write a short essay on one of the ten suggestions to assure that counseling experiences serve you well. Show this to your Test Administrator and then save it in your notebook.

Part Two

Practical Guidelines in Christian Counseling

- Pre-Counseling Interviews
- Counselor and Counselee Relationships
- Productive Counseling
- Responsibilities of Counselees
- Advances in Christian Counseling
- Questions Christian Counselors Ask

LESSON SEVEN

Pre-counseling Interviews

INTRODUCTION

elcome to the second block of six studies in Part One: The Introduction to Christian Counseling. In the first block of studies we looked at some of the Guiding Principles in Christian Counseling. In these lessons we will study some practical guidelines in Christian Counseling. Just two reminders from earlier counseling studies in Part One:

1. Christian Counseling is: teaching others to think, feel, and act like Jesus, motivating and holding them accountable to fulfill the will of God.
2. The potential good of Christian Counseling and the destiny of the souls we can touch should demand our best efforts and highest competency.

Now, let's get started in our studies of some of the practical guidelines to helping people be healed, to relate effectively with others, to find their place in God's will, and to serve Him joyfully and fruitfully all the rest of their days. We will start with a proposal that we include pre-counseling interviews in our counseling approaches.

The desire to "fix things," to resolve problems, or to help people sometimes gets some counselors into trouble or compromises their effectiveness. A strong sense of urgency often limits the needed time for understanding a counselee's need, gaining credibility, or connecting with the counselee.

A counselor would be well advised to consider the value of scheduling at least two pre-counseling sessions before even committing to help. The insights gained in these sessions will be of immense value either to give a more effective service or to determine that a referral to another care-giver would be the best service to give. While sincerely expressing a desire to help, the counselor must explain to the prospective counselee what the "interview sessions" will contribute to a positive outcome.

LESSON AIM: To learn of the importance and the benefits of pre-counseling interviews with the counselee.

LESSON PREVIEW:

- Learn of the value of pre-counseling interviews and five goals to be accomplished.
 - Discover the importance of and the time involved in getting ready for the pre-counseling interview.
-

THE VALUES OF PRE-COUNSELING INTERVIEWS

Pre-counseling sessions give time and context to gaining invaluable insights that will give accurate direction and will accelerate the good done in later sessions. Note the goals to be accomplished:

A. The Needs of the Counselee Can Be Discovered and Described

After a prayer together and reading of Scripture, the session could begin with an opening statement like, "I am honored that you have come to me, asking me to enter your life to encourage your growth. I really want to be of any help I can. To get us quickly and most directly to the areas of needed growth, can you

describe your need?” Even though some counselees may not be able to accurately express or, at this point, want to focus on the major issue, asking them to open the interview expressing their need serves both of you well. Be careful to hold the stated need for further confirmation before reaching a conclusion about the direction of the counseling.

B. Background Information Can Be Gained to Give Further Insights

Either through printed forms that are available from various sources or through your own prepared informal format you will be benefitted in learning (unless you know the person very well) about the family, education, employment, relationships, values, and life experiences of the counselee. Believing that each person is impacted by his history, knowing one’s history can be extremely helpful in understanding much about the person. It could be helpful assigning the counselee to write a brief life story, emphasizing meaningful experiences, significant relationships, deepest disappointments, and highest joys and dreams, both fulfilled and unfulfilled. Against the backdrop of one’s life story a counselor could be more understanding both of the person and the best way to offer help.

C. Possible Testing to Verify Areas of Needed Growth

1. The value of using a testing tool — Usually a select test or battery of tests sharpens a counselor’s understanding, saves a great deal of time, and even saves reaching some wrong conclusions. The value of the tests, especially if the results are shared with the counselee, is best seen in the evaluation that the counselee has given on him/herself. The test removes the counselor from having judged the counselee and leaves him/her as an objective interpreter of the text results.
2. Selecting the right testing tool — In counseling approaches, so in the choices of tests, there is a wide diversity of views. I would recommend that you become knowledgeable in as many testing programs as possible and certified in those that seem most useful to you in your level or most frequent area of counseling. Learn well the strengths and weaknesses of each person and verify the stated purposes of each program. You will find that some tests meet more of your counseling opportunities while other tests are not as useful or not as enjoyable to administer and to report to the counselee. See the Appendix in the Study Guide for a listing and comments on frequently used testing programs.

It would be time well spent to ask the counselee to complete your entry test in the first pre-counseling interview and if possible, give him/her the results in the second session. This activity alone could help set some growth goals and determine much of the content in later sessions.

D. Determine If the Counselee Is Willing to Invest in His/Her Growth

By the end of the pre-counseling sessions you should be able to both commit yourself to helping the prospective counselee and to project the number of sessions, effort, and time that will be required by the counselee. You need a verbal commitment from the counselee to proceed. The counselee must want growth enough to make some investment of time and effort. Counseling that is one-sided in commitment and in investment of time usually does not result in much growth.

Time is often the essence of life decisions. Often you must make a choice to help based on the likelihood that the investment of your time will make the most difference. We do not want to throw away people or opportunities to help. But while we are trying to help someone who is not interested or committed to growth, we could be helping someone who understands the value of the time spent in counseling.

There is a relationship between desire and outcomes. Sometimes we must become involved in people's lives to help promote desire and commitment. Seeing the possible outcomes motivates us to work with people who start with limited desire. The pre-counseling sessions are intended to help us determine as accurately as possible if there is any present hope that the counselee will make some good use of the counseling experience. Sometimes we must conclude that for the present the would-be counselee lacks the commitment to get any value from the time spent in counseling. Even with such unwilling persons we urge them to consider a future commitment to counseling and that the door will remain open for help.

E. Determine If You Are the Appropriate One to Help

Not every need can be met by one person. There are some needs that can best be met by other people. Regardless of greater preparation and experience, availability of time, previously established relation of trust, or because of the existing relation you have with the needy person, personal ego needs must not interfere with the decision to refer a prospective counselee to another care giver. What is best for the person is the first and last consideration.

Some decisions to refer a prospective counselee can be made even without the pre-counseling interviews. Counseling with employees or employers, close relatives and some close friends, or particularly intimate work colleagues often introduces distractions that either compromise the counseling outcome or burdens the other relationships. Some circumstances may commend counseling with those in close relationships, but serious consideration should be given to a counseling involvement in such cases. The better help might be of encouragement, provision of resources, and referrals to someone who is both skilled and concerned.

In all counseling commitments, the crucial question is "Am I the one who can best help this person?" You may not be the best counselor, but you may be helpful because you are most available, have some skills, are eager to help, and have the trust of the person.

See the Appendix for a series of questions that can be asked to help you determine if a prospective counselee might be ready to make a commitment to his/her growth.

If you can come out of the first two pre-counseling interviews with the following results, you will have spent your time well and will have been a blessing to the counselee.

1. Understanding the needs for growth of the counselee through the self-expressions in need statements, testing, and a life story.
2. Determination that the prospective counselee will be committed to growth or can be motivated by counseling.
3. Determination of your own commitment and clear statements of your eagerness to help.
4. A mutual agreement of the anticipated counseling approach and schedule.

Even if the pre-counseling sessions conclude without future meetings, much good can be done. The person should have a clearer view of his/her growth needs, should be affirmed that someone really cares, and should have hope that someone will provide help.

GETTING READY FOR THE FIRST PRE-COUNSELING INTERVIEW

Preparedness is the context for competency. A well-prepared counselor inspires trust in the counselee and shows that the counselor regards the person as valued. The counselor is more relaxed knowing that adequate preparation has been made. The

counselor's attitude puts the counselee at greater ease and openness. Being prepared makes the best use of time in the counseling hour where it counts most for results.

A. Spiritual Preparations

The counselor must continually pursue greater intimacy with God and be concerned about personal spiritual growth. However, beyond the personal dimension there should be specific preparation for the upcoming counseling session and the individual to be counseled.

1. Prayer: Making God the Senior Counselor.

Going into a session without consulting God is to rely on human resources, deficient wisdom, and faulty insights. Just as Jesus would not begin His days, make His decisions, or confront His challenges without prayer; a Christian counselor would not dare to approach the teaching opportunity that a counseling session provides without spending some time before God. Just as Samuel knew that he would sin against Israel in failing to pray for them,²⁷ so might a counselor fall short in failing to pray for God's guidance in entering the life of a counselee. The counselor needs to be able to confirm to a counselee what Jesus confirmed to His disciples, "*I have prayed for you.*"²⁸

2. Scriptures: Making the Holy Spirit a Counseling Colleague.

The Holy Spirit is a powerful presence in the lives of people.²⁹ The Spirit convicts people of sin, righteousness, and judgment through the sharply penetrating Word. The counselor must be a "person of the Book" at all times, but especially before going into the life of another person presuming to teach the right ways to live like Jesus. The counselee needs to see how important the Scriptures are to the counselor so as to find hope and guidance. There is no more immediate way to bring the Spirit into the session than having the Word fresh on one's mind. Being quick and accurate to give voice to the Word in a counseling session requires some purposeful time with the Spirit, being instructed and empowered by the Spirit for the approaching counseling assignment.

3. Meditation: Making Jesus the Trusted Model.

Before going before another person, a counselor needs first to go before Jesus to be found adequate for the assignment. The counselor needs to enter the counseling session unburdened of sin, refreshed in his vision of excellence, renewed in purpose to help the counselee be like Jesus, and have a passion for accountability. Paul often prayed that he would be ready before preaching to others.³⁰ An unexamined counselor is an ineffective counselor.

4. Reflection: Making the Counselee the Focus of the Hour.

Before each session, some time must be spent reflecting on what is known about the counselee, what has been learned through interviewing and testing, evaluating how he/she reacted, looking behind the words and gestures, and considering the possible meanings of what was not said. Insights are not often "flashes of the moment" as much as they are the fruit of much reflection on all of the discernible facts and circumstances. Purposeful reflection before each session opens frequent doors of understanding on how best to help the counselee.

²⁷1 Samuel 12:23

²⁸Luke 22:31

²⁹Romans 8:1–27

³⁰1 Corinthians 9:26–27

B. Material Preparation

To be a good custodian of time and do something of value in the life of the counselee, the Christian counselor must give adequate time to getting select materials collected and readily at hand.

1. Have a Bible ready and the Scripture to be read already selected and freshly read. Having to get up and search for a Bible, thumbing through its pages for the text, and reading it “sloppily” gives very little impression that the Scriptures are important. This is something that the counselee must take seriously as a major part of the desired solution.
 - a. Give thought to **the content and format of the prayers** you want led beginning or concluding the session. Preparation gives spontaneity its direction and richness. Prayer formats could include a silent prayer, a counselee led prayer, reading a biblical prayer, singing a prayer, or having the counselee write out a prayer. Some time can be well spent in every session teaching and sharing a period of devotion. One of the richest gifts to some counselees would be stirring in them the joy of worship. Be prepared to give that gift.
 - b. Have the **session plan** clearly in mind and write it down to tie each session together. You should have your session goal clearly stated and each step noted that will lead you to your desired result. Having a well-defined plan will help you get back on track when the inevitable distractions occur. A well-prepared plan permits you the flexibility to deal with the desired counselee responses without losing sight of what you feel is best for the session.
 - c. Have counseling **materials ready** precisely when needed. You may want to make a counseling assignment. If reading assignments, have the book, article, or Scripture citations at hand. Have tests or tests results at hand.
 - d. Have any **equipment tested and ready** for immediate use. Fumbling with out-of-focus overheads, discovering that projection bulbs are burned out, having to search for an extension cord, and such things distract from the serious purpose of the session.
 - e. Have the **test or questionnaire results** carefully reviewed to be fully familiar with the contents. Few things erode a counselees’ confidence in the competency of a counselor than to see him “muddling” through or misreading the test results. We don’t like it in the medical field nor can we tolerate it in the counseling field.
 - f. Give some attention to the **appearance of the counseling setting** and even to your own appearance. Unkempt surroundings and appearances do have a negative impact on most people, suggesting that the counselor may not be in charge of his/her own life.
 - g. Have a **clock in clear view to you and keep the session within the hour**. Most of what will be accomplished will be done in the middle of the session. Devotion, introduction, summary, and assignments will richly fill the rest of the session.
 - h. Have the **date and hour clearly in mind when you can meet again** with the counselee, along with a possible optional schedule. Leaving it to be decided at the end of the session by the counselee is not only time consuming, but can be frustrating. Be sure to write down the scheduled appointment for quick reference.
2. By this point I hope that you are getting the impression that getting ready to counsel is **time consuming**. An effective counselor, like a successful student or teacher, spends at least two hours of preparation for every hour of counseling. Going into a counseling session without prayer, Bible study, meditation, reflection, and making material preparations reduces the good that a counselor can do in helping a counselee think, feel, and act like Jesus.

C. Securing a Commitment

Earlier the desire of the counselee was stressed. It is important at this point to return to that theme. In the first sessions, the major objective is to secure the commitment of the counselee to invest in his/her own growth in future efforts. If you or someone who urged the person to come to you for counseling is more interested in the counseling than the counselee, you face a difficult to impossible task. During the pre-counseling sessions a counselor needs to feel that the counselee has answered or has grown in making a credible commitment. The following inquiries can help to discover or promote this commitment, as each may apply to the counselee:

1. Before coming to counseling have you had any painful feelings from hurts you have experienced?
This question, if asked sincerely and with sensitivity, places you on the side of the counselee, showing genuine concern about the emotional health of the counselee. Future sessions will provide the opportunity to understand these hurts better and to guide the counselee toward needed healing.
2. Have you struggled with any problems in your attitudes, values, conduct, or relationships?
Major needs of counselees are integrity, openness, acceptance, and accountability. From the beginning, the counselor must be guiding the counselee in expressing these qualities. Difficulty in self-disclosure may be a major part of the counselee's problem.
3. Have others expressed to you that you struggle in any such problems?
Our self-view is greatly formed by the input of others. Many take their clue about conduct from what others express. This question can help you to understand much about one's value system, how much he is open to input from others (even yourself), and how much he might be ready to invest in his own growth.
4. If so, what have you done to resolve these struggles? With what results?
Most growth occurs directly in proportion to the well-guided efforts of the counselee. If one has known he has problems but has done nothing, you know that he is in need of greater understanding and motivation. His sense of any results can give you a barometer to measure his expectations.
5. What other things have you thought about to resolve any struggle?
The counselee may have some good ideas that he has not yet attempted for fear of failure, for not knowing how best to proceed, or for need of encouragement that you can provide. The question is to stimulate thoughts of how he can get more engaged in his own growth.
6. What have you learned about yourself in these sessions to improve your life or relationships?
From the tests you have administered and reported to him, new areas of needed growth will most likely have emerged. Because of the profiles and your evaluations, the counselee may have the clearest and most accurate view of his life he has ever had. If the profiles have been properly relayed to him, he will have hope that he has never felt before.
7. May I make some additional observations that could improve your life?
Very likely, with your experience and training, you will be able to help the counselee complete the picture of the areas of needed growth or help him understand the relation between these areas and other traits or their impact in relationships.
8. How badly do you want to confront these issues? What price would you pay?
The knowledge the counselee may have gained of his areas of needed growth could motivate him with greater desire to get started in counseling, especially if he has gained confidence in you as a concerned and competent

- teacher. You need to be clear and specific about the costs of time, assigned work, and painful changes.
9. How would you describe yourself if these issues were resolved?
The purpose of this question is to help the counselee set some goals to keep him inspired through the course of the counseling and beyond. You may need to help him set specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and tangible goals. During the course of the counseling, these goals will need to be kept before the counselee.
 10. When would you be ready to start?
Starting is often the hardest part. It is a statement that a change is required, a new direction has been accepted, and new results of one's efforts will be expected. A lot of emotions, old habits, values, sacrifice of pleasures, and sometimes loss of relationships must be consistently made. This will be your most decisive moment to start encouraging a direction to be maintained until a new mind set and lifestyle have become fully owned by the counselee. Your job will be complete as you turn to teach others to grow like Jesus.

