

Biblical Counseling

Teacher's Manual

Biblical Counseling

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Lesson 1-2a

Introduction to Biblical Counseling

I. What is counseling?

A. The dictionary defines “counsel” as:

1. The act of exchanging opinions and ideas; consultation
2. Advice or guidance, especially as solicited from a knowledgeable person
3. A plan of action
4. Synonyms include: advice, direction, guidance, consultation, recommendation

B. There are many definitions given from various sources for the process counseling. A few of them include the following:

1. Counseling is something that provides direction or advice as to a decision or course of action.
2. Counseling is “the process by which a professional counselor helps a person cope with mental or emotional distress, and understand and solve personal problems.”
–American Cancer Society
3. Counseling is “the application of mental health, psychological or human development principles, through cognitive, affective, behavioral or systematic intervention strategies, that address wellness, personal growth, or career development, as well as pathology.” –American Counseling Association

Do you see anything questionable about these above definitions?

C. A good working definition for our purposes is:

Counseling is a form of guidance in which a trained or knowledgeable person offers advice or education about specific life problems or issues of living.

II. What are the various types of counseling?

There are several classical methods associated with the field of counseling. Most modern counselors find themselves using one of these or a combination of these. It is not our purpose to give exhaustive definitions of these methods but only to offer a brief summary of them for the purpose of comparison. A fuller understanding of these methods is discussed in *The Christian Counselor’s Manual* by Jay Adams.

A. There is the Rogerian method popularized by Carl Rogers.

The Rogerian model is characterized by some of the following:

1. It presupposes that man has truth within himself and through guided introspection can come to a solution.
 2. It usually avoids any direct advice, confrontation and references to moral absolutes.
 3. The counselor's primary function is to help the counselee unlock the inner secrets within and realize his or her inner potential. He does this by mirroring the patient's thoughts and restating what has been said.
- B. There is the Freudian method popularized by Sigmund Freud.

The Freudian model is characterized by some of the following:

1. It presupposes that man is basically a clean slate when he is born and that any problems he may have are due to the fact that he has been wrongly socialized by someone or something else (e.g. parents, environment).
 2. Most Freudians believe that guilt is an artificial and harmful activity that is the result of parental and societal mores.
 3. The primary method is to dig deep into the person's soul (psyche) and past to try to analyze why they are the way they are. Balance is often achieved by being able to blame others or offer an excuse for one's behavior.
- C. There is the Skinnerian method popularized by B.F. Skinner.

The Skinnerian model is characterized by some of the following:

1. It presupposes that man is like any other animal and can be trained or behaviorally controlled by manipulating his environment or biology.
 2. The primary method is to employ various behavior modification techniques that include stimulus and response. It may include behavior modification by the use of various drug related treatments.
- D. There is the biblical method popularized by Jesus and the Apostles.

This, of course, is the method that we will be pursuing in this course about which we will give fuller definition and expression as we continue on.

III. What is biblical counseling?

A. Biblical counseling is to be distinguished from other forms of counseling in several ways:

1. Biblical counseling begins from the premise that man is created by God and did not evolve from lower life forms.
2. Biblical counseling, therefore, sees man as the crown of God's creation completely distinguished from the other animals, having a spirit, soul and a body.
3. Biblical counseling acknowledges that the God who created man understands man better than man understands himself.
4. Biblical counseling accepts the fact that the God of the universe has an opinion about most of the issues that affect mankind.
5. Biblical counseling acknowledges that the Bible is God's word to man and represents His opinion relative to every area that it addresses.
6. Biblical counseling assumes that God has given to man everything that man needs to make right decisions and solve all of life's problems (II Pet. 1:2-4).

Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

May God bless you with his special favor and wonderful peace as you come to know Jesus, our God and Lord, better and better. As we know Jesus better, his divine power gives us everything we need for living a godly life. He has called us to receive his own glory and goodness! And by that same mighty power, he has given us all of his rich and wonderful promises. He has promised that you will escape the decadence all around you caused by evil desires and that you will share in his divine nature. So make every effort to apply the benefits of these promises to your life. Then your faith will produce a life of moral excellence. A life of moral excellence leads to knowing God better. Knowing God leads to self-control. Self-control leads to patient endurance, and patient endurance leads to godliness. Godliness leads to love for other Christians, and finally you will grow to have genuine love for everyone. II Pet. 1:2-7, NLT

7. Biblical counseling assumes that man will never be able to function properly unless he is in right relationship with God and His word.

B. Biblical counseling has been compromised in many ways.

1. It has been compromised by the teaching of humanistic psychology that is taught in most institutions of learning.
2. It has been compromised by educators who themselves have been trained in humanistic psychology and tend to see what they have been taught as being superior to religious teaching or insight.
3. It has been compromised by the teaching of relative truth and situation ethics which see the Bible as an antiquated, religious relic.
4. It has been compromised by evolutionary concepts that pervade many realms of society. These concepts include the ideas that...
 - a. Man is inherently good.
 - b. Man is a product of his environment.
 - c. There is no absolute authority (God).
 - d. Morality is relative and culturally developed.
5. It has been compromised by Christian counselors that have blended biblical revelation with humanistic ideas.
6. It has been compromised by the attempt to reclassify sinful behavior as diseases or disorders making it difficult to achieve biblical solutions.
 - Drunkenness becomes alcoholism
 - Fornication becomes “sexually active”
 - Homosexuality becomes “gay”
 - Thieves become kleptomaniacs
 - A variety of sinful behavior can be labeled emotional problems, co-dependency, personality disorder, dysfunctionality, etc.
7. It has been compromised by an exaltation of the process of counseling rather than the responsible actions of the one being counseled.

What I mean by that is that sometimes people see counseling as an unending discipline that puts most of the responsibility for a solution on the one doing the counseling rather than on the one being counseled. Some counselors foster this attitude because their livelihood depends on people never fully recovering. This is where the term “counseling” often changes to “therapy.”

Therapy often implies that there is a process that might help if the process is continued on a continual basis, but no solution is guaranteed. Chemotherapy for cancer cannot guarantee success. Physiotherapy for restoring full motions cannot be guaranteed.

It is difficult to extend real hope to people when there is no guaranteed result. Hoping can become “wishing” or “wishful thinking.” The Bible offers real answers to real problems. The Bible has a solution for every need of man.

8. It has been compromised as pastors and church leaders are intimidated by professional counselor.

Pastors and church leaders are made to feel that they are ill-equipped to handle the modern problems of sexual abuse, abortion, repressed memories and the like. Pastors are intimidated by terms and concepts that are not referenced in the Bible and can easily capitulate to the pressure placed upon them by trained professionals.

Pastors and church leaders are also intimidated when their solutions are called “simplistic” by those who love to complicate things. We are just as simplistic as Peter was on the day of Pentecost when he gave counsel to about 3000 people.

I like what Martin Luther once said. It went something like, “A poor uneducated man armed with the Bible is more equipped and more powerful than all of the university-trained doctors and lawyers without the Bible.”

I am not anti-education or pro-ignorance. I am saying that no problem that occurs in the lives of people is a surprise to God. His word addresses every condition of mankind.

IV. What are the main reasons why people seek counseling?

“Counseling is the interaction of people at the need level of life sharing insights toward the solutions of real problems.” Charles H. Nichols

A. Counseling is sought in many different realms of life and living.

1. Career Counseling
2. Relationship Counseling
3. Marriage Counseling
4. Family Counseling
5. Financial Counseling
6. Grief Counseling
7. Behavioral Counseling (Addictions, Anger, Worry, Fear)
8. Crisis Counseling

B. Counseling is sought for many different reasons.

1. The counselee simply needs advice about a decision.

2. The counselee needs guidance concerning life goals.
 3. The counselee needs support through an emotional season.
 4. The counselee needs motivation for change.
 5. The counselee needs assistance in resolving conflict.
 6. The counselee needs to be free from bondage in an area.
 7. The counselee needs insight into the expression of gifts and ministries.
 8. The counselee needs to understand principles of cultivating and maintaining healthy friendship and relationships.
 9. The counselee needs instruction in some of the practical areas of life (marriage, child-rearing, finances, etc.).
 10. The counselee needs to deal with issues of bitterness and unforgiveness.
 11. The counselee needs help in sorting out their priorities.
 12. The counselee needs direction and inspiration relative to their personal spiritual growth.
- C. The counseling process may be initiated by the presence of certain symptoms in the counselee(s).

Some of these include: Depression, loneliness, bitterness, resentment, stress, guilt, relational conflict, fears, frustration, etc.