Conclusion:

Getting started right by understanding the counselee's needs, understanding your own contribution to his/her growth, and securing a serious commitment will make the rest of the teaching effort more fruitful and enjoyable. The more effective the counseling is the more long lasting the results will be, therefore, the end results will demand thoughtful preparations.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON SEVEN:

1. List five things of utmost value which can be accomplished in the pre-counseling interview.
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____
2. What four (4) things are of importance in the counselor making spiritual preparation?
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
3. List the eight (8) important things for the counselor to be materially ready.
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____
6) _____
7) _____
8) _____

In-Class Reflection/Discussion Assignments

The reflection questions should be asked and answered immediately after the thirty minute lecture. The research assignments should be completed before the next lecture lesson.

1. Reflect on the five stated values of planning for pre-counseling interviews.
2. Ask yourself how the pre-counseling interviews can enhance your efforts to help people.
3. Reflect on the spiritual and material preparations that one would need to make before beginning each pre-counseling session.
4. Reflect on the questions you can ask a counselee to determine the depth and sincerity of a commitment.

Out-of-Class Research/Meditation Assignments

1. List any possible reasons why pre-counseling sessions might be counterproductive. Respond to each objection.
2. Examine your present level of preparation and set some goals for greater competency. Set a specific date for beginning and concluding the goals.
3. Rehearse and memorize the ten suggested questions you could ask in securing a counseling commitment.

Show these to your Test Administrator and then save them in your materials notebook.

LESSON EIGHT

The Counselor and Counselor Relationship

INTRODUCTION:

Counseling never happens in a vacuum. It can never be successful without a meaningful relationship between the counselee and the counselor. Good counseling is neither mechanical, mathematical, or scientific. Its best context is the human interaction in a responsible environment.

Knowledge, skills, insights, and competency are all vital qualities in an effective counseling effort. No shortcuts can be taken either in acquiring these qualities or in exemplifying them in every counseling event. However, equal to any of these qualities and sometimes more crucial is the relationship that is developed between a counselor and a counselee. How is such a relationship described? What are its qualities? Are there counseling situations where relationships are difficult? We will look at these topics in the following discussion.

LESSON AIM: To explore the Counselor/Counselor relationship, discovering the boundaries of that relationship.

LESSON PREVIEW:

- Examine six different models of the relationship between the counselor and counselee.
 - Investigate ten qualities that are of the utmost importance in relationship building in Christian counseling.
 - Learn three characteristics of the difficult counselee.
-

RELATIONSHIP MODELS IN COUNSELING

Counselors have universally agreed that some relationships should exist in the counseling experience. However, they have differed widely and even sharply over what model of relationship should be developed. Basically there are six relationship models that would be of most interest to the Christian counselor.

A. Therapist/Client Model

The most common model is seen in a variety of approaches in which the counselee responds to a counselor's initiatives in seeking information through testing, questioning, reflecting, role playing, confronting, storying, writing, and so forth. From such listening, evaluation, and insight comes the counselor's diagnosis of the counselee's complaint and a prescribed and accountable program for addressing the issue. The relationship is asymmetrical. Much is known about the counselee by the counselor. Little is known about the counselor by the counselee. There has been no effort by the counselor to share with the counselee. The model intentionally precludes relationship intimacy. Its emphasis is on the counselor being able to identify the problem or growth need and effectively guiding the counselee toward a life-style solution.

B. Parenting Model

A significant number of human problems are determined during childhood development. In some way many parents are unable or unwilling to provide a healthy environment to promote wholeness in their children. The counselor might assume the role of “reparenting” those who seek his/her assistance. Children struggle toward adult life with resentments, insecurities, anxieties, low self-esteem, insensitivities, and inadequate and even destructive values and practices. These unresolved issues are at the core of much of the counseling being done today. The counselor becomes the “parent” the child never had or focuses on an area where there has been a parental breakdown. Teaching, affirming, and holding the counselee accountable are at the core of this model doing what a good parent does best.

C. Helper Model

In contrast to the knowledgeable professional that diagnoses and prescribes a course of action, the counselor in this model is the servant who stands nearby to help the counselee identify a problem, find solutions, and achieve goals. Such a counselor should be knowledgeable and skilled but in manner, puts more emphasis on working alongside a counselee. There are no authority issues as in the therapist or teacher/parenting models. The counselor is there to help and do the most good that can be done. Insights are offered, candid observations are made, and encouragement is given. In this model the counselee is often more quickly and more increasingly responsible and in control, with the goal being learning and doing what is necessary to live effectively. The counselor steps back as soon as possible when help is no longer needed and the short-term relationship is ended.

D. Friendship Model

In a culture where there is a crusade for equality, a thirst for friendship relationships, and transparency and disclosure are demanded, it should be no surprise that friendship counseling would not become a common model. In this model counseling is two friends sharing their stories, needs, wisdom, and holding each other accountable in achieving their expressed goals. This model has been practiced wherever there have been friends. It calls on counselors and counselees to become friends in sharing, advising, encouraging, and being accountable to one another. It emphasizes mutual openness, candor, and caring.

E. Healing Model

It is believed that much of the potential in effective counseling depends on a counselor connecting with a counselee. When a counselee feels that there is understanding, a genuine desire to help, and responsible regard on the part of the counselor, there begins a connection between the two that releases the forces of healing in the counselee. This model sees the need of the counselee to be understood and cared for as much more crucial than clinical therapy, knowledge, insights, or counseling techniques. Responsible and wise intimacy is at the core of this model symbolized by the human touch.

F. Confrontational Model

This model sees that all counselee dysfunction is the result of personal sin. Thus, the beginning of counseling is to call the counselee to repentance and personal responsibility. This counseling model confronts the counselee with the following questions:

- What wrong did you do?
- What have you been doing about solving the problem?
- What does God say must be done?
- What would happen if you obeyed God?
- What hinders you in obeying God?

Environment is not the issue. The wrong behavior of others is not central. The counselee is responsible before God to reject what is wrong and start doing what is seen in Scripture to be abundantly right. A call to repentance and a commitment to right thinking and right behavior are at the core of this counseling model. The counseling is characterized by genuine concern for the counselee and an earnest desire that the counselee resolve the troubling issues that his sins have caused in his life. The counseling focuses on a prophet/sinner relationship.

There is some truth in each of these six counseling models. Each can be carried to an extreme if considered the whole of truth. One's training, counseling experience, situation, and one's personality can have a great impact on the model he/she chooses as the most frequently used in counseling. Some good can be done developing any one of the models because each emphasizes the value of some level of relationship. One may want to identify and master the best of each model and be prepared to use what would be most effective depending on the counseling situation and the needs of the counselee.

There are some times that one would do well in assuming the more professional role of a therapist to infuse structure and discipline in a counseling relationship. Sometimes the deformation of personality can only be reformed by a parenting role of teaching, affirmation, and guidance. At other times only the faithfulness and patience of a helper is needed to spur on a counselee's initiative and accomplishment. At some time everyone needs a friend to be loyal, candid, understanding, but also demanding. More than we probably know many people refuse to risk turning loose of their crippling issues until a counselor touches them both literally and emotionally with his/her concern, understanding, skills, and high regard. Many times, especially when a person resists acknowledging and accepting responsibility, a counselor must take a confrontational role and call the individual to repentance and accountability.

The point of this discussion is to say that Christian counseling runs deeper than knowing well the techniques, approaches, dangers, and personality theories. Even deeper than just knowing the right Scripture for the right situation or knowing how to classify a personality disorder or how to teach right behavior. The well spring of Christian counseling, after a counselor's right relationship with God and with oneself, is to develop a right and productive relationship with the counselee. What are the qualities that insure that a right and productive relationship can be developed?

RELATIONSHIP QUALITIES IN CHRISTIAN COUNSELING

The most desirable and productive relationships include some specific characteristics as they preclude characteristics that are counter-productive. The wise counselor determines to pursue those qualities with integrity and discipline, knowing how important good relationships are to being effective in Christian counseling.

A. Ten Qualities That Are the Irreducible Minimums in Relationship Building in Christian Counseling.

1. Cluster One: Being real, authentic, genuine, sincere, and credible.

Probably the first message that the counselee strains to hear is the core value of the counselor. Thin veneers, contrived concern, and valid contradictions alert the counselee not to trust, not to reveal, and not to cooperate.

Being real means that the counselor's responses come from the heart. Being real means that concerns expressed to the counselee are weighed with thought and individuality as opposed to stock answers. Being real is being true to one's values and purposes.

Being real for the Christian counselor is wanting to do what is right, wanting God to determine what is right. Being real means being in a

disciplined contact with one's own feelings, needs, and weaknesses. Being real means knowing one's counseling limitations, the value of other relationships outside the counseling relationship, and the commitments already made to others. Being real means being in contact with all that is happening, having clear objectives in the counseling situation, and wanting only what is best for the counselee.

This quality confirms the work and purpose of the counselor as authentic, something that the counselee can trust and in which hope can arise. There will be many times in the counseling exchanges where credibility will be put to a test. In most cases the sincerity of the counselor will mark the pathway to progress.

2. Cluster Two: Being a working model of what is proposed to the counselee.

One of the most forceful confirmations that a proposed change and practice is valid is the evidence that it is working in the life of the counselor. The best of counsel becomes blurred by the failure of the counselor to live by his own counsel. While no counselor is perfect, every counselor should be a model of self-supervision, change, and growth. Whatever the counselor asks of the counselee is already well on its way in his/her personal life and relationships. Out of one's personal commitment to excellence, struggles to change, and taste of growth, the counselor can identify with the counselee and hold him/her accountable until growth becomes a life style.

3. Cluster Three: Being trustworthy, careful, and confidential with counseling information.

Most people want to open themselves up to someone. A basic need of every human is to be transparent in voicing needs, hurts, dreams, and meaningful events. Some counseling is largely giving a trusted, caring, and understanding environment for the exercise of this pressing human need. The trustworthiness of a counselor is both crucial to a counselee being able to be transparent and to be open to any needed guidance. Sharing makes one vulnerable and is an act of courage and trust. The careless use of confidential information by a counselor can cause one of the deepest hurts, closing the door to future counseling. The counselee feels betrayed, devalued, and used. The quality of trustworthiness in the careful guarding of counseling information affirms the person, enriches the relationship, and opens the door for further, significant sharing.

4. Cluster Four: Being candid, caring, and attentive.

As much as truth sometimes may hurt, the counselee needs and wants the counselor to be candid about the problems being addressed. In most cases the candor of the counselor is not a revelation but rather a needed confirmation to help the counselee face the problem responsibly. Candor is a virtue only when it comes with a caring choice of words, clothed in sensitivity, and guided by an attentive attitude of the counselor. All the while a counselor is being candid he/she must be attentive to the reactions of the counselee. The best door to understanding a counselee is through body language, eight times more revealing than words spoken.

5. Cluster Five: Being selective in making promises and faithful in keeping them.

A wise counselor is careful in making promises, making only promises that he/she thinks are important to the growth of the counselee and only those select ones the counselor is able and determined to keep. Broken promises erode the trust that the counselee must have in the counselor. In some cultures even a "perhaps" or "we'll see" response is taken as a steadfast promise with a whole set of counselee expectations being formed. Clarity in the areas of counselor commitment is basic to establishing and maintaining a right and productive relationship.

6. **Cluster Six:** Being stable, firm, committed, and providing decisive leadership.

People are more secure in following a leader who knows exactly where he is going and what he wants to accomplish. The more severe the accumulated problems of a counselee are, the more leadership qualities will have to be exercised by the counselor. There are times when the counselor will have to be firm in insisting on a course of action. Being stable or predictable gives the counselor a context of security. The counselee needs to know that the counselor is committed to this relationship for the long haul. Some counselees have spent their lives running from reality. A stable, firm, committed, and decisive counselor can give them a reference point for staying somewhere long enough to resolve troubling issues.

7. **Cluster Seven:** Being reflective, responsive, and supportive.

Some counselees do not need additional knowledge or strengthened skills as much as they need someone to listen reflectively, respond accurately, and be supportive in a valued approach chosen by the counselee. Listening reflectively means to carefully understand and weigh what is being communicated by the counselee. This quality includes follow-up questions, clarifying inquiries, and affirming gestures. Responding accurately means one has clearly understood the message of the counselee and helps him/her to frame it even more fully and precisely. Being supportive is the skill to encourage the counselee in pursuing an agreed course of action to resolve the problem.

8. **Cluster Eight:** Being hopeful, positive, enthusiastic, excited, and commendatory.

During, and especially after, counseling sessions have ended, a major contribution the counselor can make, both to relationship building and to counselee growth, is being an initial source of hope. Most counselees have lost some degree of hope or they would have never come to the counselor for help. Most counselees come for an assurance that there is still hope. Identifying problems, finding solutions, developing skills, and projecting a course of change give renewed hope. However, beyond the objective things that should happen, the quality of hopefulness expressed in a positive way on the part of the counselor is like a spark to gasoline. The counselor's enthusiastic belief that the counselee will succeed spurs the counselee forward. The commendations by the counselor along the way assures the counselee that he/she is going in the right direction in being all that God designed him/her to be.

9. **Cluster Nine:** Being clear in stating boundaries, depth of involvement, and rightful expectations.

There are some boundaries of time and conduct that must be clearly understood by the counselor and stated to the counselee early in the counseling relationship. It is wise to map out the anticipated number of sessions and specify that the length of each session will not exceed an hour, sometimes less. It is helpful, sometimes essential, to speak clearly to counselees of the other sex of what they can expect in moral conduct during the counseling relationship. It can be of great importance to place clear limits on how much the counselee can rightly expect from the counselor. It may be necessary to limit phone calls or even preclude any contact except in the appointed sessions. The quality of being clear in these matters gives structure, discipline, and seriousness to the counseling work.

10. **Cluster Ten:** Being determined to bring closure in the context of evaluation, fulfilled objective, and referrals.

No counseling should continue without a clear terminal date. A mature counselor will not encourage an open-ended counseling relationship. The quality of closure gives purpose and plan to counseling. Closure means that

the counselor has the ability to conclude the counseling, to say no to a counselee becoming counselor dependent, or even to say no to his/her enjoying the counseling relationship to excess. The quality to have projected the length and purpose of the counseling sessions and to evaluate if and how much of the objectives have been accomplished crowns the counselor's work. The quality of knowing one's own limits, of understanding further unmet needs of the counselee, and wisely referring the counselee to others who are capable of continuing the therapy that is needed is an act of counselor humility and genuine concern for the counselee.

These **clusters of qualities** are basic to building a productive counseling relationship and to achieving the results that are desired.

B. Counseling Relationships and Results Are Threatened by the Opposites of the Ten Cluster Qualities:

1. Getting emotionally involved to the point that objectivity is clouded by pity, taking sides, and justifying counselee misbehavior.
2. Being compromised by "best friends" commitments so that candor is weakened.
3. Reluctant to call a counselee to responsible behavior because of personal guilt.
4. Yielding to self-importance by divulging confidential information.
5. Growing impatient with the failed or weak efforts of counselees because they seem to reflect on personal, counseling abilities.
6. Being unprepared for each session because of marginal importance given to counseling in general or to counseling a specific person.
7. Not giving structure, purpose, or planning to a session may result in confusion of what might have been accomplished or of when is the responsible time to conclude the counseling relationship or when to refer the counselee to others.
8. Counseling more for what is important to the counselor than what is needed for the counselee.

Developing relationship qualities will be one of the surest and quickest routes to effective counseling. Knowledge and skills are strong building blocks but must have the environment of good relations to do what is best for the counselee.

WHEN COUNSELING IS DIFFICULT

The more competent a counselor becomes, the more people will request help to cope with their problems or to accelerate growth. We want to think that everyone who seeks help does so with a voluntary and correctly motivated eagerness to identify his/her problems, correct mistakes, to find better life responses, or to enhance personal strengths or relationships. More often than not this will be the case and the responses and results of such a readiness to grow will soon begin showing themselves. Then the Christian counselor "will live happily ever after" with the satisfaction that another person has been helped to become a whole person. However, one must be aware, eager, and prepared to relate to counselees at other levels of growth and motivated by less productive purposes. These will be the times when relationship building skills and goals will be of particular help to the Christian counselor in achieving the clear objectives of the counseling enterprise.