V. Where is the ministry of counseling found in the Bible?

A. There are not many times when the words “counsel or counseling” are found in the Bible.

1. The closest Old Testament word that is most often translated “counsel” is the word *yah-gatz*. This word literally means “to advise.”

a. Jethro gave counsel to Moses (Ex. 18:19, 23).

And you shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the way in which they must walk and the work they must do... If you do this thing, and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all this people will also go to their place in peace.

b. Ahithophel was a counselor to David and Absalom (II Sam. 16:23).

Now the advice of Ahithophel, which he gave in those days, was as if one had inquired at the oracle of God. So was all the advice of Ahithophel both with David and with Absalom.

- c. God is the source of counsel (Ps. 16:7-8). He is the Wonderful Counselor (Is. 9:6; 11:1-4).

I will bless the LORD who has given me counsel; my heart also instructs me in the night seasons. I have set the LORD always before me; because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved. Psalm 16:7-8

There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. His delight is in the fear of the LORD, and He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, nor decide by the hearing of His ears; but with righteousness He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked.

Isaiah 11:1-4

- d. Much of the time this word is used in a negative sense of wicked people taking counsel together to devise wicked schemes (Jer. 49:30).
2. The closest New Testament word that is most often translated “counsel” is the word *sumbouleo*. This word literally means “to give or take advice jointly.” It means “to recommend, deliberate or determine.”
- a. Most of the time it is used in a negative sense of the opponents of Jesus taking counsel how they might destroy Him (Mt. 26:4).
- b. The primary positive use of this word reminds us that God does not need anyone’s counsel (Rom. 11:33-36).

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! “For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor? Or who has first given to Him and it shall be repaid to him? For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

This is assuring, because it indicates that God has answers. He not only has answers, He has all of the answers (all knowledge and all wisdom belong to Him).

Notice how the Message Version states this passage:

Have you ever come on anything quite like this extravagant generosity of God, this deep, deep wisdom? It’s way over our heads. We’ll never figure it out. Is there anyone around who can explain God? Anyone smart enough to tell him

what to do? Anyone who has done him such a huge favor that God has to ask his advice? Everything comes from him; Everything happens through him; Everything ends up in him. Always glory! Always praise! Yes. Yes. Yes.

- B. There are many words that are found in the Bible that enter into the counseling process.

1. Reprove (*Elenko*)

- a. Definition: To convict, to expose, by conviction to bring to light, to admonish, to correct, to call to account, to show one his fault (demanding an explanation), to chasten, to punish

*Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. **Convince**, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. II Timothy 4:2*

*Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; **correct**, rebuke and encourage--with great patience and careful instruction. –NIV*

- b. Other references: Mt. 18:15; Luke 3:19; John 3:20; 8:9,46; 16:8; I Cor. 14:24; Eph. 5:11,13; I Tim. 5:20; II Tim. 3:16; Tit. 1:9,13; 2:15; Heb. 12:5; Jam. 2:9; Rev. 3:19

2. Rebuke (*Epitimao*)

- a. Definition: To tax with a fault, rate, chide, reprove, censure severely

*Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, **rebuke**, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. II Timothy 4:2*

- b. Other references: Mt. 12:16; 16:22; 17:18; Luke 9:55; 17:3; Jude 9

3. Admonish (*Noutheteo*)

- a. Definition: To admonish, warn or exhort

And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you... I Thessalonians 5:12

Dear brothers and sisters, honor those who are your leaders in the Lord's work. They work hard among you and warn you against all that is wrong.

–NLT

Brothers and sisters, we urge you to warn those who are lazy. Encourage those who are timid. Take tender care of those who are weak. Be patient with everyone. II Thessalonians 5:14, NLT

- b. Other references: Acts 20:31; Rom. 15:14; I Cor. 4:14; 10:11; Eph. 6:4; Col. 1:28; 3:16; II Th. 3:15; Tit. 3:10

4. Correct (*Epanorthosis*)

- a. Definition: To correct, to restore to an upright or right state, to raise up again, to reform, to restore, to reestablish
- b. See: II Timothy 3:16-17; James 5:19-20

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

II Timothy 3:16-17

Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins. James 5:19-20

5. Judge (*Krino*)

- a. Definition: To separate, put asunder, to select, to approve, to determine, decree, to judge, to pronounce an opinion concerning right and wrong, to rule, to govern, to preside over with power of giving judicial decisions

For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed... For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? But those who are outside God judges. Therefore "put away from yourselves the evil person." I Corinthians 5:3, 12-13

- b. Other references: I Corinthians 6:2-31; 14:29

Lesson 2b-3 The Word and the Spirit in Counseling

I. What are the most important elements of the counseling process?

- A. The two most important elements of the counseling process are the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.
- B. The Spirit and the Word work together (Acts 10:44; Eph. 6:17; I Th. 1:5; I John 5:7).

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. Acts 10:44

This is what we want to happen to everyone who receives words of counsel.

And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God... Ephesians 6:17

For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake. I Thessalonians 1:5

This is He who came by water and blood--Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one. I John 5:6-8

II. What is the place of the Holy Spirit in the counseling process?

- A. It is good to remind ourselves that the Holy Spirit is the only one in the New Testament Who is called a “Counselor” (John 14:16-17).

And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever--the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

The Greek word used here for “Helper” is *parakletos* or Paraclete.

- B. It is good to remind ourselves what the work of the Holy Spirit is in relation to the believer.
 - 1. The Holy Spirit is the agent by which the Father draws us (John 6:44; Luke 14:16-23 [the Holy Spirit is the Servant]).

No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. John 6:44

Then He said to him, "A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, 17 and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.' 18 But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.' 19 And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.' 20 Still another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' 21 So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.' 22 And the servant said, 'Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.' 23 Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.'" Luke 14:16-23

2. The Holy Spirit causes the believer to acknowledge Jesus as Lord (I Cor. 12:3).

Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.

3. The Holy Spirit is responsible for the regeneration of the human spirit (John 1:12-13; 3:5-6).

Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. John 3:5-6

4. The Holy Spirit fills the believer continually (Eph. 5:18).

And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord... Ephesians 5:18-19

5. The Holy Spirit sets us free from the law of sin and death enabling the believer to put to death the deeds of the flesh (Rom. 8:2, 13).

For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. Romans 8:13

6. The Holy Spirit sanctifies us, sets us apart and makes us holy (I Cor. 6:11; II Th. 2:13; I Pet. 1:2).

As for us, we always thank God for you, dear brothers and sisters loved by the Lord. We are thankful that God chose you to be among the first to experience salvation, a salvation that came through the Spirit who makes you holy and by your belief in the truth. II Thessalonians 2:13, NLT

7. The Holy Spirit works to transform us into the image of Christ (II Cor. 3:18).

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

8. The Holy Spirit renews the believer (Tit. 3:5).

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit...

9. The Holy Spirit produces Christ-like fruit in the life of the believer (Gal. 5:22-23).

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

10. The Holy Spirit strengthens the believer in the inner person (Eph. 3:16; cf. II Cor. 4:16).

For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man... Ephesians 3:14-16

11. The Holy Spirit speaks to the believer (Acts 8:29; I Tim. 4:1; Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29).

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says... Revelation 2:7

12. The Holy Spirit leads the believer (Rom. 8:14; Gal 5:16, 25).

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. Romans 8:14

13. The Holy Spirit teaches the believer and leads him into truth (John 16:13; I John 2:27).

However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. John 16:13

But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him. I John 2:27

14. The Holy Spirit reveals the deep things of God to the believer (John 16:14; I Cor. 2:9-14).

But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." 10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. 13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. I Corinthians 2:9-14

15. The Holy Spirit opens the believer's understanding to the things of God (I Cor. 2:12).

16. The Holy Spirit reveals the future to the believer (Luke 2:26; John 16:13; Acts 20:23; 21:11; Rev 1:10).

And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. Luke 2:25-26

When he had come to us, he took Paul's belt, bound his own hands and feet, and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'" Acts 21:11

17. The Holy Spirit helps and guides in prayer and intercession (Rom. 8:26-27; Eph. 6:18; Jude 20).

Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. Romans 8:26-28

18. The Holy Spirit comforts (John 15:26; Acts 9:31).

Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied. Acts 9:31

19. The Holy Spirit seals the believer (Eph. 1:13; 4:30; II Cor. 1:21-22).

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Ephesians 4:30

20. The Holy Spirit is a helper who abides with us forever (John 14:16).

And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—

- C. It is good to remind ourselves of those things that the Holy Spirit can do that we as counselors cannot do.

1. The Holy Spirit can bring conviction of sin (John 16:8).
2. The Holy Spirit can speak to a person at night (Ps. 16:7).

I will bless the LORD who has given me counsel; my heart also instructs me in the night seasons.

3. The Holy Spirit can identify the thoughts and intents of the heart (Ps. 139:23-24).

Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

“This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ says the LORD of hosts.” Zechariah 4:6

III. What is the place of the Word of God in the counseling process?

It is important to understand that the Holy Spirit works in conjunction with of the Word of God.

- A. It is good to remember the supernatural qualities of the Word of God.

Because the Bible is the Word of God it reflects the nature of God. A person’s word and a person’s name are synonymous.

1. God is faithful and so is His Word (I Cor. 1:9; II Pet. 1:19).

God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. I Corinthians 1:9

And so we have the prophetic word confirmed [a more sure word], which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts... II Peter 1:19

2. God is incorruptible and so is His Word (I Pet. 1:22-23).

Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever...

3. God is eternal and so is His Word (I Pet. 1:25; Is. 40:8).

All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away, but the word of the LORD endures forever.
I Peter 1:24-25

4. God is powerful and so is His Word (Heb. 4:12; Ps.107:20; 147:18).

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Hebrews 4:12

He sent His word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.
Psalm 107:20

5. God is holy and so is His Word (Rom. 1:2; II Tim. 3:15).

Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God² which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures... Romans 1:2

6. God is creative and so is His Word (Ps. 33:6).

By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.

7. God is good and so is His Word (Is. 39:8; Heb. 6:5).

...and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come...
Hebrews 6:5

8. God is righteous and so is His Word (Ps. 33:4).

For the word of the LORD is right, and all His work is done in truth.

9. God is true and so is His Word (Ps. 119:43,160).

The entirety of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever. Psalm 119:160

10. God is unchanging and so is His Word (Ps. 119:89).

Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven. Your faithfulness endures to all generations.

11. God is light and so is His Word (Ps. 119:105).

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

12. God is Spirit and so is His Word (John 6:63).

It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life

13. God is pure and so is His Word (Ps. 119:140; Pro. 30:5).

Your word is very pure; therefore Your servant loves it. Psalm 119:140

Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him.

Proverbs 30:5

14. God is the source of life and so is His Word (Ps. 119:50).

This is my comfort in my affliction, or Your word has given me life.

15. God is the source of hope and so is His Word (Ps. 130:5; 119:74, 81, 114).

Those who fear You will be glad when they see me, because I have hoped in Your word. Psalm 119:74

My soul faints for Your salvation, but I hope in Your word. Psalm 119:81

You are my hiding place and my shield; I hope in Your word. Psalm 119:114

16. God is to be feared and so is His Word (Is. 66:2, 5).

For all those things My hand has made, and all those things exist,” Says the LORD. “But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word. Isaiah 66:2

17. God never fails and neither does His Word (Is. 55:10-11; Jer. 1:12).

“For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it. Isaiah 55:10-11

- B. It is good to remember the function of the Word of God in the life of the believer.

1. The Word of God is a **hammer** (Jer. 23:29). It is able to break up and make an impression on hard hearts.

“Is not My word like a fire?” says the LORD, “And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?”

2. The Word of God is a **mirror** (Jam. 1:23-25). It reveals to man his true spiritual condition.

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. ²³For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. ²⁵But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

3. The Word of God is a **two-edged sword** (Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12). It works for us to bring victory to our lives. It works on us to convict and divide (II Tim. 3:16; Jam. 1:23-24).

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner [lit. judge or critic] of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12

4. The Word of God is a **judge** (Heb. 4:12) (In the Greek, the word for “discerner” literally means “critic” or “judge”). The Word of God passes right judgment on the innermost nature of man. It is like an umpire or the one who calls the shots.
5. The Word of God is **water** (John 15:3; Eph. 5:26). It refreshes, cleanses and purifies the soul from the defilements of sin.

6. The Word of God is **seed** (Luke 8:11; I Pet. 1:22-23). It is sown in the heart to bring forth a spiritual harvest.

Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,²³ having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever. I Peter 1:22-23

7. The Word of God is **food** (Jer. 15:16). It is that which imparts strength to the spiritual man (Deut. 8:3; Ps. 119:103; Job 23:12).

Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; for I am called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts.
Jeremiah 15:16

- a. It is milk for babes (I Pet. 2:2; Heb. 5:12-13).

Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking,² as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby,³ if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

I Peter 2:1-3

- b. It is bread for the mature (Is. 55:1-2; Mt. 4:4).

So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD. Deuteronomy 8:3

- c. It is strong meat or solid food for the adult (I Cor. 3:2; Heb. 5:12-14).

- d. It is as sweet and delightful as honey (Ps. 19:10; 119:103).

How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth.
Psalm 119:103

8. The Word of God is **a lamp** (Ps. 119:105; Pro. 6:23; II Pet. 1:19).

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. Psalm 119:105

- a. It imparts life to darkened man (John 6:63; II Cor. 3:18).

- b. It exposes areas of sin in our lives (Heb. 4:12-13).

- c. It gives direction and guidance (Pro. 6:22-23).

9. The Word of God is **true riches** (Ps. 19:10; 119:72). It makes the possessor rich and wise.

The law of Your mouth is better to me than thousands of coins of gold and silver.

Psalm 119:72

10. The Word of God is **a fire** (Jer. 20:9; 23:29).

- a. It warms the heart.
- b. It gives zeal for service.
- c. It exposes the wood, hay and stubble in our lives (I Cor. 3:12-15).

IV. What are the advantages of a Christian in the counseling process?

- A. The Counselor has a distinct advantage.

1. The Counselor has an absolute source of truth as his or her disposal (II Pet. 1:3; II Tim. 3:16-17).

Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. II Peter 1:2-4

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. II Timothy 3:16-17

2. The Counselor has the unlimited power of God as his or her disposal.

- a. When you have the Holy Spirit you have boldness (Acts 4:31).

And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

- b. When you have the Holy Spirit, the gifts of the Spirit operate within you.

Think of how the gifts of the Holy Spirit can assist in the counseling process.

- Word of Wisdom
- Word of Knowledge

- Word of Faith
 - Prophecy
 - Discerning of Spirits
 - Working of Miracles
 - Gifts of Healing
3. The Counselor has the Holy Spirit or THE Counselor dwelling within him or her (John 14:16-17).

In other words, if the Holy Spirit is the Wonderful Counselor and you have the Holy Spirit within you, then you have the counseling resource of the Holy Spirit within you at all times.

B. The Counselee has a distinct advantage.

1. The Counselee has the Holy Spirit dwelling within as well (John 14:17; Rom. 8:9; I Cor. 3:16; 6:17; II Cor. 6:16; Gal. 2:20; II Tim. 1:14; I John 2:27).

So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. Romans 8:8-9

Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? I Corinthians 3:16

That good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us. II Timothy 1:14

2. The Counselee has broken the power of sin in water baptism (Rom. 6:1-14).

Sin no longer has to have dominion over the child of God.

3. The Counselee has been empowered by the Holy Spirit.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is part of the Christian's foundation and his or her "power from on high" (Acts 1:4-5, 8; 2:4).

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. Acts 1:8

4. The Counselee has the grace of God upon his or her life (I Cor. 1:4; Heb. 12:15).
5. The Counselee has God working in them (Phil. 2:12-13).

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

V. What temptations do Counselors need to resist?

- A. Counselors need to resist the temptation to lean on his or her own wisdom and strength rather than on the wisdom from above represented to us in the Word of God and on the power available to us by the Spirit of God (I Cor. 2:1-5).

Note Paul's words...

And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

It is not the Counselor's eloquence that will get the job done (I Cor. 2:1-5). It is the power of God.

Worldly counselors must rely on human wisdom and worldly philosophies.

- B. Counselors need to resist the temptation to integrate the wisdom of the world and the wisdom of God (Jam. 3:11).

When we do, we mix bitter water and fresh water together and the result will always be tainted (Jam. 3:11). Both the Word of God and the power of God will become diluted in strength.

Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening?

When people come to us for counseling we must assure them that we are not coming to them with the wisdom of the world or cleverly devised fables. They may have been to many such counselors before who have used the wisdom of the world with little or no success.

Build confidence in the Word of God and the power of the Spirit of God.

- C. Counselors need to resist the temptation to build on a life that has no foundation.

The first order of business in the counseling process is to be sure of the salvation of the participants—evangelism. This includes both water and Spirit baptism. If these

are lacking the counselees will not have the power to do what is being suggested in the counseling process.

These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. I Corinthians 2:13-14

Through the Holy Spirit we are able to understand things that the natural man cannot understand. We are no longer "mere men" (I Cor. 3:3).