The Christian counselor knows counselees can be reluctant, resistant, and hostile. However, being a difficult counselee does not lessen one's desire to help.

A. The Resistant Counselee

It seems contradictory but there are people who ask for counseling assistance who seem to resist the work of the counselor. The counselor feels that such counselees actually fight the treatment being offered. They seem to regularly do things that slow down the counseling process. All of the relationship skills of the counselor will be called upon to make any meaningful contribution to the growth of resistant counselees. What can a counselor do?

1. A counselor must be aware of what is happening and avoid taking the resistance personally or reacting angrily. Such resistance most often occurs when the counseling process begins to get close to the root of the problem and changes are urged. The sad fact is that the counselee would prefer the dysfunctions of the present to the fear of the unknown changes being urged.
2. A counselor must have some insights of the motivations that cause the resistance. For some, the healing would mean giving up their dependence on the counselor (transference). For others, it means giving up some secondary gains of attention, freedom from responsibilities, punishing others, and so forth. Still for others, there is the need of self-punishment for shameful actions or to confirm their own sense of unworthiness.
3. A counselor must learn the varied characteristics of a resistant counselee and learn how to calmly respond to each one to keep the counseling going forward. The following are some of the characteristics of a resistant counselee:
 - a. **Silence** is the most common response of the counselee, leaving the counselor with the burden of trying to involve the counselee in an effort to understand his/her needs. The better form of counselor inquiry is to be alert to the feeling level expressed even at the body language level and direct any statements at how the counselee must be feeling about personal problems, hopes for the future, or expectations of the counselor. Expressing discomfort over the silence of the counselee, attacking the silence by diminishing the person, asking “yes” or “no” type questions, or filling the silence chasm with counselor talk usually proves ineffective in building a counseling relationship.
 - b. **Laughing frequently and jesting** especially when discussing emotional issues can be an indicator that the counselee wants to divert the course of counseling. For some, insecurity and pattern laughing go closely together. The context does not seem to merit such degree or expression of humor. Again, a counselor needs to sensitively focus the counselee’s attention on the painful area he/she is trying to resist. A question like, “From what you are saying I am wondering if you feel some pain in this area. It would be good for you to discuss it some more.” could invite the person to go forward.
 - c. **Excessive talking** is like a team staying on the offense to keep the other team off the field. If the counselee can consume the counseling hour, the counselor will have little time to call attention to painful areas. Often the talk may take the forms of self-diagnosis, intellectualizing the counseling issues, deflecting blame to others, and making empty promises. The counselor is a listener to be sure, however, the counselor is a teacher and must intervene into the aimless monologue to bring the counselee to face the reality of his/her resistance to change. The counselor needs to avoid some of the same verbosity and intellectualizing of the counselee by being crisp, to the point, and never far from the issue that needs to be treated.
 - d. **Generalization**, both in expressing understanding of the problem and in making a commitment to change, usually reflects a resistance to embrace the counseling conclusions. The counselor will need to focus

- on specifics, even asking the counselee to repeat or write down the issues and the solutions.
- e. **Crisis** are not the most common but are quite effective diversionary ways to resist the course of counseling. A burst of tears, a passionate call for pity, accusations of counselor unconcern or lack of understanding, threats of abandoning the counseling, and even threats of suicide if something doesn't happen are all in the experiences of counselors as they work with resistant counselees. The counselor rarely needs to be greatly agitated, knowing that a diversionary effort is under way. But rather, the counselor needs to be alert to what nerve was touched, refuse to be manipulated, and go calmly about helping the person to come to grips with the unresolved issue.
 - f. **Tardiness**, either by regularly coming late to the counseling session or frequently rescheduling an appointment or often leaving early, frequently indicates that the counselee is unconsciously trying to slow down the counseling process. Sometimes, the repeated failure to complete counseling assignments make the same statement. In the "Counselor's Bill of Rights" a counselor has the right to say to the counselee that their continued effort on the counselee's behalf depends on punctuality in attendance and in preparation. There are many things that a counselor needs to tolerate. However, condoning irresponsibility that undermines the very structure and desired outcome of the counseling process is not one of them.
 - g. **Multi-track Counseling**, that is, going to several counselors at the same time and playing smorgasbord with the counselors is the ultimate diversion of a resistant counselor. No medical doctor would long condone it and no counselor can work effectively with such resistance. With humility, the counselor must confront the counselee with the necessity of deciding to work with one counselor with whom he/she can be comfortable and can sufficiently trust and to make every effort to confront the painful and unresolved issues. The counselee must be guided to acknowledge the diversionary efforts and to understand that such resistance will never lead to healing.

B. The Reluctant Counselee

This is a person who does not want to be in counseling and has come through the insistence of another. Thus there is little expressed motivation to be there and he/she is minimally committed to acknowledging any need or working toward any change. The counselor is faced with a non-voluntary relationship. The significant challenge of seeing any change is preceded by building a personal relationship in which the person can begin to see any value in being in counseling.

1. The counselor begins to build a relationship by recognizing several things:
 - a. The reluctance comes from not wanting to examine and admit any failure.
 - b. There is likely anger because someone forced him/her to come to counseling.
 - c. There is a threat to an already diminished sense of self-esteem.
 - d. There may be a perception that only failures come to counseling.
 - e. This counseling situation presents a high percentage of failure, especially if the counselor has unrealistic expectations.
 - f. As always in these cases, it is especially true that "first a friend, then a counselor" must be valued.
2. The counselor's approach includes the following considerations:

- a. The reluctant counselee must be accepted for what he/she is, reluctant and uninterested to be in counseling but with feelings and rights.
- b. The objective must be kept in clear focus. The reluctant counselee is the first concern, not the referring person or institution. It could be better for such referees if the counselee “shaped up” but the focus must be on improving the person over improving the situation.
- c. The first meeting is at best, an effort dedicated to removing barriers to counseling, gaining a mutual trust and personal regard. It would be a breakthrough if the counselor could amiably explain the process of counseling in such a way as to lessen the mystery and fear associated with counseling and create some interest in the reluctant counselee to explore whether to go forward or not. Explanation of possible benefits of self-knowledge easily derived from testing could be in the forefront of the counselor’s efforts to break down barriers.

Many reluctant counselees have become cooperative and excited in a purposeful quest of healing and growth. It is one of the special delights of an effective counselor to be involved in such meaningful transformations.

C. The Hostile Counselee

Like the reluctant counselee, the hostile counselee does not want to be in the counselor’s place, probably having been forced against his/her will. All of the things said of one type is true of the other. However, the hostile counselee brings a considerable amount of anger and resentment and will test the counselor, trying to push all the buttons to obstruct the counseling process or even to provoke a conflict justifying a “walk-out.” There will be challenges to the counselor’s academic training. There will be skeptical questions raised about whether the counselor has enough counseling experience or experience in life to think that he/she could counsel others. There may be unfavorable comparisons made between the counselor and others, even of the hostile counselee with the counselor. There will be challenges and rebuffs at every step in the opening session. This kind of counseling can be the most frustrating that many counselors will encounter because it may hold so little immediate promise of a good outcome, and it can cut deeply into the confidence of the counselor. The counselor can make a difference sometimes by applying the following considerations:

1. Avoid angry responses or getting into a defensive or explanatory role when the hostile counselee attacks. To do so puts the counselee in control of the session and encourages further manipulation. One can always benefit from more training and experience but he can only use what he has to try to help people. One hostile counselee berated the counseling diplomas on a counselor’s office wall as being nothing but useless paper only to be told by the counselor that he hoped that one thing they said was how much he was willing to invest of his life to be helpful to others.
2. The counselor must not respond to the elements of the challenge or even give the hostile efforts any personal meaning, but rather the responses must address the motivation behind the question that lies just beneath the surface of the skepticism. It may be a painful protest to the way he is being treated. It may be a cry for someone to regard him, to care for him, or to treat him with dignity. A good counselor can respond well to all of those messages if he/she does not make a personal issue out of the hostile counselee’s outbursts.
3. The counselor must communicate interest, understanding, and human warmth. The counselee probably hasn’t had much regard expressed to him in some time. These expressions must come out of a genuine belief in the

- unique value of the individual and a clear view of what the person could become if unburdened of so many unresolved issues.
4. In the end, the counselor must communicate regard for the counselee coming to the meeting even though it was difficult. It could serve well to express that he/she hopes that they both have come to know each other better and regard one another more and that they can meet again soon. Genuine affirmation of some positive qualities of the counselee would be in order. Here, the counselor could describe the process of counseling and cite some immediate benefits to be gained in a second session. It could help if the counselor could dismiss the ones who referred the counselee from the counseling equation and offer a one-on-one relation to the counselee. Such as, “The next time you come, you do so without being sent. You come on your own decision. I promise to regard you as one coming because you want to discover something that may better your life.”

Conclusion:

To win the voluntary participation of a former, hostile counselee takes the sting out of all the stress and frustration of the process and makes the effort worthwhile. A friend will have been gained and a whole person is in prospect. The Christian counselor joins Paul the apostle and all concerned counselors of the ages in “*making it my aim to present every man whole in Christ Jesus.*”³¹

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON EIGHT:

1. List six (6) types of relationship models in counseling.

1) _____
 2) _____
 3) _____
 4) _____
 5) _____
 6) _____

2. Name ten (10) qualities that are minimums in relationship building in Christian counseling.

1) _____
 2) _____
 3) _____

3. Describe three (3) types of counselees that make counseling difficult.

1) _____
 2) _____
 3) _____

4. List five (5) of the seven (7) characteristics of a resistant counselee.

1) _____
 2) _____
 3) _____
 4) _____
 5) _____

³¹ Colossians 1:28

In-Class Reflection/Discussion Assignments

1. Reflect and understand well the five most common counseling models.
2. Reflect on the ten clusters of characteristics of relationship qualities in Christian counseling.
3. Reflect on the times and circumstances that you will encounter obstacles when counseling difficult people.
4. Reflect on the value of prayer, knowledge, and competency in helping resistant, reluctant, or hostile counselees to take advantage of the opportunities for growth you are offering.

Out-of-Class Research/Meditation Assignments

1. Determine which counseling model might best describe how you would counsel others. Foresee and report on how you could be prepared to get the best of all five models.
2. Over the next week, pray that God will accelerate and deepen your growth in the relationship qualities of Christian counseling. Record them on a card so you can carry it with you and refer to it frequently.

LESSON NINE

Productive Counseling

INTRODUCTION

The adage, “Anything worth doing is worth doing well” applies especially to Christian counseling. Helping people think like Jesus, feel like Jesus, and act like Jesus is worthwhile. It is worthy of good men and women who invest much time and effort to make a difference in the lives of people in whom God has made some deeper investments. This lesson will propose some ways by which Christian counselors can make the counseling enterprise one that is worthy of serious people.

LESSON AIM: To determine the qualities and characteristics of productive counseling.

LESSON PREVIEW:

- ❑ Consider three gifts which constitute the elements of a guiding focus in successful Christian counseling.
 - ❑ Examine and evaluate several things which will serve to equip you with a guiding approach to counseling.
 - ❑ Learn the sheer joy of helping people in their problem times in life.
-

A GUIDING FOCUS

A far-reaching rediscovery of the last decades is that Christian people differ widely in their ministry gifts, but all the gifts are focused on fulfilling God’s vision of an all-sufficient Church. The more Christians can discover their giftedness, develop each gift toward its potential, and use their primary gifts effectively, the more the Church will achieve its purposes on earth. The gifts can be seen in three areas:

A. Gifts of Passion

From observation and personal experiences we know that individuals have greater capacities to serve one kind of people more than other kinds of people. They are particularly drawn and feel deeply about ministering to select kinds of people in particular circumstances. Some people have an infinite amount and quality of concern for little children, teens, adults, or senior adults. In each of these age categories they have pointed concerns for specific circumstances common to each group. For these reasons we have people who are happy in preparing and serving as nurses, teachers, preachers, counselors, and servants of all kinds. They serve long, they serve well, and they serve with a sense of fulfillment. There is a marked difference between doing something for which there is a strong and driving passion and doing something though right and necessary, for which there is a lesser motivation. Every Christian needs to know what kind of people and with what specific needs God has assigned and make the preparations to serve them.

Among the gifts of passion are the gifts that call people to be gifted counselors. Some can become gifted counselors to children, teens, adults, or senior adults. Some can be especially good in child development, marriage counseling, conflict resolution, drug abuse, financial management, parenting,

prison counseling, and clinical dysfunctions. Each gifted Christian can soon find an age group and the specific circumstances that he/she feels most called to serve. When the gift of passion is identified and preparations have been made to serve effectively, God will give the opportunity to use the gift fruitfully and joyfully.

B. Gifts of Service

These gifts provide a capacity to a Christian to be equipped to excel in specific ministry areas of the Church. Testing and experience confirm that each Christian has three to four primary gifts and the same number of secondary and tertiary gifts. While each one needs to develop skills in each gifted area, special attention needs to be spent in the primary gift areas. These are areas of God's specific assignments in the Church (cf. Romans 12:6–8; Ephesians 4: 11–12). In these areas of ministry, God will hold each gifted believer particularly responsible and accountable. The Church needs each gifted member to excel in the primary areas of giftedness to carry out its mission in this world.

Among the ten or more ministry gifts are the three gifts most necessary to be an effective counselor:

1. The **gift of mercy showing** is the capacity to be sensitive, caring, insightful, patient, kind, and understanding.
2. The **gift of exhortation** is the capacity to make truth real and to help people translate truth into practical, fruitful living.
3. The **gift of shepherding** is the capacity to strengthen, to lead, to correct, and to develop people.

All of the qualities of these three gifts, when they are developed, serve well in assisting people through times of need and growth. They blend together in making a Christian a superb counselor.

C. Gifts of Ministry Approach

These gifts are little understood but are among the richest of God's gifts. An exciting discovery is that God's people do the same things in service but differently. The differences too often become the cause of conflict rather than the cause of unity and greater productivity. Each counselor will approach people differently than others. Basically, there are four gifted approaches to any ministry.

1. **Task oriented/structured** people greatly tend to set goals for each time period and organize themselves to reach each objective. They see this approach as the most effective and productive, the best use of the available resources.
2. **People oriented/structured** people focus on people, relationships, and service. People's needs take precedence over getting all the planned tasks completed, yet sharing with the task oriented person, the people oriented person places great importance in being well organized in relating and reaching out to people.
3. **People oriented/unstructured** people, like the people oriented Christians, focus on serving people, but prefer to do so without any specific or set schedule. They like to let the people's needs of the hour dictate the schedule and the priorities.
4. **Task oriented/unstructured** people gather together the love for getting things done completely and being free of the tyranny of specific planning.

God must have actually believed that all of these diverse people could work harmoniously and fruitfully together. He created us and called us by the same Gospel to be in one Family, charged with fulfilling common purposes. It is easier for some to relate to others because each group shares something with two other groups: structure/structure, people/people, unstructured/ unstructured, task/task. It becomes more difficult when nothing is shared. The task/structured, people/unstructured, task/unstructured, and people/structured have to work harder to relate and team together. However, each approach brings something very rich and very necessary to every group action.

Counselors working alone or in a group ministry will each approach an identical counseling situation differently according to his/her giftedness. This fact calls upon each counselor to maximize the best of the gift and guard against the possible abuses of the gift. For example:

- a. The task/structured counselor can be highly productive but can become absorbed in following a counseling plan and forget the feelings and diversities of people. He might insist on everyone marching by the same drum beat.
- b. The people/structured counselor can achieve a marvelous balance, but fail to achieve some important parts of the counseling agenda in deference to the counselee.
- c. The task/unstructured counselor will be highly productive and flexible to meet unforeseen situations but may not make concessions in his work schedule for people.
- d. The people/unstructured counselor can seize added opportunities to serve people because of his/her alertness to people and keeping free to respond at the moment, but he can fail to meet the expectations of others who depend on prior promises.

The ideal is for each counselor to know his/her own gifted approach and to appreciate the giftedness of others, seeing how valuable each approach is to a group effort. Some attention should be given to acquiring the skills of each approach and using them to some extent in confronting the various situations that arise in the counseling process.

Productive counseling results when a counselor maintains a guiding focus on his/her giftedness both to discover, develop, and employ each gift of passion, each service gift, and the gift of ministry approach.

A GUIDING PURPOSE

A. The Counselor's Guiding Purpose and Commitment to That Purpose

The navigators of old traveled the world following a “guiding star.” Counselors, no less, must have their guiding stars, their stated purpose, and hold steadfastly to it in making a difference in the lives of counselees.

1. There is a pronounced relationship between intention and accomplishment in the lives of productive people. In great part, one’s statement of purpose must be consistent and supportive of a person’s giftedness or else one’s giftedness might frame one’s statement of purpose. Paul’s giftedness gave voice to his statements of purpose:

So that I . . . ***“may present everyone perfect [whole] in Christ”***
(Colossians 1:28).

“Yet when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, for I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!” (1 Corinthians 9:16).

“It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else’s foundation” (Romans 15:20).

2. Paul was a gifted evangelist and a gifted counselor (cf. Romans 15:14). His statements of purpose came out of the richness of his giftedness.
3. To be at his/her best each counselor should have a purpose statement that flourishes in the exercise of God’s appointed gifts. It could begin as Paul’s statements began: “I make it my aim,” *“I am compelled to preach . . .”* or even *“It has always been my ambition . . .”* Christ, who was gifted without measure, was clear with His omni-purpose statements: “[I] . . . **the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost**” (Luke 19:10), and *“. . . I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full”* (John 10:10).
4. A counselor with a guiding purpose will have clear direction in every session and in the whole of the counseling process. Every counselee will benefit from the guiding purpose. Time will be used to its maximum value when the counselor is guided by a terse, clearly stated, gripping, and consuming purpose.

B. Truman’s Sample Purpose Statement

I have chosen a purpose statement for my life and my counseling that puts emphasis on my own personal and responsible relationship with God and my ministry to people in need: **“Living Christ every day, making Him real to everyone in every way.”** This purpose inspires me to keep growing in my intimate walk with God, which is foundational to being an effective counselor. This purpose keeps me motivated to think of the need for Christ to be central in the lives of all. This purpose alerts me to look for the many ways that I can make Christ as real to others as HE is to me.

A GUIDING APPROACH

Whether a counselor is more task or people oriented, structured or unstructured in how opportunities are confronted, there must be some thought given to a systemic approach to counseling. Depending on the individual counselor, the approach will be more or less task oriented and structured. The common desire is that a difference will be made in the lives of the counselees. How might counselors with diverse orientations be productive in their counseling? There are four considerations in getting the most out of each counseling opportunity:

A. Seeing

The counselor needs to spend some time before every counseling session visualizing the flow of the meeting, how to conduct the relationship, anticipating the desired responses of the counselee, and picturing the desired outcome. Not everything may happen as foreseen, but looking ahead adds to the preparedness of the counselor, increases alertness, improves the responses, and keeps goals for the session in clearer view. Failure to take time to see may be approaching the warning of the proverb, *“If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a ditch.”*³² A counselor’s leadership is no better than his/her vision. A counselor’s vision gives content, purpose, and direction to every session.

³²Matthew 15:14

B. Preparing

With a clear vision of the session, especially the desired outcome, a counselor will know what is needed to make the experience a productive one:

1. The session can be planned as to areas to be addressed, problems to be resolved, questions to be asked, and responses to be solicited.
2. Areas of needed research and learning can be identified and processed to make the session rich and meaningful.
3. Resources can be collected, organized, and placed within easy reach.
4. Prime time can be given to inviting God to supervise the session and add His blessings.

The counselee is worth the preparation being made and will be encouraged to see that the counselor gives time to be prepared for every session.

C. Doing

Knowing the desired direction and outcome and being prepared to conduct a productive session, the counselor is ready to accomplish the chosen objectives:

1. After greeting remarks, the session needs to get started as soon as appropriate. Often, much time is given to non-productive exchanges, sometimes filling most of the counseling hour. Extended visiting precludes accomplishing the purposes of the meeting.
2. Along the course of the session, the counselor needs to refer to the counseling plan for the session, adjust the plan to meet necessary changes, but push forward with the aim of accomplishing the preplanned objectives.
3. Staying as closely as possible to the planned track, a counselor can bring the session to completion within the stated time. In the concluding moments, the counselor needs to wrap up the session in terms of what was discussed, agreeing on an evaluation of what was accomplished and making preparation for the next session.

The **doing** part of counseling is most visible, bringing both satisfaction and challenge to the counselor, and most impacts the counselee. However, the counseling hour would not be productive unless the **seeing** and **preparing** parts were done well; nor would future sessions be as productive without the fourth part of the counseling approaches.

D. Enjoying

The session is not over when the counselee leaves. Productive counseling takes some purposeful time to evaluate the whole process. The evaluation should include the following questions:

1. **Plan Accomplished?** Was the counseling plan followed and how was each step effected? Were any steps deleted and why? Were any considerations added during the course of the session and why?
2. **Results Achieved?** Even with deletions and additions, were the pre-session objectives achieved? Could they have been achieved more completely?
3. **Learning discovered?** What was learned to make the next session more helpful? What deficiencies were exposed? What areas need to be researched further to enhance future counseling? What preparations need to be made?
4. **Lifted to God?** The last act of counseling is the most necessary and noble. Giving thanks to God for His provisions, asking for His continued

supervision, presenting the counselee to God, and pledging to bring joy to God through dedicated and improving service.

Whatever one's ministry approach may be, structured to unstructured, people to task, one must make the most of the opportunities in counseling that God gives. So much is possible when one person is given renewed hope, when obstacles are removed, and when new direction and skills are gained. Responsible counseling is the means to making that difference in the life of people, one person at a time.

A GUIDING COMMITMENT

A. Productive Counseling Involves a Commitment to Life-long Growth

In the first steps of counseling there is excitement in learning. Faced with a new problem in counseling there is both desire and effort given to research the issue. These special learning moments are exciting. However, the real difference in being productive or not is the commitment to life-long growth. The productive counselor is committed to a continual life-style of learning. Particularly in the areas of greater giftedness, he/she will determine to master everything to be learned in that field of counseling. While there comes a sense of confidence that one has become effective in select fields of counseling, there must never come a time when one feels there is not more to learn. The rush of excitement when a new resource is discovered or a new advance is proposed should never be allowed to die.

B. Growth Resources Available as Never Before

When counseling was emerging as a separate discipline, all of the earlier resources were books and articles written by secular theorists. Educational institutions began adding courses and counseling departments to their academic offerings. Secular associations for professional counselors emerged in the Western world. As counseling was increasingly recognized in Christian circles as a specific and valued ministry, there has been an explosion of resources. The Christian counselor has wide and rich choices to make to continue his life of learning:

1. Books by the hundreds are available in bookstores by Christian oriented writers covering a wide range of counseling issues.
2. Taped audio and video cassettes address individual subjects and entire courses.
3. Certified and degree programs are available through numerous colleges, universities, and institutes.
4. Counseling associations are growing in number and quality to help keep counselors on the cutting edge of knowledge in the counseling field.

Most of these resources and many more can be found through research on the Internet by signing on to "counseling," "Christian counseling," "American Association of Christian Counselors," Internet book companies, and other sources. Some of the more common names of noted writers are: Gary Collins, Lawrence Crabb, Gary Smalley, Wayne Oats, Jay Adams, and H. Norman Wright.

A GUIDING EXPECTATION

Too much is made of the stress, frustration, and the limited success of counseling. Much more needs to be said of the joys in Christian counseling. The difficulty has been that a counselor does not have a continuing knowledge of all the growth being experienced in the lives of counselees. Too often the counselor joins with Jesus in wondering why only a tenth of those healed ever come back to express gratitude (cf. Luke 17:16–17). A significant amount of the counseling results must remain forever unsaid and nameless, protected by confidentiality and only discussed in the most general of terms. Yet the counselor does know enough to be assured that many lives have been changed, values affirmed, marriages saved and strengthened, child development enhanced, hurts healed through genuine forgiveness, conflicts resolved, clinical dysfunctions corrected, new skills and visions claimed, new ministries launched, churches united, and again and again God has been glorified.

It is sheer joy to the Christian counselor to look back over a life of counseling and reflect on the ones whose lives are richer, more fruitful, and closer to God through his/her counseling efforts.

A. The Joy of a Counselor Is Seen in the Comments of John the Apostle:

It gave me great joy to have some brothers come and tell about your faithfulness to the truth and how you continue to walk in the truth. 4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth (3 John 3–4).

B. The Joy of a Counselor Is Seen in the Commendations of Those Who Were Taught:

I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you (Philippians 2:19).

For this reason I am sending to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere (1 Corinthians 4:17).

C. The Joy of a Counselor Is Seen in the Continuity of the Message Through Those He Has Taught:

And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others (2 Timothy 2:2).

D. The Joy of a Counselor Is Seen in the Work of Other Counselors:

I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another (Romans 15:14)

E. The Joy of a Counselor Is Seen When Even a Few of Those Benefitted Do Return to God with Gratefulness in Their Hearts:

[One of the ten lepers who was cleansed] . . . *threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him — and he was a Samaritan.* Jesus asked, “*Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine?*” (Luke 17:16–17).

Conclusion:

If the purpose of counseling is to glorify God by presenting everyone **whole** to Him (cf. Colossians 1:28), then Christian counseling has to be one of the most promising joys of all Christian ministries.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON NINE:

1. Three gifts which constitute the elements of a guiding focus in successful Christian counseling are:
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
2. Give four (4) considerations in getting the most out of each counseling opportunity.
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
3. The counseling session is not over until there is evaluation. List four areas of evaluation.
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
4. Write out Truman Scott's purpose statement.

In-Class Reflection / Discussion Assignments

1. Reflect on the immense value, even necessity, of identifying, developing, and employing one's giftedness so as to gain a guiding focus.
2. Reflect on the relationship of one's focus on ministry giftedness and one's stated purpose.
3. Reflect on the vital, systemic steps in one's approach to counseling.
4. Reflect on the joy you will have each time you have helped someone to think like Jesus, feel like Jesus, and act like Jesus.

Out-of-Class Research/Meditation Assignments

- Avail yourself, if not already done, of a profile on ministry giftedness to define your primary gifts. With results in hand, foresee how God could use you as His effective servant according to His gifts to you.
- Be open to a counseling opportunity and make a pointed effort to use all parts of the suggested approach: seeing, preparing, doing, and enjoying.
- Give attention to building a list of resources to enhance your counseling efforts.

LESSON TEN

The Responsibilities of a Counselee

INTRODUCTION

A full lesson will now to be devoted to responsibilities of the counselee. Counseling can be no more productive than the level of seriousness of the one being counseled. The counselor can help the counselee in his/her part to get the most out of the counseling experience. Such matters of initiative, disclosure, integrity, accountability, punctuality, credibility, closure, and discipline will be featured in the study. This introductory course to Christian Counseling has been all about the counselor and effective counseling. Only marginally have we spoken of the counselee. Is the counselee just an object, a minor player in the drama of counseling? Actually, the counselee is the only reason counseling exists. Everything we say and do to improve counseling is to benefit the counselee. Without counselees all the counselors would be looking for something else to do as a ministry or professionally.

We do well, then, to consider the responsibilities of a counselee. Many of these responsibilities will have to be taught or urged in the counseling process by a competent counselor. Nevertheless, the fulfillment of these responsibilities belong to the counselee alone.

LESSON AIM: Counselors who help counselees fulfill their counseling responsibilities make a significant contribution to building a triumphant army who revels in repeated victories all to the glory of God.

LESSON PREVIEW:

- ☒ Learn a definition of and the nature of responsibility.
 - ☒ Discover eight (8) different areas of responsibility to be instilled in the counselee.
-

THE NATURE OF RESPONSIBILITIES

One of the major reasons many counselees have problems is because they have not learned to be responsible or are caught in a relationship where others have not learned to be responsible. Responsibility is a must in discipline, in self-supervision, in keeping promises, in building and maintaining relationships, and in honoring values.

Being responsible speaks of being “capable of responding” to the surrounding situation or persons. This is largely a learned ability. Adults are often deficient because insufficient learning took place in their child development to enable them to cope responsibly. Many adults have had to learn to act responsibly during adult years that otherwise should have been years of productive behavior and fulfilling relationship development. This deficit is what brings a majority of people to ask for counseling assistance. The Christian counselor accepts the invitation to work with people knowing there may need to be a rebuilding of a deficit value system, an introduction of a new set of relationship skills, a repairing of a predictable

list of emotional hurts, or teaching other life skills such as communication, conflict management, or financial management.

From one point of view, the major goal of every counselor is to aid the counselee to become more responsible in life. Adding the Christian dimension, the Christian counselor aims at helping the counselee to be responsible before God, to serve others humbly and responsibly, and to be whole within oneself.

COUNSELEE RESPONSIBILITIES IN COUNSELING

An irresponsible counselee leaves little opportunity for the counselor to be of much help. This makes teaching the counselee an important part of many counseling relationships. A counselor must teach and urge the following responsible responses:

A. The Responsibility of Initiative

Many counselees have to be urged, seemingly pushed to go for help, especially men. Some refuse entirely to ask for help that would be readily available and sometimes at no cost other than initiative. The effectiveness of the counseling is closely related to how responsible the counselee is in asking for help. The statement of Jesus is very applicable to our topic of initiative.

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you (Matthew 7:7).

Initiative is often hindered by learned pride, low self-regard, negative perceptions of the value of counseling, hurt feelings, and unresolved anger. These issues will long remain and dampen initiative even when life is coming unraveled unless something intervenes. Desperation will sometimes motivate people to ask for counseling assistance, however, we need to take more positive measures to elicit initiative:

1. A loving family can sometimes win over the reluctance of a would-be counselee.
2. A church family, who knows that partly from their own failures and triumphs, knows how to understand, accept, and love is one of God's best invitations to reluctant counselees.
3. A Christian counselor, whether he is an elder, a preacher, or a faithful member who has been effective in building relationships and reaching out to many, will be more easily sought out by a person having difficulty in taking initiative to seek counseling.
4. A congregational leadership who affirms the value of Christian counseling by scheduling frequent seminars, making counseling readily available, providing publications on spiritual/counseling needs, seeing to it that biblical help in practical living is frequently presented in all areas of the church, and are encouraging para-counseling training will create an environment where less stigma is attached to asking for counseling help.
5. A membership who speaks of how Christian counseling has been a blessing to them will encourage others to seek needed help.

The first step of initiative is a commitment that requires courage, hope against hope, and humility. The person who makes this step should be both encouraged to take the step and applauded when he/she does take the initiative to do something right and good for himself or others.

B. The Responsibilities of Disclosure

No counselor can read minds. Not every fact or feeling can be known from prior knowledge of the counselee. A counselor's guessing or presuming can be

disastrous. One of the key sources of information and the beginning of understanding for the counselor is a counselee who will make responsible disclosures. Counselee silence, evasion, superficiality, partial, distorted responses, and allowing a counselor to assume untruths are all signs of a long, unproductive counseling experience. Fortunately most counselees are responsive and very helpful in making the needed information readily available to a good counselor who is skilled in assessing just what is needed to understand the situation. Why would a counselee engage in any of these above activities especially if he came to be helped?