You cannot counsel an unbeliever. They will not be able to receive it. They will think your counsel is foolish. They will not understand it and they will not have the power to do it. All you will produce through this type of counsel is a hypocrite. It will be ritual, external conformity but no genuine inner change.

People who do not take the step of evangelism should be warned that "the way of the transgressor is hard" (Pro. 13:15).

Lesson 4

The Ministry of Counseling

I. How can Jesus be seen as the model counselor?

A. Jesus was called the “Wonderful Counselor” (Is. 9:6).

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

The word “wonderful” in this passage means “a miracle.” Jesus was a miracle worker when it came to the realm of counseling.

1. He counseled Nicodemus (John 3:1-5).
2. He counseled the woman at the well (John 4:18).
3. He counseled a man concerned about his inheritance (Luke 12:15).

B. Jesus had the heart to counsel.

1. Jesus had a heart of compassion (Mt. 9:36; 14:14; 20:34).
2. Jesus had the heart of a servant (John 13:3-5; Mark 10:43-45). He was willing to bend low and wash the feet of his disciples.
3. Jesus was willing to work with the unlovely and untouchable (Mt. 8:1-4; John 8:11). Whether it was a leper or a person caught in adultery, He was willing to reach out to those that society had rejected.
4. Jesus did not have a condemning heart (John 8:11). When people were in Jesus’ presence they did not sense condemnation even though Jesus was completely sinless. Jesus was touched by the condition of mankind (Heb. 4:15).

For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

C. Jesus had the right attitude toward sinners.

1. Jesus was not intimidated by sinners (Mt. 9:10-13; Luke 15:2).
2. Jesus was not shocked by sinners (John 8:1-12). Jesus understood that sinners do sin.
3. Jesus was not afraid of the demon possessed (Mt. 17:14-18; Mark 5:1-8).

4. Jesus was confident and secure in Himself and understood Who He was before the Father (John 13:3-4).

Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself.

Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything and that he had come from God and would return to God. So he got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist, and poured water into a basin. Then he began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel he had around him. –NLT

D. Jesus had the qualifications to counsel.

1. Jesus was separate from sinners (Heb. 7:26).
2. Jesus was able to relate to the human condition (John 2:24-25).

But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.

3. Jesus was patient with people (John 20:24-29).

He was happy to manifest Himself to Thomas when he did not believe the testimony of the other disciples.

4. Jesus functioned in the gifts of the Spirit.
 - a. Word of Knowledge (John 4:18).
 - b. Word of Wisdom (Mt. 22-21-22)
 - c. Discerning of Spirits (Mt. 9:32-34)
 - d. Working of Miracles
 - e. Gifts of Healing

5. Jesus had a good working knowledge of the Word of God.

E. Jesus used the Word of God in counsel.

1. Jesus quoted the Word of God regularly in dialogue (Mt. 13:13-15; Mark 7:6-7; Luke 4:18-19).
2. Jesus directed people to the Word of God for self discovery (Mt. 9:13; 12:3-5).

II. Is there such a thing as a “ministry of counseling” from a biblical point of view?

The answer to this question is both yes and no.

A. The ministry of counseling is not one of the ministries listed in the New Testament.

1. It is not mentioned in the list of leadership ministries (Eph. 4:11).
2. It is not mentioned as a calling.

B. The function of counseling is seen as an aspect of the work of pastoring.

1. As such the ministry of counseling is an extension of Christ's ministry to the needy (Ps. 23).
2. As such the ministry of counseling is an extension of the pastoral ministry in the local church.

C. The nearest ministry to that of counseling that is referenced in the Bible is that of an exhorter (Rom. 12:8).

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. Romans 12:6-8

1. The word "exhortation" in the New Testament refers specifically to "an appeal, an entreaty, encouragement, consolation and comfort."

To exhort someone is "to admonish, or to urge someone to pursue some course of action. It literally means:

- To appeal to, urge, encourage and exhort.
 - To implore, request, entreat.
 - To comfort and cheer up
 - To try to console or conciliate, and speak to someone in a friendly manner.
2. In the New Testament an exhorter is one who is called to someone's aid.
 3. An exhorter is someone who offers the same strength and comfort that the Father (Rom. 15:5; II Th. 2:16-17), the Son (I John 2:1; 14:6) and the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7; Acts 9:31) provide.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. II Corinthians 1:3-4

4. Every believer is called to a ministry of exhortation (I Th. 5:11; Heb. 3:13; 10:24-25).

And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

Hebrews 10:24-25

5. There will be those who seem to have a special grace in this area of function in the body (Rom. 12:8). Those who function in the ministry of exhortation operate in the following manner.

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. Romans 12:6-8

If your gift is to encourage others, do it! Romans 12:8a, NLT

- a. They come to the side of and encourage people in times of tribulation, affliction, sorrow and bereavement (Mt. 2:18, 5:4; I Th. 3:2-3).

Therefore, when we could no longer endure it, we thought it good to be left in Athens alone, and sent Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith, that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this. I Thessalonians 3:1-3

- b. They intercede for those that are sick (Mt. 8:5).
- c. They encourage and exhort people regarding their future in relation to God's purposes (I Th. 5:14-18; Luke 3:18).

Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all. See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. I Thessalonians 5:14-18

- d. They admonish people when they are not entering into the full privileges of their inheritance (Luke 15:28).

But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded [exhorted] with him. So he answered and said to his father, "Lo, these

many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.” And he said to him, “Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.” Luke 15:28-32

- e. They warn the careless and apathetic of impending danger and encourage watchfulness (Rom. 16:17-18).

Now I urge[exhort] you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.

- f. They exhort and encourage others to follow the ways of God (Acts 2:40; 11:23; Eph. 4:1; Jude 3).

And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation.”

- g. They warn others of dangers they sense in the course they have set for themselves (Acts 21:12; I Th. 5:14; II Th. 3:11-12).

For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread. II Thessalonians 3:11-12

- h. They come to the side of those who have fallen, but have demonstrated repentance (II Cor. 2:6-8).

This punishment which was inflicted by the majority is sufficient for such a man, so that, on the contrary, you ought rather to forgive and comfort [same word] him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow. Therefore I urge you to reaffirm your love to him.

- D. The ministry of counseling can be summarized with a number of truly biblical words and concepts including,

- Reproving
- Encouraging
- Instructing
- Training
- Admonishing

- Edifying
- Exhorting
- Comforting
- Warning

It is not difficult to see that this is an important ministry if the people of God are really going to come into a state of maturity. We all need daily reminders and encouragement to go forward through times of discouragement.

III. What are the different levels of counseling?

- A. Level One: The Holy Spirit speaking directly to the heart of an individual.

One of the objectives of the Counselor is to get people to function at this level. The Holy Spirit is committed to speaking to people from the inside out.

- B. Level Two: The pastoral leadership of the church ministering to members of the church.

Leaders of the church have been called by God to minister to the needs of the flock. Sometimes this means ministering counsel to them as they seek to come to a place of deliverance.

- C. Level Three: Trained counselors ministering to those entrusted to them.

Trained counselors are really an extension of the pastoral ministry of the local church. It is essential that those who function in this realm are careful to follow the instruction and observe the guidelines given to them by those in authority. Nothing can be more damaging than conflicting counsel. Nothing can postpone true recovery more than wrong diagnosis and wrong prescription.

- D. Level Four: Believers counseling other believers (Gal. 6:2; I Th. 5:14).

May the God of your hope so fill you with all joy and peace in believing [through the experience of your faith] that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound and be overflowing (bubbling over) with hope. Personally I am satisfied about you, my brethren, that you yourselves are rich in goodness, amply filled with all [spiritual] knowledge and competent to admonish and counsel and instruct one another also.

Romans 15:13-15, Amp

Lesson 5-6 The Qualifications of the Counselor

I. **There are many biblical qualifications for those who serve the people of God as representative of the Lord and of church leadership (I Tim. 3:8-13; Acts 6:3).**

It is interesting that God is very specific about who is to care for and render service to His people. He does not want just anyone to function in His house. He is very jealous over His people. He does not take any volunteer who wants the job. He is not desperate for help. God is very particular about every person who has any responsibility in His house.

When the apostles were looking for helpers to oversee the “daily distribution to the widows” they asked for individuals of *honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom* (Acts 6:3).

Later on in the development of the Church in the New Testament, Paul gave a little more concrete definition to the qualifications necessary for appointed servants in the local church. It is important that we see that these qualifications are not put forth as ideals to be aspired to by appointed servants, but everyone who serves in areas of responsibility should already possess these qualities (I Tim. 3:8-13).