1. People are reticent in talking about subjects in which they may be diminished, accused for wrong behavior, or situations in which someone toward whom they feel angry is seen as right.
2. People may be unsure and will test the counselor to determine if he/she can be trusted before they will begin full disclosure.
3. Some topics are harder to discuss: sex, finances, personal failures, personal faith.
4. Perceptions of the wrongness of sharing with anyone, especially leaders or professionals, make people uncomfortable. **NOTE:** A counselor must be aware of the possible difficulties the counselee might feel and be ready to help bridge the discomfort. Several considerations need to be evaluated:
 - a. The counselor needs to be **attentive to both words, tone, and expressions that could communicate his/her prejudgetment bias or disdain to the counselee.** The counselee may full well know that he is wrong, but most early meetings are not usually the appropriate place or time for what would be regarded as rejection. If the counselor is reputed to be harsh, rigid, and quick to condemn, the readiness of the counselee to be open and transparent would be predictable. Many preachers are not sought out for counseling because of their known treatment of others or because of their harsh views presented in public teaching.
 - b. The counselor must **communicate a genuine desire to understand and not judge**, a sincere intent to help and not diminish, a dependability to be loyal with shared information and not reckless to the hurt of the counselee, and an availability to work through the problem with the counselee, not leaving until the job is done.
 - c. Early in the counseling relationship the counselor must **give the counselee a solid basis of hope**, things can be better and the desired results validate all of the right efforts.

In such a counseling context, a counselee will find greater motives to be open and transparent, and the counselor will soon have the basis for understanding the situation. Then he/she can begin to be helpful in guiding the counselee toward valid decisions and behavior.

C. The Responsibilities of Integrity

Reluctance to reveal is one thing while intention to distort is entirely different. While most counselees are honest or really make an effort to tell the truth as they see it, some will just not be truthful. The counselor knows that it is still true that “... *the truth will set you free*” (John 8:32) and hiding behind a lie or living a lie will greatly obstruct the counseling process and largely preclude the desired results. What does the counselor do to insure that the counselee fulfills the responsibility of integrity?

1. In the first meeting, the expectation of integrity needs to be stated. The counselor needs to say, "You can expect me to be honest and open with you and I expect no less of you."
2. There should be a special effort made to commend the counselee when he/she struggles and succeeds in being honest, especially when there is a need to be in contact with long repressed feelings.
3. When it becomes obvious that the counselee lacks integrity, an appropriate recall to the earlier expectations must be made. Dishonesty left to go un-confronted and unresolved derails the counseling process.
4. Some counseling may have to be interrupted or precluded if there is a pronounced practice of dishonesty. Until that deficiency is resolved, there is no context for helping a person.

Working with honest people is one of the greatest teaching experiences one can imagine. There is understanding, response, effort, and a sure growth result.

D. The Responsibilities of Accountability

1. Good counseling includes assigning and expecting a counselee's completion of assignments. There may be reading assignments, completing questionnaires, listening to well chosen audio or video tapes, Bible readings and reflections, writing assignments, projects like assisting or visiting others, or attending certain events. The counselee sometimes learns more from assignments than from counseling sessions. If the counselee has really made the connection between what a counselor wants him/her to learn and how much richer his/her life will become, the accountability responsibility will be a delight to both the counselor and counselee. How can the counselor make that connection more obvious?
 - a. The counselor must think seriously about every assignment; that it must be more than "busy work" or general in nature, and it must be directly related to the individual need of the specific counselee.
 - b. The counselor must state clearly the connection of the assignment with a valid, desired result in the life of the counselee.
 - c. Occasionally, the counselor can communicate with the counselee between sessions on how the assignment is progressing and if any help is needed. This attention adds credence to the value of the assignment and underlines the responsibility of the counselee to complete the assignments.
2. When the assignment is presented in the next session, the counselor needs to commend those parts that reveal effort and learning and give candid suggestions on strengthening any part. Reassignments of deficient parts where little learning is evidenced would be appropriate. Learning is the value and purpose of accountability.
3. There are other areas of accountability in a positive counseling process:
 - a. Many changes may be discovered during the course of the counseling. The counselee needs to be confronted periodically with some commitments to be made to change past values, attitudes, and behaviors. Calls to accountability should be as frequent as seems necessary.
 - b. An important part of counseling, in some cases, is to help counselees gain a deep and reverent sense and practice of accountability to God. Valued time may need to be spent in the counseling sessions teaching them the elements of prayer, confession, the art of self-examination, the Christian disciplines, and a purposeful and life-style study of the Word and sharing its message with others.
 - c. Particular attention, for some, needs to be given to accountability in relationships. The model of 1 Corinthians 13, the portrait of the

Beatitudes in Matthew 5:1–8, or the traits of Galatians 5:22 can be of monumental help in the growth of accountability in relationships.

If the counselee lacks the trait of accountability, counseling should provide the opportunity for needed growth. Holding the counselee to accountability in assignments, commitments made, and in growth is an important service that the counselor must give.

E. The Responsibility of Punctuality

The time of most counselors is limited. Being on time and ready to make the best use of the time allotted for the counseling session contributes to the value of the counseling, permits the counselor to use the limited time wisely, and is the responsible thing to do. Already noted in an earlier lesson, repeatedly being late, leaving early, or changing the appointment may indicate a resistance to the counseling. In any case, the need for responsible involvement must be the commitment of the counselee. How can the counselor help a counselee to fulfill the responsibility?

1. Make sure that the counselee has understood clearly when the next session is scheduled.
2. If a trend seems to be developing, the counselor can call and express that he/she is looking forward and making preparations for the next session, repeating the schedule.
3. Mention to the counselee who comes late to the session the importance of being punctual. No comment may soon indicate to the counselee that it is not important.
4. Give the counselee a clear example of counselor punctuality. Seeing the efforts to be on time for every session, sometimes with much difficulty, communicates to the counselee that being on time is important.
5. Commend the counselee each time he/she arrives punctually and is ready to begin the session.

We all know how difficult it is to be punctual, especially in a metropolitan area or having to contend with crowded work or family schedules. Still, disciplining oneself by allowing time for the unexpected and coming directly to the appointment are virtues to be learned. The counseling experience is a good place to teach the counselee if there is a lack in fulfilling the responsibility of punctuality.

F. The Responsibility of Credibility

We have spoken a lot about the counselor inspiring trust in the counselee. However, the counselee has a responsibility to give the counselor every reason to believe he/she is serious about learning and growing in the counseling process. After all, the counselor is investing heavily in the hope that the counselee will grow toward his/her potential. No one can be excited long about wasting valuable resources. The counselor is investing time, strength, training, knowledge, and costly resources. What time is given to one counselee means that another needy person may not get help. Many of the other areas of responsibility go into making this area valid: taking initiative, being open, being accountable, being honest, and being punctual. Genuine efforts in all of these areas, even at times failing, would make a counselee credible, giving renewed hope to the selfless counselor. There are other responses by the counselee that would make himself easier to be believed. Just a quick study of one Scripture selection about responsible responses to teacher/leaders would help in the responsibility of credibility:

*Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you.
Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith
(Hebrews 13:7).*

1. **Hebrews 13:7** — Disciples were urged to be sensitive, look to the leader with feeling, and value the outcome of the life of a teacher/leader in such a way as to determine to learn and practice the good in his life.
2. **Hebrews 13:17** — Believers were urged to make every effort to believe in their leaders, give them margins of consideration, and be careful about making their work more difficult than it was already.
3. **Hebrews 13:17** — The reason cited was that such people were working hard on their behalf and carried an additional burden of being accountable to the Shepherd of souls concerning the outcome of their work.

It would be well to note many other Biblical citations which teach about the regard that people are to have toward those who teach and lead them to become more like Jesus (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:12–13).

G. Responsibility of Closure

Some counselees will want to remain in counseling past the reasonable time of closure. They may want the counselor to continue dealing with every problem and each flaw or to allow the counselor to teach a list of skills. Some good would come out of such prolonged, open-ended counseling. However, a counselor has many others to help in critical ways who cannot wait until the present counselee becomes perfect. There are many books and classes within the resources of the local church and small groups in which continual growth can be encouraged. There are other counselors who could help in one-session appointments to deal with specific needs. Periodic follow-up sessions might be possible with the earlier counselor. The point is that no counselor should allow any person to become a dependent counselee. There are some things that a counselor can do to assure that each counselee will be prepared to accept the terminal date of counseling.

1. In the first pre-counseling sessions a terminal date can be given or at least an estimate of how many sessions may be required.
2. Remind the counselee several times during the process that there are a certain number of sessions left in which the counseling will be completed.
3. It is important, especially with the opposite sex with whom an attraction would be possible, that the number of sessions not be increased.
4. Toward the end of the planned number of sessions more and more resources should be made available to counselees to assure them of their readiness to apply what they learned without further counseling.
5. The counselor must remember that his/her counseling commitment is healthier for both if it is focused on major problems for appropriate durations.
6. Necessary longer term counseling can be segmented with purposeful breaks in between. Both counselor and counselee will profit from “time out” periods.
7. Referrals serve both to bring closure to a counseling relation and to give a counselee more specific help.

Counseling prepares people to walk confidently, to cope successfully, and then to help others who struggle as they once struggled. To encourage a counselee to remain dependent on counseling violates the very nature and purpose of Christian counseling.

H. The Responsibility of Discipline

Counseling is successful if people can continue to grow, serve, and die faithfully in the Lord. However, this requires that each counselee will be responsible in personal discipline. The battle begins again after counseling is over. Though the counselee is stronger than before and armed better than before, Satan is more likely to attack with stronger weapons and with greater malice. He resents all spiritual gain. He hates all clearer visions and stronger purposes. He loathes all healed relationships. He holds God in contempt for saving or renewing even one of his presumed servants. How can the counselor help the former counselee fulfill the responsibility of discipleship?

1. Be a brother's keeper by watching the steps of the counselee, praying by name and circumstance for the counselee, and by keeping the counselee surrounded by the Spirit's attention.
2. Intervene if a serious defeat is threatened. It should be as if Satan will have to pass through the counselor to take charge or exercise his diabolical influence. The counselor must fight harder to retain the counselee than he/she did to save, heal, or teach.
3. Commend the former counselee often as victories are won and as fruitful living and service result.
4. Invite the counselee for "check-up" sessions to confirm that growth is progressive and stable.
5. Involve the counselee in helping others who are struggling in the same ways the counselee once struggled. Make some counselees skilled para-counselors.

Growing numbers of healthier Christians make a congregation and a brotherhood more able to fulfill the mission of the Church in every community and around the world.

Conclusion:

Counselors, who help counselees fulfill their counseling responsibilities, make a significant contribution to building a triumphant army that revels in repeated victories all to the glory of God. Through kindness, patience, and fraternal love, a counselor will need to teach people to be responsible in counseling so they can be responsible in the larger picture of life. By firmness and purpose, a counselor may have to demand responsibility in counseling to some, even as he holds him/herself to a high standard of responsibility.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TEN:

1. Complete this sentence: Being responsible speaks of _____

2. A counselor must teach and urge eight responsible responses. List these below.
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____
6) _____
7) _____
8) _____
3. Concerning integrity, what statement does the counselor need to state clearly?

In-Class Reflection/Discussion Assignments

1. Reflect on and discuss each of the eight counselee responsibilities.
2. Reflect on the frequent futility of counseling when a counselee will assume little or no responsibility in the counseling experience.
3. Reflect and exchange views on the statement at the beginning of this lesson:
“... the major goal of every counselor is to aid the counselee to become more responsible in life.”

Out-of-Class Research/Meditation Assignment

1. Prepare a handout to be given to each counselee at the beginning to impress on him/her your expectations in the counseling relations. Use this lesson's material to complete this assignment.
2. Visit an esteemed, competent counselor to learn his/her counseling experiences that emphasize the importance of each counselee assuming as much responsibility as is possible.

LESSON ELEVEN

Advances in Christian Counseling

INTRODUCTION

From the limited view of one-on-one counseling this lesson presents other approaches being used to broaden and deepen the scope of helping people. We will look at small groups, para-counseling training, self-help resources, pulpit counseling, community counseling sponsorships, mission counseling, and electronic counseling.

From the modern beginnings of counseling as a separate field of study until now, there have been many advances. From the long, theoretic and in part, Godless counseling efforts of Sigmund Freud, many have showed their dissatisfaction by advocating other approaches. Most of them were not much better than earlier theories and practices. However, some of the proposed advances brought value to understanding how to help people. The sum of those proposed secular advances in counseling gave us a frame work of counselee responsibility, as opposed to no personal accountability, better techniques, and higher purposes. Not until Christian men and women began bringing godliness and biblical truth into the field of counseling were any real, substantive advances made. For coming generations of Christian counseling there still remains a vast horizon to be explored and still more proposals of better ways to help people. This lesson surveys some innovative ways being used to reach more people, more effectively.

A Beginning Place

Christian counseling begins deeply rooted in the commands and practices of Jesus. Jesus by the Great Commission made the Church a dynamic body of missionary-minded, preaching, teaching, and discipling people empowered by the Holy Spirit and full of the love of Christ. By the practices and teachings of Christ it is strikingly clear that He made the Church to be a healing body where hurting people could find acceptance, understanding, forgiveness, hope, wholeness, and abundant living. The Church must be evangelistic and therapeutic. One without the other is a distortion of the mission of the Church. Jesus did both and He sent His disciples into the world to do both. Nothing has changed over two thousand years. People are still lost and in need of the Gospel to be saved. People are hurting and in need of the Gospel to live abundantly and to die in hope. Christian counseling is teaching people to think, feel, and live like Jesus until He comes again.

LESSON AIM: To investigate several areas of counselor training opportunities and responsibilities concerning the Church.

LESSON PREVIEW:

Study and examine several ways the Church can extend Christian counseling throughout the congregation.

THE VAST HORIZONS OF CHRISTIAN COUNSELING

Most counseling is seen as one-on-one dialogue in an office somewhere where a person with some degree of training is helping another person find some answers to an unresolved issue. If this is all that counseling is, there is a world of rich benefits to come to the number of people who will be helped by the limited number of

competent counselors. If this were the whole of counseling, we would still need to develop it to its highest potential and regard it as one of the marvelous ways we can obey our Lord in “. . . teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you . . .” (Matthew 28:20). However, there is vastly more we can do to make counseling that is Christian more available to a greater number of needy people.

A. Small Groups Within the Church Are a Microcosm of the Congregation

Small groups do, in partial degree, what the whole church does in all of its parts. They evangelize, teach, heal, comfort, give hope, strengthen, raise up leaders, and in all things, they glorify God. Through healthy, small cells within the Body, the whole Body functions, heals, and reproduces itself. Counseling is a prominent feature of each functioning small group. In most cases, except perhaps when problems have been long ignored, a trained small group can embrace the problems of a new or old member and provide the support and guidance needed. Someone in most groups will have experienced the same problem and is able to share the ways in Jesus that led to victory.

This does not happen just because a congregation has small groups. Just the practice of friendship, social exchanges, study of Scripture, periods of prayer, and the growing closeness and understanding found in most small groups is greatly helpful. There are some things that need to intentionally happen for the small group to be increasingly effective in the healing ministry.

1. The group needs to understand biblically that one of its purposes is to provide the environment and opportunity for healing and growth.
2. The group needs to be profiled to identify the ministry giftedness of each member and records developed so immediate responses can be made to specific needs.
3. Each gifted member of the group needs to be trained to be as effective as possible in responding to the kind and circumstance of people needing help for whom he/she is gifted.
4. A leading feature of a small group is the open disclosure and the trusted sharing of a person and the promised acceptance and understanding by the group. To this must be added the statement of victory when, within the group, victory has been achieved.

When small groups are functioning well in a congregation, and ideally every member is active in a small group, then there is no need that goes unidentified or unmet. There is no hurt that is given time to fester and destroy. There is no gift that is not employed in the purposes of the church. There is no member who leaves the fellowship not having needs met and hurts healed. There is no member needing advanced help that is not guided to the Shepherds and to others who may have special counseling gifts and training. However, even that number will be greatly reduced and within the scope of the traditional one-on-one counseling model.

Christian counseling, to be effective and available to more of the people who could benefit from it, must be integrated into small groups. Otherwise, there are not enough trained persons in most congregations to respond to all of the needs. And most of the people in a congregational setting will not request help.