Deacons [appointed servants] likewise must be serious, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for gain; 9 they must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. 10 And let them also be tested first; then if they prove themselves blameless let them serve as deacons. 11 The women likewise must be serious, no slanderers, but temperate, faithful in all things. 12 Let deacons [appointed servants] be the husband of one wife, and let them manage their children and their households well; 13 for those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith which is in Christ Jesus. –RSVA

All of these qualifications can be summarized in terms of moral, domestic and spiritual qualifications.

A. Moral Qualifications

1. Not double-tongued (I Tim. 3:8)

This would imply that people who are appointed to work on an intimate level with the people of God are not known for gossip. Those who have a double tongue are those who say one thing to one person and give a different view of it to another. Because of the position that these people will have in the church and the fact that they will come to know many details regarding the lives of others it is essential that they not be people of gossip.

2. Not given to wine (I Tim. 3:8)

People who are placed in responsible positions in relationship to the church must be above reproach in terms of their personal habits and lifestyle. The servants of the house cannot be those that are dominated or under the control of anything but their relationship to the Lord. It will always cloud their judgment.

3. Not greedy for money (I Tim. 3:8)

It is critical that those who serve in this capacity are not covetous or interested in what they can get out of it for themselves. People can be greedy for many things including money, admiration and authority.

4. Blameless (I Tim. 3:10)

Appointed counselors must be above reproach in all areas of life, especially those areas for which they will be offering counsel. This would include all of their business dealings and their life inside and outside of the church. The character and nature of those appointed to such ministry in the local church will reflect directly upon the leaders in that church and the reputation of the church itself.

5. Proven (I Tim. 3:10)

The word proven in this passage means “to be tested, examined, scrutinized to see whether a thing is genuine or not”. The position of a counselor is not given to promote maturity. Those given this position should already be living the life of a servant before they are entrusted with the responsibility of an appointed servant.

6. Sober-minded (I Tim. 3:11)

This means that those who serve in such a way are known for their sound mind and good judgment. They are people with common sense who take their responsibility seriously. They cannot be those who make purely emotional judgments. Sometimes our emotions can cause us to waver from the truth and common sense because we feel sorry for the parties involved.

7. Not slanderous (I Tim. 3:11)

This term describes one “given to fault finding with the demeanor and conduct of others, and spreading innuendoes and criticism about them.” Confidentiality is an important part of the counseling ministry. If those coming to you do not feel that you can be trusted with information, it will undermine the entire counseling process. Your lack of discretion in this area will also reflect on other counselors and leaders in the church.

8. Faithful in all things (I Tim. 3:11)

Those who work closely with God's people should be known for the fact that when they are given a responsibility or an assignment they are always faithful to carry it out. This means being faithful to appointment times and follow through.

B. Domestic Qualification

1. Husband of one wife (I Tim. 3:12)

The laws of God are a priority for this individual who has undivided affections.

2. Ruling his own house well (I Tim. 3:12)

This does not mean that a counselor or leader must be married and have children, but if they are, this part of their life must be in order. This qualification is probably not to determine ruling ability as it is with the elder (See I Tim. 3:5), but to determine the nature of the person's Christian walk. This means that the person must first be a good spouse and parent, doing a good job and leading a Christian lifestyle at home.

C. Spiritual Qualifications

1. Full of the Holy Ghost (Acts 6:3)

Natural ability is important but it plays a second role to the life that is motivated and empowered by the Holy Spirit. It would be better to use someone who was sensitive to God and lacking some natural ability than to use someone who was relying on natural ability alone (Zech. 4:6).

2. Full of wisdom (Acts 6:3)

Individuals working as representatives of the leadership will need much wisdom because they will find themselves in situations where emotions are high and where they may know facts that they could use in a wrong way. They must know how to behave wisely. In some ways this means that they should become an observer of other leaders in how they work with people so that they can "watch and learn."

3. Reverent (I Tim. 3:8)

This term denotes a seriousness of mind and character which should characterize the person's whole service. These people are to be such that they inspire the reverence, awe and respect of others.

4. Holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience (I Tim. 3:9).

This person must be spiritually right with God, so that along with immediate counsel they can birth long term loyalty and faith toward God. It is difficult to produce in others what you do not possess yourself. It is difficult to produce in other what you do not possess yourself.

II. There are many practical qualities that make a person better suited for the counseling ministry.

The person of the Counselor is the most important aspect of any counseling situation.

The Counselor:

A. Must be an example of the believer (I Tim 4:12).

A great deal that you share in counseling others comes out of your own life and experience. The fact that you are living what you are sharing gives authority to your words.

Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

This means being an example in the following areas:

1. In separation from sin.
2. In love for righteousness.
3. In desires to see God's purposes established corporately and individually.
4. In compassion and concern for others.
5. In the personal discipline of prayer and Bible study.

You cannot be a voice of the Holy Spirit in other people's lives unless you are able to hear the Holy Spirit in your own life.

B. Must have the fruit of the Spirit operating in his or her life (Gal. 5:22-23).

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

All of these qualities will be tested in the counseling process.

1. Love

2. Joy
3. Peace
4. Patience
5. Gentleness
6. Goodness
7. Faith
8. Meekness
9. Self Control

C. Must be a lover of people.

There are seven reasons why people will come to you for counsel.

1. People turn to those that they know.

In order for this to happen you need to mix with new people and people who have problems. Sometimes we are very selfish in how we make and develop relationships. We tend to reach out in relationship to those who have something to offer us. If you are going to be seen as a problem solver you will have to be like Jesus and associate with people who are less than perfect.

2. People turn to those that they like.

All this usually means for us is that we are friendly to people and we do what we can to get along with people. It means that we must keep our own relationship wholesome and pure.

3. People turn to those that they personally respect.

This means that you need to demonstrate your respect for all people regardless of their station in life. People respect those who show respect to them. It is a law of sowing and reaping. Treating people with respect whether they are employees or waiters in the restaurant will position you to be a ministry to all of humanity.

4. People turn to those who show willingness to spend time with people.

Counseling situations do not present themselves in five minute segments of conversation. If all we ever do is come to church and leave quickly we will only communicate with people on a surface level. The more time that we take for people the more they will open their lives up to us. When you spend time with people it indicates to them that you really care.

5. People turn to those who demonstrate competence.

Preparing yourself in order to become more skilled at what you do will put you in good stead as a counselor. The more competence you have in an area, the more

authority that you will have. There is no getting around it, the more you prepare and study the better you will be. People develop a reputation in the area of counseling. People know when you are just speaking and when you are speaking with authority (Mt. 7:28-29).

And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

6. People turn to those who they perceive know God.

When people come to you they want to hear the voice of God. If you are a person who has the reputation as one who knows God and can hear from God consistently, people will seek you out.

7. People turn to those whose lives are in order (especially in the area for which they are seeking counsel). Your personal example gives authority to what you say.

D. Must have true humility (Pro. 11:2-3) (it will be tested).

When pride comes, then comes shame; but with the humble is wisdom.

1. Humility means that you do not counsel with an air of superiority.
 - a. Do not act as if you have never had a problem.
 - b. Be willing to be honest about your life and your own struggles.
 - c. Be willing to use yourself as an example of having to overcome.
2. Humility means that you know and can be honest with your personal limitations.
 - a. This means being aware of your own mental and physical state.

Sometimes you may be in a poor place personally to be counseling others. If you are emotionally drained, in inner turmoil or if you are fighting a major physical battle, you may not be the best person to counsel. You should always counsel from a position of inner peace.

- b. The means that you do not counsel in areas where you do not possess appropriate knowledge.

As a counselor or leader you do not have to know it all. In fact it is impossible to know it all. It is a wise person who can direct people to others who are more knowledgeable. This happens in the medical field all of the time. Whether you

do the counseling personally or you direct them to someone else, in either case you have helped them.

To offer wrong counsel because you do not want to admit that you do not know the answer is dangerous. When people act on wrong counsel it can lead to very negative consequences. It is a serious thing to offer input into people's lives.

3. Humility means that you keep yourself impervious to reaction.

You cannot allow the counselee to get you stirred up against them. You cannot allow what they say to set you on edge or cause you to overreact. There can be no "buttons" in you that they can push that set you off or get you out of control. This requires humility.

4. Humility means that you position yourself as a servant to those for whom you are ministering.

It is essential that those who function in this ministry do so with the right spirit and attitude. They do not come as the "know-it-alls" of the local church; they come to serve, to lift and to comfort. Therefore, they should minister in an attitude of meekness and gentleness (II Cor. 10:1). Their motives need to be purely the interest of others (I Th. 2:1-8). Their heart should be full of a father's love for His people (I Th. 2:8).