B. Para-counseling Training, an Extension of Counseling in the Congregation

Para-counseling training, either in relation to small group training or certainly in relation to specially gifted members, is a necessary extension of counseling in the congregation. Small groups are a great improvement on having to rely on one or two trained persons within the congregation to try to respond to the counseling needs of a whole membership. The development of a larger group, who is given basic counseling training and specific training in areas of giftedness, is a further positive advance in Christian counseling. There are some

considerations to assure that para-counseling becomes a force within the congregation.

1. A qualified teacher must be recognized and invited to organize and supervise the training program. Other area personnel may be available to enhance various phases of the training.
2. The best prospects for para-counseling training are those whose primary ministry gifts are in the areas of mercy showing, exhortation, and shepherding. These areas represent at least an overlap of over 20% of the membership of a local church, giving a good number of people who can specifically be trained to give counseling assistance in a semi-professional way.
3. The training should begin with studies that include **The Distinctiveness of Christian Counseling, The Qualities of the Christian Counselor, The Preparation of a Christian Counselor**, and so on.
4. The training should continue giving smaller group training according to the primary giftedness of each member of the para-counseling group.
5. A library of video tapes, counseling books, and available spiritual growth seminars should be made available to the ones being trained.
6. Supervised counseling (para-counseling internship) should be included in the training agenda.
7. The availability of the para-counseling group should be of common knowledge among the leaders of the small groups for referrals, valued by the Shepherds if special needs are to be addressed, and seen by the membership as a good secondary choice to accelerate growth.

Prepared small groups, trained para-counselors, gifted counselors, and equipped Shepherds should provide both the opportunity and means to help every member to resolve difficulties, be free and instructed in Christian growth.

C. The Importance of Counseling Self Help Resources

Self help resources should be provided in congregations for its members or for area people. Despite every effort in small groups, para-counseling, and Shepherding, there are some people who will want to try to resolve their own problems before going to anyone else. Such initiatives are both right and understandable if not carried too far. What can be done to extend Christian counseling further to assist this number of people?

1. Elders need to provide a library of books, tapes, video productions, or guidance in purchasing a significant amount of Christian materials to aid people wanting help.
2. Events need to be organized in the congregation in seminar, workshop, class, or retreat formats to provide opportunity to self-help people.
3. There should be someone appointed who will stay aware of all helpful events being organized and announced in the area. While our preference may be towards church sponsored events, with careful scrutiny, some select community events could provide helpful experiences to some.
4. If resources are available then self-help groups, short term or continual, can be organized to address particular needs and give a support system. Many congregations have sponsored groups to help members struggling with an ongoing family or personal problem. These can be patterned after the multiple groups in the community that provide a support system and professional help: alcohol and drug abuse, ex-smokers, parents of drug abuse children, single parents, blended families, and other such problem areas.

These self-help resources may be all that some may need and would help everyone with special needs. They clearly speak to the fact that the leadership of a church really cares and really understands.

D. The Large Potential of Pulpit Counseling

Pulpit counseling provides one of the best focal opportunities to reach the largest number of members and visitors in one seating and during one hour. The preacher (and we have some of the best in the religious world) needs to think of the full counsel of God and meeting the total needs of the whole congregation. He must not turn the pulpit into a counseling office, however, he can build select lessons into the preaching year that deal with presenting every member whole before Jesus Christ. How can the preacher make the pulpit a place where healing and victorious living are affirmed?

1. He needs to assess the life situation of each member and preach to meet those needs on a regular basis.
2. He needs to study extensively so he can give definitive affirmations and biblical documentation on many of the themes being treated in other counseling situations in the church.
3. As a spokesman for the congregation, he must give a passionate, caring, and careful treatment of life issues to affirm the heart of the Church, identifying it with those who suffer and struggle. The message of the church must be seen as relevant to people.
4. He must examine his heart deeply to assure himself that he truly feels the hurt and needs of many people and must vigilantly guard his heart continually so that no root of bitterness weaves itself among his better thoughts. A negative tone or manner of delivery can out-shout his well crafted message.
5. He must be a ready resource to those who feel that his lessons speak to their hearts. He has much to offer in one-on-one dialogue, in materials to be shared, in small group settings, to Shepherd referrals, or in suggestions to upcoming seminars and self-help opportunities.
6. He must spend a significant amount and quality of time praying for each member, knowing each member better, and visiting with each member both by social exchanges and telephone contact.

More than any other in a congregation, the preacher is the most visible leader because he holds a prominent place in the congregational meetings and is usually more available during the work week. Whether that may seem more desirable or not, it is a reality to be used to provide focused help to assisting members meet growth needs. He has the pulpit, his office, classes, visitation, and personal prayer time to serve members in their longing to be like Jesus.

E. The Availability and Benefits of Community Counseling

Community counseling can provide an enormous opportunity to a congregation to extend the benefits of Christian counseling beyond its membership to many throughout the area. The value of becoming known in the community as a caring, helping, and healing Church family is incalculable. It would be informative to determine how the Church is viewed in a community. The Church needs to be perceived as having a head that thinks soundly, a mouth that speaks wisely and truly from the Word of God, a heart that feels careingly, hands that serve gladly, and feet that run to people in need either of salvation or healing. What can a church do to reinforce the perception that it is a place where people can come for love and acceptance?

1. Plan community interest events and advertise them widely. Seminars can be planned on parenting, marriage harmony, coping with stress and anxiety,

- financial management, and select issues like divorce, bereavement, and being a care giver to the chronically ill. Care must be taken that the presenter and the environment be of superior quality.
2. Articles in circulated newspapers and local periodicals should be frequently published that address developmental issues with a Christian solution. Some may have to be paid articles but most of them can be written as "human interest" pieces and will be gladly published for free.
 3. Offer free, self-help literature to the public through a regular column in the newspaper or by leaflets handed out by members can often provide a door into the lives of grateful recipients for further teaching.
 4. Through a small group invite the persons who have been befriended by any of the above activities to attend a meeting where much love and acceptance can be personally expressed — first a friend, then a brother!

F. Sponsorship of Christian Counseling Is a Long Overdue Work of a Distant-looking Leadership or Generous Benefactor

We have far too few publications to sound a distinctive Christian treatment of the issues of human hurt and healing and of Christian wholeness and practice. Most of those who do research and write, do so at great personal sacrifice and in the midst of a demanding ministry schedule. Why couldn't some church family or individual provide a situation where some chosen person could devote large blocks of time to producing some materials that could be published and distributed to a wide audience of appreciative people? Good men are supported to preach to a small audience every Sunday for many years. Why couldn't a few good men and women be supported to teach thousands year after year? Experienced men are supported to hold Gospel meetings in places where there are limited local resources. Why couldn't some mature and capable men be employed to go to those same areas and hold meetings to accelerate spiritual growth through counseling themes like learning to forgive, learning Christian disciplines, or learning how to be sensitive and effective in building servant and loving relations? How could this become a reality in the Church?

1. Several wise men, well respected for their fruitful experience in counseling ministries, could be consulted to learn the most pressing themes and most likely writers who would be available to produce a series of needed studies or counseling programs.
2. Make it a budget item even as generous as adding any other staff member to work with the youth, education, or evangelism.
3. Search for the indicated counseling writer/lecturer as thoroughly and seriously as a search for a pulpit minister might be conducted.
4. Develop a clear, detailed job description describing the full expectations, compensations, and a job standard for evaluating a completed project or assignment.
5. Develop a support system to keep the counselor/developer encouraged and focused. The work is by its very nature one that requires much discipline and little initial results.
6. Be prepared to supply or find support for the publishing and distribution of materials, travel funds to hold seminars, and funding for expected follow-up requests for additional information and resources.

If several visionary leaderships do not arise among us, we will remain where we are today without the abundance and quality of resources to further our pursuit of being a credible community of believers who genuinely care that people grow to the full stature of Jesus Christ.

G. Mission Counseling Needs to Become a Part of Our Church Planting Strategies

How could this thought be implemented?

1. A trained counselor should be recruited and placed on every mission team to integrate a counseling awareness in emerging small groups, developing a para-counseling group, and preaching planned lessons that relate to member needs.
2. As many mission teams reach into a community with Bible Study Centers, some featuring English as the means of instruction, an effective outreach could be launched through a Family Studies Center. Such a center, staffed by qualified people, would make a strong appeal to people interested and even struggling as parents, marital partners, and those lacking life skills. People with a unique readiness to learn would be attracted. Friendships through helping could be developed from which evangelism could blossom.
3. Planning and forethought would have to precede any mission counseling efforts with a thorough study of the culture, acquiring a full understanding of the ethnic needs, and guarding against offensive cross-cultural practices and expressions.
4. There must be the preparation of culturally relevant materials to help people in the particular culture. These materials should be presented professionally without economy being the chief priority.

People are people even though they may be dressed differently, speak another language, and live in a diverse culture. Human needs and human problems share a common urgency everywhere. People who reach out to those in need with what seems a foreign and theoretic message that is so much in contrast to their world view and cultural values better have it accompanied by a message of care, acceptance, and relevant service. Helping people will not save them without the Gospel, but it does put a human face and heart to words that will more quickly become meaningful and compelling.

H. Electronic Counseling Opens Doors Around the World to Expand the Benefits of Christian Counseling

We may not be able to preach openly to the Muslim searchers, reach the Indian masses, or ever arrive at the door of most of the six billion without Christ in our exploding world, but we can reach many of them who are in the growing millions of Internet users. How can Christian counseling make an Internet impact on a global basis?

1. Hundreds of congregations and church organizations have web sites focused on specific features of their ministries. Some are superbly professional. Christian counseling themes could be included in the menu or separate web sites could be developed to feature counseling resources available to Internet users.
2. Software programs could be developed presenting complete training courses in Christian counseling.
3. CD ROM programs could be developed with select books and testing applications available for personal or certified growth results.
4. Greater initiative could be taken to challenge the growing thousands of computer/internet persons among us to envision the mind-boggling ways that both the Gospel message and the Christian invitation to a Christ-centered life could be communicated in this century, a century in which even greater leaps ahead will be experienced.

God surely has given us a technology that is just beginning to be understood to match the greatness of the task ordered in the Great Commission.

There Are No Self-exam Questions For this Lesson

In-Class Reflection/Discussion Assignments

1. Reflect on the continuing opportunities and expanding methods in which people are being helped.
2. Reflect on coming advances in counseling just appearing on the horizon.
3. Reflect again on the definition of counseling given in this course: “Teaching people to think, feel, and act like Jesus.”

Out-of-Class Research/Meditation Assignments

1. Research in your area to determine what counseling advances mentioned in this lesson are being employed.
2. Choose one of the eight counseling advances presented in this lesson and **write a five page essay on its use**. Include this paper in your notebook after showing it to your Test Administrator.

LESSON TWELVE

Questions Counselors Ask

INTRODUCTION:

In the concluding lesson we will respond to thirty seven questions in five areas: personal concerns, counseling concerns, family concerns, counseling logistics, and specific counseling situations. Every counselor asks these and many other questions to keep the counseling process in perspective. These answers could save some counselors a great deal of time and misdirection of efforts.

Question and answer forums are often the best learning experiences. This lesson will try to anticipate the questions that could be asked, knowing quite well that at best, they are only samplings of the many and perhaps better questions that each student of this course could ask. The questions and responses will be grouped into five areas of counseling concerns.

AREA ONE: PERSONAL CONCERN

Q: 1. Should a counselor focus on an area of counseling?

A: A major need is to identify one's gift of passion to determine for what kinds of person and what kinds of situations he/she is primarily gifted. One will do better focusing on both preparation and ministry in those areas. However, we should respond to people in need even if they may not be in our primary areas of giftedness and do the best we can until other help can be given.

Q: 2. How does a counselor find time for ministry renewal?

A: He/she can't unless a priority is given based on a sense of its value. By ministry renewal, we should think of getting enough rest, plan periods of recreation, have social exchanges with an inner circle of friends, have a non-ministry hobby that is creative and fulfilling, have fun for the sole purpose of having fun, have one or two high points in every year, and experience major growth events in which personal affirmation results and "going apart for awhile" as Jesus did with His disciples. He was crushed with people's concerns but made time for renewal in prayer, separation, and meditation.

Q: 3. How does a counselor foresee being overly committed in counseling?

A: It is difficult to stay in contact with one's own needs and feelings, especially when there is great fulfillment, when one is driven by a distorted value system, or when one struggles with self-discipline. Some telling signs of over commitment are:

1. When commitments are suffering in areas of punctuality or quality.
2. When one is continually tired, increasingly irritable, and aloof.
3. When high priorities like family, personal development, and other ministry commitments are being neglected.
4. When focus is lost during counseling sessions and there is no time to do the record keeping and home work for the next session.

Q: 4. How does a counselor deal with false accusations?

A: Prevention is the best response. Live impeccably and humbly before God and man at all times. Be sharply attentive during a counseling exchange to

give no room for error or to communicate a message that would be wrong or easily misunderstood. Review the session to scrutinize your conduct. Be quick to apologize if a mistake was made. Keep records of where and whom you are with each day. Most accusations are rooted in inaccuracies of place and time and can be exposed by documented truth. Avoid compromising circumstances like going alone to a home or being completely alone in the counseling situation. The first line of defense is a clean conscience before God. After that, it is important to try to understand why the person is falsely accusing you and what need is being met by the wrong conduct. It is crucial to begin the process of anger management and forgiveness. Anger has hardly ever been the best response to false accusations.

Q: 5. How does a counselor determine if he/she has other interests than helping people through counseling?

- A: One should be greatly aware of other interests that will eventually diminish or destroy the effectiveness of his/her counseling. The other interests could include the desire to control or even manipulate the hunger for counselee acceptance and affirmation, the unhealthy need of a sense of competency, the lust for sexual fulfillment, or if fees are charged an inordinate desire for material gain. Integrity, self-examination, accountability, and recommitment to the highest purposes and to the very nature of Christian counseling are the steps to keeping one's counseling work right and fruitful.

Q: 6. How does a counselor guard his heart against sexual attraction?

- A: One should begin with the admission that such attraction could and often does begin to occur. Few men have the absolute gift of abstinence that Paul professed (cf. 1 Corinthians 7). A confronted attraction is the safeguard of the heart. The best long term response is the moral pursuit of becoming all that the "one woman man" expectation of 1 Timothy 3 requires. A frequent reminder of one's relations to others (family, wife, children, grandchildren, the Church, ministry colleagues, the lost, and to God above all) helps guard the heart. Meeting Christ regularly in the Word and at the throne of grace is singularly crucial (cf. Acts 20). Having a covenant with a trusted and mature brother who will hold you accountable for a pure heart can be the difference in moral integrity (cf. James 5:16). Self-discipline guards the weaker places (cf. 1 Corinthians 9). God is faithful in His promise to give a door of escape to every believer under attack (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:13).

AREA TWO: COUNSELING CONCERNS

Q: 1. How high is the priority of counseling in a busy schedule?

- A: In part, the answer comes through identifying one's ministry giftedness. If God has gifted one for counseling, it is an assignment in Kingdom building and must be given due priority. Schedules are entirely what we make them to be. We determine which activities get the best of our attention. We set priorities according to the importance we give to people, tasks, and activities. So, how are you gifted? How valuable and needed is counseling to the people around you? What activities are more or less important than counseling? After determining one's own giftedness and the importance of counseling, it seems that the rest has to do with setting one's priorities including or excluding counseling.

Q: 2. What are some of the richer counseling resources?

- A: Among the first and most useful resources in doing counseling are the following:

1. **The Counselor Library** by Word provides an excellent resource book and two albums of counseling tapes and assignments on a broad range of counseling concerns.
2. **Resources for Christian Counseling** by Word is a library of recently written books on many counseling themes.
3. **American Association of Christian Counselors (AACC)** are producing both books and certification programs in counseling.

Q: 3. How can a person be encouraged to begin a counseling relation?