For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain. 2 But even after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict. 3 For our exhortation did not come from error or uncleanness, nor was it in deceit. 4 But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts. 5 For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness--God is witness. 6 Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. 7 But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children. 8 So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us.

I Thessalonians 2:1-8

E. Must view God's word as the only infallible authority on which to build (Ps. 19:7; John 6:63).

The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple... Psalm 19:7

It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life. John 6:63

1. To be a good counselor you must know the Bible (Col. 3:16).

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

In a very real sense counseling is one of the “Word” ministries of the local church. Rather than ministering the word from behind a pulpit, it may be ministered from behind a desk or over a cup of coffee.

2. To be a good counselor you must screen materials that you use as homework or recommended reading.

Materials that you may recommend should share the same high view of scripture. If not, it will lead to confusion.

Recommend course titled *Basic Doctrine I*, Lesson 3-8

F. Must have a deep loyalty to and agreement with the local church and its leaders.

The answer to so many people’s needs is to be found in a right relationship to the local church. In order to push the local church, you must believe in the local church.

1. This includes a loyalty to the leadership team of the local church.

Never run down the leaders of the church or put yourself up as one of superior understanding in relation to them. If people are running down leadership this is symptomatic of a problem. Do not agree with or sympathize with them. Your counsel should always lead people to their leaders. Do not be one who gathers disciples to yourself (Acts 20:30).

Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.

2. This includes a loyalty to the vision of the local church.
5. This includes a loyalty to the guidelines established for counseling in the local church.
6. This includes a loyalty to and an agreement with the importance of the local church in the life of every believer.
7. This includes functioning under the authority of the leadership of the local church in the work that you do and keeping them informed of your progress.

So many of the solutions in the lives of people have to do with how they relate to the local church in practical ways. All of the elements of the body of Christ that are available to them come through their connection to the local church. Every believer needs the dynamics of the local church working for them as they attempt to deal with their personal problems. In fact the local church is their spiritual support system (Eph. 4:16).

...from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

Recommend course titled *The Local Church*

G. Must have a basic understanding of authority and chain of command.

So many people's problems come back to how they relate to the authority figures in their lives. Counselors themselves are often tempted to move into a wrong place of authority or to overstep their authority in relation to the counselee. The counselor must be constantly pushing people in the direction of the authorities in their lives.

1. In the home (Recommend course titled *Family Issues*)
2. In the church (Recommend course titled *Local Church*)
3. In secular society (government, job, etc.) (Recommend course titles *Life Management III*)

Recommend course titled *Social Roles and Relationships*

H. Must have an understanding of the laws of relationship.

Many problems have to do with relationships and friendships. When you understand the laws of relationship you can help people to deepen relationships that are to be encouraged or to wean themselves from relationships that are harmful.

1. Governed by time
2. Governed by words
3. Governed by actions

Recommend course titled *Social Roles and Relationships*

I. Must have a confidence in the biblical pattern and approach of confrontation as prescribed in Matthew 18:15-18.

Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that “by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.” And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

Counseling can involve many different activities. Sometimes it is instructional. At other times it is confrontational. Some counseling ends up becoming confrontational because people are not willing to repent, they are not willing to change their behavior, and they are not willing to come under the authority of the clear Word of God.

At some point you need to know when to pass them up the chain of command to the pastoral staff.

J. Must be confident in and dependent upon the Holy Spirit as THE Counselor.

This again highlights the fact that the counselor must be in a good personal relationship to the Holy Spirit through his or her personal devotional life. The counselor depends on the Holy Spirit for at least four things.

1. For enablement
2. For revelation and insight
3. For supernatural gifts
4. For personal comfort and encouragement

K. Must be available to people.

In other words you must make time in your life for people. This is true whether you counsel as believer to believer or you are a designated counselor for the local church. Counseling always takes time and some counseling takes a great deal of time.

Lesson 7-9 Foundations for Biblical Counseling

I. **The first foundation for entering into biblical counseling is the foundation of the Gospel.**

The reception of the Gospel is absolutely essential if we are going to be able to help people move from where they are to where they want to be. All counseling situations arise because of sin in the lives of a party or the parties involved. The Gospel is God's only provision or remedy for the sin issue.

True change is not inspired by self-help books, personal discipline and self-control or the exertion of one's will power. True and lasting change only comes when we experience that inward change of nature brought on by our new birth through Jesus Christ.

- A. The Gospel is the single most powerful force in bringing deliverance into the lives of people (Acts 8:5-8; Rom. 1:16).

Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word. 5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. 6 And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. 7 For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. 8 And there was great joy in that city. Acts 8:4-8

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. Romans 1:16

1. A person who has not received the Gospel and is not born again is, therefore, not in a place to be counseled (I John 5:4-5). They are actually in a place to be evangelized.

For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

This is true for several reasons:

- a. They have a sin nature that affects everything that they do (John 3:16-21, esp.19).

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. 18 "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not

believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20 For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. 21 But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.”

- b. They have no natural inclination toward God (Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:23).

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? Jeremiah 17:9

- c. They have no power to change even though they may want to (Rom. 7:15-25, NLT).

In Romans 7:15-25 Paul describes man’s condition apart from the work or Christ...

The law is good, then. The trouble is not with the law but with me, because I am sold into slavery, with sin as my master. 15 I don’t understand myself at all, for I really want to do what is right, but I don’t do it. Instead, I do the very thing I hate. 16 I know perfectly well that what I am doing is wrong, and my bad conscience shows that I agree that the law is good. 17 But I can’t help myself, because it is sin inside me that makes me do these evil things. 18 I know I am rotten through and through so far as my old sinful nature is concerned. No matter which way I turn, I can’t make myself do right. I want to, but I can’t. 19 When I want to do good, I don’t. And when I try not to do wrong, I do it anyway. 20 But if I am doing what I don’t want to do, I am not really the one doing it; the sin within me is doing it. 21 It seems to be a fact of life that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. 22 I love God’s law with all my heart. 23 But there is another law at work within me that is at war with my mind. This law wins the fight and makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. 24 Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin? 25 Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God’s law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.

- d. They do not have the ability to understand spiritual concepts (I Cor. 1:18-25; 2:14).

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written: “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.” 20 Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased

God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. 22 For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

I Corinthians 1:18-25

But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. I Corinthians 2:14

Biblical concepts are only so much foolishness to the unsaved person. They are contrary to the natural man's thinking. The unsaved person has been groomed from childhood on natural man's thinking (Pro. 12:15).

The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but he who heeds counsel is wise.

- e. They are slaves to sin (Rom. 6:17, 20; 7:5-6).

But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered... For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. Romans 6:17, 20

For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter. Romans 7:5-6

When you are a slave to something, it means that something else is your master. Outside of Christ all men are under the mastery of sin and Satan. Outside of Christ all men are captives to the will of Satan (II Tim. 2:24-26).

And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.

- f. They are not subject to the law of God and cannot please God (Rom. 8:7-11).

For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law

of God, nor indeed can be. 8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. 10 And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

- g. They exalt their own opinions above the Word of God (Pro. 14:12; 16:25).

There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.

Proverbs 16:25

2. A person who has not received the Gospel cannot exhibit the love of God toward others (I John 4:7-11).

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

- a. Unbelievers can only love on a human level.

They cannot love on the level of I Corinthians 13 and they never will be able to. This kind of love is found in God alone. We can only love this way when we are born of God.

Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. Love does not demand its own way. Love is not irritable, and it keeps no record of when it has been wronged. It is never glad about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance. Love will last forever... I Corinthians 13:4-8, NLT

They cannot love on the level of Philippians 2:1-4

Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

- b. Unbelievers love themselves first (II Tim. 3:1-2).

You should also know this, Timothy, that in the last days there will be very difficult times. For people will love only themselves and their money.

The word used in this passage by Paul literally means that people will be “fond of themselves” or selfish.

- c. Unbelievers make decisions that are in their own best interest (Phil. 3:18-19).

For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame--who set their mind on earthly things.

- d. Unbelievers are controlled by human passions (Rom. 7:5; Gal. 5:24; Tit. 3:3).

I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. 24 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Galatians 5:16-25

For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. Titus 3:3

- e. Unbelievers have difficulty making personal sacrifices purely for the sake of others. They have to see how it benefits them before they can buy into any change of behavior.

3. The work of Christ on the cross provides a major change in our situation (Col. 1:21-22).

- a. Once we were dead in trespasses and sin, but now we are made alive in Christ (Eph. 2:1-6).