- A: Most people will come or be referred for counseling. Far more need counseling but will not come without an invitation, if then. Seeing how you have helped many others invites a person to consider asking for assistance. The best invitation is building a rapport in which caring and trusting are mutually felt. Serving people in lesser needs insures people that you are ready to help them in the bigger needs of life. Most people wave flags on which needs are written clearly and some cry out for help. Being there at the point of need opens the door to make yourself available to help. There are times when a counselor may have to intervene more directly. Hopefully, a trusting relationship is growing. However, Matthew 18:15 authorizes one to go uninvited if another's relationship with God is put in jeopardy by sin and even to take further steps to help a sinning and unrepentant brother.

Q: 4. What are some guiding principles in honoring confidentiality?

- A: A commitment of confidentiality must be made and maintained from the beginning of the counseling relation, but it needs to be defined. Under the laws of most states, pastoral confidentiality is not protected. In cases of child abuse, rape, murder, and other such grave crimes, a counselor is in jeopardy of prosecution if he fails to report his knowledge of such felonies. Particularly in child sexual abuse there are often no statutes of limitation on the crime. Even in other cases of confidentiality, a counselor may need to urge the counselee to make full disclosure of some knowledge to someone who is seriously impacted by the material. At other times a counselor may need to indicate that the counselor's pledge of confidentiality would be detrimental to the counselee's well being or would jeopardize the counselor's integrity. However, most of the material shared by a counselee can and must be protected by the counselor. The desire is that the counselee can trust the counselor and will hold back nothing that the counselor needs to know to help the counselee. There is much that the counselor does not need to hear such as blow by blow accounts of an event, detailed justification of activities, and much background material that is irrelevant.

Q: 5. How does a counselor bring closure when a counselee demands further counseling?

- A: This situation most frequently happens when the counselor has not been clear from the beginning of a desired terminal date and has failed to remind the counselee of the upcoming date. A counselor works with every counselee with self-sufficiency in mind. He does everything reasonable to help the counselee toward autonomy. At other times, the counselor finds it difficult to say "no" and mean it. Too often such a situation is the result of an unhealthy need, either of the counselor or counselee, being met in continued counseling: need for attention, control, affirmation, and other such needs. The greater the demand, the surer the clinical dysfunction of the counselee, and the surer that the average counselor knows that it is past time to refer the person to someone trained in clinical disturbances. In most matters, though, if the counselor is persuaded that the major objectives have been reached, the counselee needs other therapy or time to apply the

counseling guidance, or that future sessions will not be productive, he must conclude the relation. Depending on the counselee's state of mental health, these times can become critical. These are times that accusations can be made, guilt can be laid on the counselor, the counselee may see the termination of counseling as rejection, or a counselor statement of his/her little worth and the progress seemingly seen in earlier sessions can be washed away. Yielding to a counselee's demand is not the answer because the next time it would be even more difficult to bring closure to the counseling. Done with kindness, genuine concern, and interest in the well being of the counselee, closure must occur. Safe guards and other resources should be offered and in place, small groups, visitation by others, materials, and other sources.

Q: 6. How does a counselor deal with a counselee who calls or comes without a counseling agreement?

- A: In the first session, a "contract" could be well put in place in which the responsibilities of a counselee could be defined. Most people will respect the private time of a counselor and will know that he has many other commitments. However, some will be so pressed by personal need that too little consideration will be given to the counselor's needs, especially if it is indicated by the counselor to call whenever there is a need. The fact is that most counselors want to help whenever there is need, but if said without definition, it does not teach the counselee to be responsible, respectful of the needs of others, or to work toward autonomy. The counselor needs to say that he can be reached at certain hours. If called or visited at other hours, after determining the nature of the need, the counselor can schedule a meeting. I have found that even discussions about a threatened suicide can be scheduled!

Q: 7. When does a counselor know it is time to refer a counselee to another counselor?

- A: There are some counselees that need to be referred before meeting with them and others after a few introductory, precounseling meetings. If one is not prepared in clinical counseling, it is not good for the counselor to play doctor. If a young man is asked to give counseling in areas of no experience or training, it probably should be referred if there is an older counselor available. If a male counselor is asked to counsel a woman when his marriage is in shambles or he is struggling with sexual issues, he should refer her to someone else. If there is a close friendship or dependent employment relationship, the counselee should be referred in most cases. If there is perceived distrust, the counselor should consider referral. In all cases in which the counselor feels particularly inadequate, he should help the counselee find help elsewhere. The well being of the counselee is foremost in importance, the first consideration.

Q: 8. Should a congregational counselor charge a fee for counseling?

- A: This is certainly a judgement call. Some charge a fee, even if it is minimal compared to market charges, believing that counselees will be more punctual, more responsible, and more accountable if they invest something. Others give the counselees a list of needs in the counseling ministry and ask them to consider a donation or underwriting a need (books, cassettes, software programs, furniture, or other needs). Others if members of the same congregation feel that a service is being given, especially a supported minister may consider that the counseling cost has already been paid by a caring congregation even as it underwrites service in other areas.

AREA THREE: FAMILY CONCERNS

Q: 1. What are some major counseling concerns in child development?

A: The values, knowledge, and parenting skills of parents are primary in developing an environment in which children can grow toward healthy adulthood. In counseling adults, the failures of parenting are prominent. In fact, most adult counseling is related to “re-parenting,” finding what was lost, healing what was hurt, fixing what was broken, and teaching what was left out. Some of the most valuable counseling is preventive counseling in teaching young parents how to raise healthy children. Parenting foundation principles must be taught, parenting pillars must be erected, and parenting skills must be developed.

Q: 2. What are some of the topics that must be covered in counseling parents?

A: Christian parents must know that the Bible contains all of the basics for effective parenting:

1. God is the author of parenthood (cf. Genesis 1).
2. God has given the law of parenthood (cf. Deuteronomy 6).
3. God has given the optimum seasons of parenting (cf. Proverbs 22:6).
4. God has given the model of parenting (cf. Luke 2:52).
5. God has given the strategy of parenting (cf. Ephesians 6:1–4).

Christian parents need to learn that one of the best gifts to their children, other than faith in God, is a genuine, lavishly expressed, and faithful love for one another.

Q: 3. What are some considerations in parent-child counseling?

A: The Christian counselor needs to have an accurate view of the quality of home in which these relationships have been forming. A few areas to consider would be the strength, openness, and faithfulness of the marital relationship, the roles of each parent, the effectiveness of conflict management, the handling of finances, the parental involvement in the home, the affirmation of children, the affectionate care of children, the recreational experiences in the family, the value system, the goals and hopes of the family, and the purposeful building of a spiritual fiber in the home. Counseling would contribute to strengthening any of the above areas that might be lacking.

Q: 4. What approach could be used in pre-marital counseling?

A: A couple could be invited to attend a pre-marital seminar regularly scheduled in the congregation, followed by a set number of couple sessions to review personal wholeness, compatibility, communication, expectations, and values, closing with planning for the wedding and setting goals for the first year.

Q: 5. How does a counselor educate a congregation on the value of pre-marital counseling?

A: The more the value of mature and happy marriages is emphasized, the more clear the need for marital preparation will become. More preparation is required for professions of all kinds than is urged for a life-long marriage. Somehow we continue with the myth that “love” will solve all problems. Instruction on attitudes, foundational principles, relational insights and skills are the basics of a good marriage. This training should be continual in the homes, in teen and adult classes, and sounded clearly from the pulpit. Select reading materials should be provided. A thoughtful marriage policy,

including emphasis on the need of pre-marital counseling, approved by the congregational elders should be published and distributed. The counselor, with few to no exceptions, should condition performing weddings on the assurance that adequate preparation has been made. We insist on instruction as a basis of salvation. For some of the same reasons, we must stress that a life commitment in marriage should be on the basis of sound biblical and relationship instructions.

Q: 6. How does one approach marital counseling?

A: The counselor must have some “intake” time to assure himself that he understands the strengths and deficiencies of the relationship, the specific issues causing tension, and the history of the marriage. The precounseling sessions proposed earlier in our studies would serve these purposes. These sessions would include some effective personality testing and evaluating and determining if both of the couple counselees are ready to invest in the marriage recovery or strengthening. If it is discovered that only one is eager to take responsibilities, then the counseling is no longer marital counseling. It becomes an effort to help one person become more complete in Jesus. Sometimes marriage counseling must be placed on hold as a counselor works separately with each person. With individual issues resolved, the couple counseling can start on a more promising basis.

Q: 7. What are the basic principles in marital counseling?

A: Believing that marriage belongs to God and that He alone has the right to legislate all matters relative to marriage, Christian counseling aims at teaching people to honor God in knowing His will, doing His will, and enjoying the fruits of obedience. Often, a call to repentance and responsible relationships stand at the return to a God-honoring marriage. In many cases a renewal of hope that characterized the early days of a marriage will have to be experienced before responsible efforts can begin. Most couples wait too long before asking for help, making the work of the counselor more difficult to revive hope and trust. Renewing hope and trust is aided in helping a couple understand what deficiencies or circumstances have contributed to their marital difficulties and in setting an agenda for resolving the conflicts and acquiring the necessary relationship building skills. In most cases there will be hurt that must be healed through understanding and forgiveness and conflict management skills that must be learned.

Q: 8. What are major marital problems that should be addressed?

A: After knowing and sincerely trying to obey God’s will, some of the major marital problems are:

1. Dealing with the unresolved issues and hurts that a person brings into the marriage, such as the residue of abuses, the learned inadequacies in resolving conflict, responsibly managing finances, effectively communicating, and battling a diminished self-image.
2. A misunderstanding of the biblical roles that each must agree to responsibly fulfill.
3. Over-commitment to goals that leaves little time to build a mutually fulfilling relationship.
4. Ignoring basic values to fulfill human desires that are distractive to the health of the marriage such as sexual affirmation, career aspirations, and recreational choices.
5. Failure to grow in all of the essential areas of marital development: attitude, insights, and skills.

6. Permitting the demands and joys of parenting to displace marriage building and fulfillment as the primary couple objective. Forgetting that two people who deeply love and honor each other in a marriage is the couple's best gift to a child.
7. Differences in child discipline, spending money, recreational choices, tastes in dressing, care of possessions, choices of friends and careers are all irritants that can escalate into more serious problems.
8. Allowing in-law interventions or friendship disruptions to diminish a mate or distort a couple commitment strain otherwise promising marriages.

Q: 9. What are the stages of marital development?

A: A counselor needs to help a young couple prepare and successfully pass through each of the stages of marriage:

1. **Security:** A young man needs to provide an environment for his young bride to feel secure, valued, and wanted. It starts with material security of sufficient income, a safe residence, and trustworthy transportation. Especially essential is that he provide a place where faith can grow and enrich the lives of the children being given to the marriage. The young woman provides security in responding with shared faith, feminine acceptance, affirmation, and dependence. This stage could well consume the first ten years. If done well it releases the couple to go into the second stage.
2. **Affirmation:** Each must be assured that he/she is doing well, progressing toward mutually defined goals, and is satisfying the other mate's needs. An emerging basis of realistic hope should be forming as the resources for fulfilled goals are being assembled. Meaningful relationships, productive skills, and early tastes of desired outcomes should be taking shape. A real sense of being valued and of enjoying a marital partnership should be regular realities. By now an assurance that the marriage belongs to God is deeply motivating to each to give his/her best in honoring God together in building the marriage, parenting, and serving others. These are the qualities of the second marital stage.
3. **Confirmation:** Careers are established, children are nearing adulthood, material security is of lesser concern than before, values have proven to be trustworthy, relationships have been meaningful, and major purposes have been pursued with satisfying results. Even more than ever there are some higher couple and spiritual purposes demanding the best from the marital partnership and give excitement to thoughts about the fourth marital stage.
4. **Realization:** Becoming a couple again is important when the children are adults and there is the privilege of grand parenthood. Time to indulge, long-denied pursuits are more possible and cherished dreams urge fulfillment. Some health and material restrictions are daily concerns. Time for intimacy with God, reflection, savoring, serving, and making contributions from storehouses of wisdom, faith, and experience make a day livable and worth singing about. This stage becomes special if both can live some years together in reasonably good health and companionship. At its moment of triumph one lays the other into the arms of God.

A Christian counselor has the privilege of helping couples in each and sometimes all of these marital stages.

Q: 10. Can a counselor help people prepare for grand parenting?

A: Successful grand parenting starts earlier than most people think. Mature young people choosing and marrying mature mates and working together in developing mature adult children is the best preparation for grand parenting. A class in “The Art of Grand Parenting” should be a part of every church curriculum. People have to learn to accept a new family role that features supportive counsel. Parents must develop a different relationship with their adult children that features a respect for the autonomy of the adult child and the chosen mate. It is difficult to have so much perceived wisdom while the adult children, often times, choose to reinvent the wheel and learn all over again from their own mistakes. It is difficult to resist taking control when clear mistakes are being made or when giving money would resolve the immediate problem. Restraint is required not to diminish a parent before the grandchildren and intensify a loss of respect. Humility comes hard when parents of highly successful children want to take the full credit for developing model children.

AREA FOUR: COUNSELING LOGISTICS**Q: 1. Should there be a time limit in formal counseling sessions?**

A: Keeping a counseling session within the hour makes good sense. After forty-five minutes there is a sharp drop in energy for both counselor and counselee. Such a period is usually sufficient in most cases to work on one or two major issues, summarize the session, and give follow-up assignments. In prolonged sessions it seems that much of the intensity wanes, repetition and rambling occurs, and it is more difficult to stay focused on the stated purposes.

Q: 2. How frequent should sessions be planned?

A: Many variables dictate the frequency of counseling sessions. Two times a week may be necessary when cases are in urgent need of attention but once a week fits most people’s schedules. If the counselor has a heavy schedule, a once a week meeting gives the necessary time for preparation in prayer, study, and planning.

Q: 3. How many sessions would be recommended?

A: The nature of the counselee’s problem, the availability and readiness of the counselee, and the counselor’s schedule impact the decision concerning the number of sessions. There can be no set number in all cases. Open-ended counseling with no terminus in mind is not wise. It is wise to learn how to foresee the number of counseling sessions to be expected and work toward such a projection. One or two sessions may be all that are needed. In most cases, other than clinical counseling, six sessions could be the maximum number with evaluations being made at the end of the sixth session to determine if a second block of three sessions might be recommended to conclude the effort.

Q: 4. What are important considerations about the place of counseling?

- A: Whether the counseling takes on a more formal format or is more a friendship or para-counseling format, there are some basic considerations in all cases.
1. The place should provide quiet with a minimum of distractive noises or movements. A counselee should not bring children to adult sessions.
 2. The more intense the content of counseling, the more thought should be given to the selection of the place.

3. The place should provide comfortable seating, temperature, and non-glaring light.
4. The place should provide a clean and orderly appearance, free of clutter.
5. The place should provide an obvious level of privacy to give comfort to the counselee.
6. The place should provide a clear signal to the counselee that any effort toward illicit intimacy or a contradiction of values will not be tolerated and that appropriate accountability of all participants is expected.
7. The place should provide access to needed materials, means of communication, and easy exit.
8. The place should provide room for arranging separate seating favoring direct, frontal positions that are three-to-five feet distant. In more formal settings some counselors prefer having a desk or small piece of furniture separating the counselor and counselee.
9. In substance, the place should provide a suitable environment without distracting or dominating the purpose or diminishing the desired outcome.

Q: 5. What kind of counseling assignments might be given?

- A: Counseling assignments have value only to teach the counselee. An assignment could teach discipline, responsibility, accountability, new skills, rethinking past values or behaviors, and claiming new values and attitudes. Reading and writing assignments, listening to tapes or studying video programs, completing projects, consulting an Internet offering, attending significant events, engaging in prayer, fasting, and service assignments could be among the various approaches an insightful counselor may require.

Q: 6. What kind of response should be given when a counselee fails to do an assignment?

- A: A counselor needs to be considerate about the circumstances or counselee difficulties in making a response. However, even on the first failure a point must be made of the counselee's commitment, the importance of investing in the process, and the virtue of being responsible and accountable. A counselor needs to identify the problem if there is a repeated failure to complete assignments. A counselor might cancel a session at the very beginning, telling the counselee that no other sessions will be scheduled until more responsibility is shown. A counselee must not be given the idea that a waste of the counselor's time is of no consequence or that the assignments are of little value.

AREA FIVE: SPECIFIC SITUATIONS

Q: 1. How does a Christian counselor help a young lady who is premaritally pregnant?

- A: The Christian counselor needs to be sensitive to the trauma that the young lady is experiencing. She may be overwhelmed by fear, shame, guilt, rejection, and anger. She may be deeply torn by the societal pressures to abort the child. She may not have the understanding, acceptance, and support of her parents. She may feel all alone with a problem for which she may have few resources. She must know that her condition is a direct result of a sinful choice, but there is a way back to responsible behavior. The young lady probably does not need a long, indicting sermon as much as she needs a helpful, genuine friend. The counselor may have the opportunity to help parents who are devastated, embarrassed, and struggling with coming to the side of a daughter as readily as if she had made a serious traffic mistake and needed help. Wise counsel must be given on the future of the

child. The child has done no wrong and should be treated as any other child born in more favorable conditions. The age and health of the young mother, the financial means available to raise the child, the family structure into which the child is born, and the pre-commitments need to be considered in deciding to keep and raise the child or to secure an appropriate adoption arrangement. Living and growing up in the home of even one natural parent precludes some of the down-sides of adoption. However, if the deficiencies are many and severe, adoption by approved, Christian parents is often the better choice. Thus a Christian counselor should be in direct contact with a well-documented adoption agency or, with great care, become qualified to conduct private, legal adoptions. Not to be forgotten is the young man involved in the untimely pregnancy. He has responsibilities to assume and some responses to make, both spiritually and materially. He, nor his family, should be either left unnoticed in their needs or ignored in acknowledging their responsibilities. Urging marriage without a valid basis of compatibility is not a solution to even be considered.

Q: 2. What does a counselor do when an affair is exposed in the life of a married counselee?

- A: At first, confidentiality guards the “little secret” as the counselor works insistently with the counselee to abandon the illicit relation. The counselee must be confronted with the fact that no failure, real, perceived or exaggerated, on the part of the mate justifies the breaking of his/her marital promise. Two wrongs do not make one right. The counselor will have to insist that being fulfilled in the illicit relation is no justification for beginning or continuing what is sin against God and is a repudiation of a promise. Issues of integrity, responsibility, promised love, care, and sensitivity need to be brought to the forefront. In the mix, the counselor must know what needs are being met in the affair to understand the dynamics that hold the counselee in the grips of the relationship. The erring counselee will not likely leave the relationship unless a stronger motivation can be felt: a call to a right relationship with God, to integrity, to past joys and future hopes, to repentance, forgiveness, and healing. However, with a continued refusal to sever the wrongful relationship, the counselee must be made to understand that the counselor’s pledge of confidentiality can no longer be expected to cover a sinful choice. The counselor must maintain a clear view of the value of souls, the defeat of sin, and the objectives of restoring, renewing, and strengthening the failing marriage.

Q: 3. How does a Christian counselor honor confidences in the face of questioning by concerned parties?

- A: A reckless handling of information given in confidence will shut the door to counselee trust and the opportunity to help the person wanting help. Yet, it is acknowledged that others are rightfully concerned, and in some cases, could help if given some needed information to guide them. As a rule the promise of confidentiality prevails if it does not compromise the counselor’s integrity or deprive the counselee of the help that is needed. The counselor needs to be informed concerning some kinds of information that may not be retained in confidence without being in violation of law. A first step is to show the counselee the value of sharing the information with the appropriate persons, with the pledge to support him/her. A young person using drugs, involved in homosexual promiscuity, being pregnant, or being in violation of a law will need more help than one counselor might be able to give. Eventually, most of these cases will become known and sometimes too late for any positive solution. While honoring confidentiality to a point and deciding what further resources the counselee can obtain through wider disclosure, the counselor must work for a solution of the causative problem.

Most of the information shared with a counselor need never be shared and the counselor will go to his/her grave never having revealed the large amount of confidences shared over the length of years of counseling.

Q: 4. How does a Christian counselor respond in cases of divorce?

- A: Divorce counseling is near the top of the most difficult counseling challenges. Divorce takes a heavy toll on every part of a person. The hurt, rejection, loss of emotional, spiritual, and material resources, disruption of many relationships, challenge to every cherished value, and the ruthless blasting of hope and purpose present the counselor a multi-dimensional set of counseling problems. Intensifying these questions is one's understanding of the will of God concerning biblical solutions in the aftermath of divorce. A counselor will need to make an exhaustive study of the divorce-remarriage issue to be in a confident position to guide the divorced person. The conviction needs to be at such an informed depth that the counselor can offer counsel that is first true and is consistent to his/her considered beliefs.

Q: 5. How does a Christian counselor serve those suffering the loss of a family member?

- A: The counselors who help bereaving families the most are those who have invested much time and concern in the family in the years before the loss. Grieving families will turn naturally to those who have long loved them and served them unselfishly. The Christian counselor makes changes to be available, is eager to help, goes beyond expectations, and lets actions speak persuasively. Times of grief need more the language of feeling that speaks with a few well chosen words than the language of fact that thrives on many words. The counselor must reject the role of judge and the assigning of destiny to the deceased. The counselor functions as a healer to a wounded family, a guide to an uncertain future, and a friend in need. The objective is to give special attention to the bereaved until the sun starts shining again and then returning to confirm that there is still hope in God's tomorrows. The Christian counselor especially knows that the bereaved will get even more attention than they may need in the immediate days of the loss but are often forgotten as people get back to their pressing schedules. These days may be the days in which the Christian counselor can best give the needed help as the bereaved ones begin to feel just how deep the loss has been.

Q: 6. How can a Christian counselor help people with financial difficulties?

- A: The counselor needs to identify the nature of the financial difficulty. Some people are in difficulty through no direct fault of their own because of changing demographics, collapsing markets, natural losses, job downsizing, and other events. Many more lack personal maturity and management skills. Some are over committed and give too small priority to their financial stewardship. Some couples have not yet defined their roles in the financial matters of earning, budgeting, spending, and accounting. The Christian counselor either functions as a financial teacher and consultant or a referral is made to someone who can offer the service, either professionally or in friendship. Whether in a computer software program or in a manual set of books, every Christian should employ a system by which responsible planning and accounting enhance one's stewardship of financial resources.

Q: 7. How does a Christian counselor not trained in clinical therapy help a dysfunctional counselee?

- A: Anyone at any level of counseling needs to know that no one has such knowledge as to effectively respond to every counseling situation. The more intense the counseling need, fewer are the ones who have the training and giftedness to offer positive therapy. Every serious counselor knows his/her

limits and refuses to go further at the risk of the counselee. A non-clinical counselor needs to study enough to recognize that a prospective counselee has needs beyond his/her training. There is nothing to be gained by playing therapist to the detriment of the counselee. Often the dysfunctional person may cling to a well known counselor and resist being referred to someone new. The Christian counselor must persist in doing what is best in the long term for the counselee. Even though one may not be able to offer clinical therapy, one can keep a list of reputable and competent therapists to whom a counselee can be referred. Throughout the process, a non-clinical counselor can give valuable support, greatly needed assurance, and continuing direction.

In-Class Reflection/Discussion Assignments

1. Discuss other questions that could have been asked.
2. Reflect on other questions that could have been asked.
3. Reflect and discuss the values of having many of these questions answered in an introductory course without having to learn by “trial and error.”
4. Reflect on how you could apply the response to several of these answers in your own efforts to help people.

Out-of-Class Research/Meditation Assignments

1. Develop at least ten more questions about some specific area of counseling, research appropriate materials and write your responses.
2. Choose one of the questions discussed in this lesson and write a more extensive response.

Congratulations!

You have finished the exam and the course. You may want to reread your responses. Many failed exams occur largely because a student did not read the question correctly, answer all parts of a question, or was careless in answering. Check for spelling and grammar of all responses. Remember that the graders may not be able to read your writing as well as you do. What they cannot read, they cannot grade!

Give the exam and research assignments of each lesson to the Test Administrator. He will send your exams to SIBI for grading. He will examine and return your written assignments for you to put in your notebook.

You will receive notification from SIBI if you have passed the course and you will have been credited the course. You will also receive a certificate of completion.

Appendix

- Training Programs in Christian Counseling
- Discussion of the Sunset Servant Profile
- Frequently Used Testing Programs
- Questions to Test a Counselee's Readiness to Commit to His/Her Growth
- Christian Counseling Bibliography

A. Training Programs in Christian Counseling

There are many on-campus training programs in Christian Counseling among which are graduate programs at Abilene Christian University in Abilene, Texas, and Harding University in Searcy, Arkansas. There are many distant learning college programs among which are Bethany College and Theological Seminary in Dothan, Alabama, and Liberty University in Decatur, Georgia.

There are some well produced, self-study programs that would serve as introductory studies for general, para-counseling needs among which are:

- AACCC Video Series consisting of a growing number of video topics.
- AACCC Certificate Program for Biblical Counseling consisting of thirty lessons divided into five sections of study.

B. Discussion of the Sunset Servant Profile

The basis of much counseling is knowing the ministry gifts of the counselee. Having failed to discover, develop, and employ one's giftedness is the source of many counseling problems. One's needed sense of well-being, competency, belongingness, and value can be strengthened with the knowledge of God's gift to every person. Sunset has developed a program, "The Profile of a Servant," that helps the counselee discover his/her passion, potential, and approach in ministry. It exists as a seminar but a video seminar is in preparation.

- The gift of passion is the knowledge of the kinds and circumstances of people one is drawn to serve.
- The gifted potential of a person is seen in the discovery of his/her primary gifts to be developed and employed in serving others.
- The gifted approach to ministry determines how one best can serve the needs of others.

When one has a knowledge of his/her servant profile and finds the means to develop it and the freedom to use it in serving others, a sense of purpose and fulfillment gives one the strength to be faithful and fruitful.

C. Frequently Used Testing Programs

Verbal exchanges with the counselee, closely observing one's responses, knowing what to look for, and employing mature insight can often get to the core of the counseling problem. However, a problem can be more objectively understood sooner through the use of testing programs.

- Some, like the Taylor-Johnson Temperament Analysis (T-JTA) and Briggs-Myers, have been available for years but require certification to administer

and interpret (Psychological Publications, Inc., 290 Conejo Ridge Ave., Suite 100, Thousand Oaks, CA 91361-4928).

- ▶ The most comprehensive and easily accessible testing tool is the DISC offered by the Institute for Motivational Livings (#1-800-779-3472 — www.DlSinsights.com/counseling).
- ▶ The Arno Profile System is a certification course to equip the Christian counselor to accurately identify counselee problem areas. (www.APSReport.com — #1-914-951-6834).

D. Questions to Measure a Counselee's Readiness to Commit to His/Her Growth

The best counseling results come when a counselee chooses to invest in his/her own growth. In the pre-counseling sessions the Christian counselor needs to determine how committed the counselee will be. How the counselee responds to profiles being taken, how he/she communicates openness in the early discussions, and the replies to specific questions assist the counselor in knowing if the counselee is ready to begin the counseling experience. Some questions could be:

1. “So far, what seems to be the causative problem that has brought you to request counseling?”
2. “Have we been able to understand its origin and the risks of leaving it unaddressed?”
3. “How does the problem compromise your relationship with valued people and with God?”
4. “Will a biblical solution address the problem better than any other that you have tried?”
5. “What part will prayer serve in the counseling experience?”
6. “How often and how regularly can you meet to work on the problem?”
7. “So you see the value of assignments like reading, writing, and visiting with others?”
8. “With help, do you want to change what is necessary to achieve wholeness?” “What do you mean by change?”
9. “If the desired changes occurred, what would you see and would you like what you saw?”
10. “Would you see the value of the changes enough to make permanent changes in your thoughts and behavior?”

It would be important to listen intently to the choice of words, to the tone of the words, and to the body language in every response. Eye contact and eye content would be especially important and revealing. The importance of having a verbal commitment by the counselee of wanting to resolve the problem so much so as to participate willingly and faithfully cannot be overstated.

E. Christian Counseling Bibliography

The publishing of Christian counseling materials has exploded with many good books and programs. Almost every counseling need is addressed by recently published books. Current publications can be considered through the catalogue of the American Association of Christian Counselors (#1-800-526-8673). The bibliography that follows will cover only some of the proven introductory materials that are available.

Christian Counseling Bibliography

1. Pioneer Classics

Adams, Jay E., Competent to Counsel. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1970. (Adams has been a prolific writer championing the nouthetic counseling approach. He has produced an impressive library on introductory themes.)

Collins, Gary R., Christian Counseling. Waco: Word Books, 1980. (Following this pacesetting publication Collins continues to be a frequent writer and leader in the counseling field.)

Crabb, Lawrence J. Jr., Effective Biblical Counseling. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing Co., 1977. (Crabb was one of the earliest pioneers in introducing counseling as a Christian ministry and continues to add rich materials to the field.)

Kirwan, William T., Biblical Concepts for Christian Counseling. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987. (Kirwan's brief study is on most reading lists for students of Christian counseling.)

Narramore, Clyde M., The Psychology of Counseling. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing Co., 1960. (Narramore was one of the first and most used introductory publications in counseling training and practice.)

Oates, Wayne E., Introduction to Pastoral Counseling. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1959. (Oates wrote early and through the years has contributed greatly to making counseling more Christian.)

Ward, Waylon, The Bible in Counseling. Chicago: Moody Press. (In assigning homework, Ward's book has been used for a long time and other similar programs have resulted from this work.)

Wright, H. Norman, Marital Counseling. San Francisco: Harper and Roy, 1981. (Wright has been one of the early and most respected biblical and practical authors of counseling materials covering a wide range of topics.)

2. Christian Counseling Series

Clinton, Timothy; Ohlschlager, George, Competent Christian Counseling. Is offered by AACC Counseling Library: Call #1-800-526-8673 or go to www.aacc.net for a catalog of the growing list of publications. (The American Association of Christian Counselors provides the most current selection of books for Christian counselors. Subscription to the periodical, *Christian Counseling Today* would be helpful.)

Collins, Gary R., Ed, Resources for Christian Counseling. Dallas: Word Publishing, 1986-continuing. (The most current and exhaustive counseling library of over thirty volumes written from a fundamental, biblical perspective.)

Kennedy, Eugene; Charles, Sara C., On Becoming a Counselor. New York: Continuum, 1990. (One volume of an extensive, secular series on counseling that is basically sound and practical.)

Meier, Minerth; Wichen, Ratcliff, Introduction to Psychology and Counseling. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1993. (The Meier and Minerth Publications regularly excel in helping non-clinical students of counseling understand the medical side of counseling.)

To this Introduction of Christian Counseling and the Basic Thoughts in Christian Counseling by Dr. Ken Wilson, there will be added counseling courses and publications on pre-marital, marital, parenting, personal development, crisis counseling, and clinical counseling by various authors.

The obvious must be stressed: the one and best book on Christian counseling is the Spirit inspired Word of God — the inerrant and divinely revealed Bible. Most of the good that is written in the growing counseling library finds its origin in the mind of God as revealed in the always relevant Word.

Study Guide

Truman Scott, PhD.

Dr. Truman Scott has served as an evangelist, a missionary and Christian counselor in the Lord's church. He received his undergraduate degrees from Freed Hardeman and Harding Universities. His graduate work and Ph.D. are from Harding University and Bethany Theological Seminary. His counseling experience is extensive and he has authored study guides on counseling and leadership in the church.



Truman Scott has now retired as Dean of the International Division at Sunset International Bible Institute and director of Sunset Center of Ministry Renewal. For many years, Truman was a frequent lecturer in counseling, missions, family and leadership seminars.

He has been married to Ferne White for over fifty years. They have three children and nine grandchildren. They make their home in Medford, Oregon.

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