- b. Once we had hatred toward God, but now we love Him who first loved us (Rom. 8:7-8; I John 4:19).
- c. Once we were strangers, but now we are children of God (Eph. 2:11-13).
- d. Once we were far from God, but now we have been brought near (Eph. 2:13).
- e. Once we were blind and dwelling in darkness, but now the light of the gospel has shined unto us and we see (Ps. 18:28; John 8:12; Eph. 5:8; I Pet. 2:9-10).
- f. Once we were destined for hell as children of wrath, but now we are destined for heaven as the bride of Christ (II Th. 1:7-10).
- g. Once we were snared by the devil and taken captive to do his will, but now our chains have been broken and the prison doors opened (Ps. 124:7; II Tim. 2:26).

Our soul has escaped as a bird from the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken, and we have escaped. Psalm 124:7

- 4. The work of Christ on the cross makes major transformation possible.
 - Christ was abandoned so that you would never be alone.
 - Christ became sin so that you could be righteous.
 - Christ was punished so that you could receive mercy.
 - Christ died so that you could experience life.
 - Christ became a curse so that you could be free from the curse.
 - Christ was taken captive so you could be free from bondage.
 - Christ was falsely charged so that you could not be charged.
 - Christ was stripped naked so that you could be clothed with royal robes.
 - Christ was condemned so that you could experience no condemnation.
 - Christ submitted to death to deliver you from death's power.
 - Christ carried our grief so you could have joy unspeakable.
 - Christ's body was torn so that you might be healed and whole.
 - Christ was humiliated and abused that you might be exalted.
 - Christ was forsaken by the Father so you might have full access.

B. The Gospel includes several elements that all have a powerful influence on the counseling process.

Think of how each of these elements can affect the counseling process.

1. Repentance

- a. Let us remind ourselves of the definitions of repentance.

Charles Finney defined repentance this way: “It implies an intellectual and a hearty giving up of all controversy with God upon each and every point. It implies a conviction that God is wholly right, and the sinner wholly wrong, and a thorough and hearty abandonment of all excuses and apologies for sin.”

Oswald Chalmers defined repentance this way: “It describes that deep and radical change whereby a sinner turns from the idols of self and sin unto God, and devotes every movement of the inner and outer man to the captivity of His obedience.”

Think of how this disposition will assist in the counseling process.

- b. Let us remind ourselves of the fruit of repentance in someone’s life.
 - i. They will have a godly sorrow for sin (II Cor. 7:9-11).
 - ii. They will hate pride and selfishness (Job 42:5-6).
 - iii. They will have a godly hatred for sin (Ezek. 36:31-33).
 - iv. They will confess their sins when confronted with them (I John 1:9).
 - v. They will have a desire to turn away from and forsake sinful behavior (Pro. 28:13).
 - vi. They will desire to put on the new man (Eph. 4:22-24).
 - vii. They will make restitution for damage that they have done (Luke 19:8-9).

2. Faith

- a. Let us remind ourselves of the definitions of faith.

“Faith toward God is simply to trust God, to have confidence in Him and His word. To believe what God has said, that His word is true, and what He has promised, He will perform.” --Kevin Conner

“To believe God is to rely upon or have unhesitating assurance of the truth of God’s testimony, even though it is unsupported by any other evidence, and to rely upon or have unfaltering assurance of the fulfillment of His promises, even though everything seen seems against fulfillment.” --R.A. Torrey

“Now faith is the assurance (the confirmation, the title deed) of things (we) hope for, being the proof of things (we) do not see and the conviction of their reality - faith perceiving as real fact what is not revealed to the senses.”

Hebrews 11:1, Amplified Bible

Other translations:

What is faith? It is the confident assurance that what we hope for is going to happen. It is the evidence of things we cannot yet see. –NLT

- b. Let us remind ourselves of the evidences of faith.

Pamela Reeve in her book *Faith Is...* offers many statements that relate faith to our daily lives (*Faith Is...*, 1970, Multnomah Press). Think of how these statements relate to the counseling process. Here are just a few examples:

Faith is...

- The conviction of realities I cannot see or feel.
 - Allowing God to straighten the record when false things have been said about me.
 - Doing the right thing regardless of the consequences knowing God will turn the ultimate effect to good.
 - Rejecting the feeling of panic when things seem out of control—His control.
 - Recognizing that God is the Lord of Time when my idea of timing doesn't agree with His.
 - The assurance that God is perfecting His design for me when my life's course, once a swift-flowing current seems a stagnant pool.
 - Confidence that God is acting for my highest good when He answers "NO" to my prayers.
 - Not related to my believing hard enough, nor my emotional exhilaration or flatness, but rests on what God guarantees in His Word.
 - Not a vague hope of a happy hereafter, but an assurance of heaven based on my trust in Christ's death as payment for my sins.
- c. Let us remind ourselves that faith does not focus on what Satan says or on the circumstances but the magnitude of our God (Ps. 46:1-3).

Wendell Smith in his book *Great Faith* expressed confidence in the magnitude of God this way (pg. 27).

- There is no problem He cannot solve.
- There is no question He cannot answer.
- There is no disease He cannot heal.
- There is no demon He cannot cast out.
- There is no enemy He cannot defeat.
- There is no difficulty He cannot overcome.
- There is no stronghold He cannot bring down.
- There is no bondage He cannot break.
- There is no prison He cannot open.
- There is no need He cannot meet.
- There is no mountain He cannot move.
- There is nothing too hard for our God!

3. Water Baptism

There are things that happen to believers in the experience of baptism that are crucial for them to be able to deal with their own problems.

- a. The old nature is put to death (Rom. 6:3-7).
- b. The new man comes forth (Rom. 6:3-6; Col. 2:12).
- c. The slavery to sin is broken in a person's life (Rom. 6:3-6, 17-23).
- d. There is a circumcision of the heart (Col. 2:11-15).

People who have not experienced believer's baptism by immersion need to be encouraged to do so as a part of the counseling process. If they are not baptized, they are missing out on some important equipment that they need to help them walk out the principles of faith that will be shared in the counsel that is given to them.

4. Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Just like water baptism, the baptism of the Holy Spirit puts tools into the hands of people to help them solve their problems and succeed in life.

Share a personal testimony. Back when I received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit I really believed that it was the answer to every need—and that is how I counseled.

What happens when we are baptized in the Holy Spirit?

The Bible teaches that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is an endowment with power to do the commands of Christ (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8).

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. Acts 1:8

When the apostles found believers in Christ they at once sought to discover whether they had received the Holy Spirit, and if not, they at once saw to it that they did (Acts 19:1-6).

And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples 2 he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” So they said to him, “We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.” 3 And he said to them, “Into what then were you baptized?” So they said, “Into John's baptism.” 4 Then Paul said, “John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.” 5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.

It is alright to give people a little spiritual check-up before the actual counseling process goes forward.

II. The second foundation for biblical counseling is the establishing individual Christian disciplines in the life of believers.

One of the primary goals of the counseling process is to help people get to the place in their walk with the Lord that they no longer need your counsel. Unlike worldly psychologists who rely on people remaining dependent upon them, the Christian counselor's goal is to help people to become independent of them.

This means that to a great extent counseling is a form of Christian discipleship. During the counseling process we want to wean people from us and into a personal and dynamic relationship to the Lord. People who have such a relationship rarely need counseling except in a crisis or in the decision making process. That is because they are receiving input regularly from the Lord through the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

There are several Christian disciplines that will assist everyone in becoming more Christ-like and a better Christian, husband, mother, employee, boss or student. Some of these disciplines include the following:

A. Personal Prayer

1. Prayer is vital to the personal success of every believer.

When we do not pray, we are saying “I can handle my life alone” or “My own strength is sufficient for me.”

2. God promises to hear and respond to the prayers of believers (Ps. 34:15; Pro. 15:29; Jam. 5:16; I John 5:14-15).

The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry.
Psalm 34:15

The LORD is far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous.
Proverbs 15:29

The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. James 5:16b

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. I John 5:14-15

3. Prayer is the channel through which the Holy Spirit speaks to the believer.

In the counseling process, it is not uncommon for me to give homework that deals with spending time in prayer. It is good for the counselee to construct a prayer list of all the things for which they are committed to pray daily during this season of their life. It is also good for them to get in the habit of keeping a prayer journal to record what they feel God is saying to them as they pray. The Holy Spirit will always be their best counselor.

B. Personal Bible Reading and Study

Notice the eight-fold ministry of the Word described in II Timothy 3:16-17.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

The Word is profitable...

- For Doctrine
- For Reproof
- For Correction
- For Instruction
- For Convincing
- For Rebuke
- For Exhortation
- For Comfort

Note: For more teaching on prayer and personal Bible reading refer to the course *Prayer and Personal Bible Study*.

C. Regular Church Attendance (Heb. 10:24-25).

And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

What happens to people in the context of regular church attendance that will assist them in facing the challenges of life?

1. They become more kingdom and others orientated (Mt. 6:33).

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

2. They become an engaged member of the body of Christ (Eph. 4:16).

...from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

3. They provide and receive mutual edification (I Cor. 14:26).

How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.

4. They receive exhortation and comfort consistently (Col. 3:16).

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

5. They get a vision beyond themselves.
6. They are challenged by the lives of other believers.
7. They experience all of the “one another’s” of the New Testament Christian community.
 - a. Stirring up one another (Heb. 10:24).
 - b. Encouraging one another (Heb. 3:13).

- c. Comforting one another (I Th. 5:14; Gal. 6:2).
- d. Building up one another (Rom. 14:19; 1 Thess. 5:11).
- e. Praying for one another (Jam. 5:16).
- f. Teaching and admonishing one another (Col. 3:16).
- g. Serving and sacrificing for others (I John 3:16).
- h. Meeting the practical needs of others (I John 3:17-18)
- i. Giving financially to others (Rom. 12:13).
- j. Exchanging of skills with others (Eph. 4:28).
- k. Rushing to the “emergency” needs of others (Tit. 3:14-NAS).
- l. Showing hospitality to others (Rom. 12:13; I Pet. 4:9).
- m. Doing good to others (Gal. 6:9-10).
- n. Rejoicing together with others (I Cor. 12:26; Rom. 12:15).
- o. Refreshing one another with joy (Rom. 1:12).

The truth of the matter is that very few people who establish these kinds of priorities in their life have serious problem in other areas of life. Their need for counsel generally falls in the areas of seeking wisdom or advice regarding a decision or an opportunity.

D. Christian Friendships and Relationships

Many people have problems because they do not have a wide range of relationships. They can easily depend on one or two individuals in their lives to supply all of the emotional support that they need. When this happens, an inordinate amount of stress is placed on those few relationships. When any of those few relationships let us down, our lives can be shattered.

Some people have few friends because they know very little about making friends or being a friend.

1. Good friends can provide much of the counsel that we need (Eccl. 4:9-12).

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor.10 For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, for he has no one to help him up. 11 Again, if two lie down together, they will keep warm; but how can one be warm alone? 12 Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

This verse teaches that:

- a. A person who has friends has someone to share in his or her labor.
 - b. A person who has friends has someone to lift him up when he or she falls.
 - c. A person who has friends has someone to bring warmth to his or her life.
 - d. A person who has friends has someone to help him or her overcome obstacles.
2. Bad friends or evil associations can lead us down the wrong path.

As much as the Bible says about the positive aspects of friendship it also warns us not to associate with certain types of people. We must choose our friends wisely because we will be known by our friends or the company we keep (Pro. 12:26; 13:20; I Cor. 15:33). We will also become like our friends. We become like what we worship or admire (Ps. 106:19-20).

The righteous should choose his friends carefully, for the way of the wicked leads them astray. Proverbs 12:26

He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed. Proverbs 13:20

Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits." I Corinthians 15:33

Bad company corrupts good character. –NLT

They made a calf in Horeb, and worshiped the molded image. Thus they changed their glory into the image of an ox that eats grass. Psalm 106:19-20

Here are five types of people that you do not need as friends.

- a. Angry or hot-tempered people (Pro. 22:24-25)

Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man do not go lest you learn his ways and set a snare for your soul.

This verse clearly teaches that you become like what you associate with.

- b. Worldly people (Eph. 5:11; Jam. 4:4)

And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. Ephesians 5:11

Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

James 4:4

- c. Wicked people (Pro. 12:26; II Cor. 6:14-15; Gal. 5:19-21)

Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? II Corinthians 6:14-15

- d. Self-centered people (II Tim. 3:1-5)

In this passage Paul discusses the nature of people in the end times. They are lovers of self, lovers of pleasure and lovers of money. He tells us how we are to view these people who maintain a form of godliness but do not live accordingly.

And from such people turn away! II Timothy 3:5b

- e. Hypocritical, unrepentant “Christian” people (Mt. 18:15-17; II Th. 3:6).

But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. Matthew 18:17b

But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us. II Thessalonians 3:6

These are people who profess to be Christian but who live a lifestyle characterized by some of the following:

- Covetousness—Inordinately desirous or greedy.
- Idolatry—Inordinately fond of anything above the Lord.
- Railing—Abusive and scornful in their language.
- Drunkenness—Habitually drinking to excess.
- Extortion—Obtaining gain by dishonest means.
- Fornication—Involved in illicit sexual relationships.
- Hardness of Heart—Refusing to reconcile an offense with a brother.

With these types of people we are encouraged not to eat or keep company (I Cor. 5:11; II Th. 3:14-15).

But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner--not even to eat with such a person.

I Corinthians 5:11

And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother. II Thessalonians 3:14-15

Note: For more teaching on friendship refer to the course *Social Roles and Relationships*, Lessons 5-7.

E. Systematic Tithing and Giving to the Poor

Think of the promises of prosperity that come to those who tithe and honor the poor.

The Bible is full of admonitions regarding the poor. Here are the top seven:

1. When we give to the poor we lend to the Lord (Pro. 19:17).

He who has pity on the poor lends to the LORD, and He will pay back what he has given.

2. When we give to the poor we actually make ourselves rich (Pro. 11:24-25).

There is one who scatters, yet increases more; and there is one who withholds more than is right, but it leads to poverty. The generous soul will be made rich, and he who waters will also be watered himself.

There is a German proverb that states, “Charity gives itself rich, covetousness hoards itself poor.”

3. When we give to the poor we honor God (Pro. 14:31).

He who oppresses the poor reproaches his Maker, but he who honors Him has mercy on the needy.

4. When we are sensitive to the needs of the poor, God is more sensitive to our needs (Pro. 21:13).

Whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the poor will also cry himself and not be heard.

Those who shut their ears to the cries of the poor will be ignored in their own time of need. –NLT

5. When we are liberal with others, God is liberal to us (Pro. 22:9).

He who has a generous eye will be blessed, for he gives of his bread to the poor.

6. When we give to the poor we insure ourselves against personal calamity (Pro. 28:27).

He who gives to the poor will not lack, but he who hides his eyes will have many curses.

7. When we give to the poor, we lay up for ourselves a reward in heaven (Luke 14:13-14).

But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just.

Promises to the tither are just as prolific in the word. When we do not tithe and honor God in these ways our lives are actually under a curse rather than a blessing. God honors those who honor him. When we are counseling with others it is good to remove all of the hindrances to His blessing being upon their lives so that we can isolate the specific problem that we are addressing.

F. Serving Others

Serving others is a sign of mature Christian living. When people are all about themselves they make no place in their life for others. As far as they are concerned the whole world revolves around them. It is difficult to work with people who are self-focused. They live in a very small world.

The believers in the Early Church seemed to tap into the keys for spiritual power in their lives. As you read through Acts 2 you will discover the elements in their life that contributed to their success.

- They continued steadfast in the apostles doctrine (Acts 2:42).
- They continued steadfast in fellowship (Acts 2:42).
- They continued steadfast in the breaking of bread (Acts 2:42).
- They continued steadfast in prayers (Acts 2:42).
- They shared their goods with one another (Acts 2:44-45).
- They had a consistent relationship to the house of God (Acts 2:46).

III. The third foundation for biblical counseling is a having a biblical understanding of local church authority and discipline.

A church cannot counsel effectively if the church does not believe in church discipline. Ultimately, church discipline is the stick or the teeth behind the counsel.

- A. Jesus gave instructions to the church as to how to handle difficulties that arise between members of the church (Mt. 18:15-18).

Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that “by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.” And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

Jesus laid out the prescription for discipline in the local church. He indicated that true discipline moves through stages and the acceleration of discipline is totally dependent upon the response of the person being disciplined.

1. Private

The first step of discipline is private, one on one. If more people would take personal responsibility for the first step very little would have to go beyond that.

2. Semi-Private

The next step is to include others. Who should be included? It should be those who have authority in their lives including parents, church leaders and people of influence in their lives. Remember, you are primarily after the result of repentance and healing not punishment and excommunication.

3. Public

This step is handled by the leadership of the church and should only be done when all else fails. This involves a removing of the person from the covering of the local church and putting them into the hands of the highest authority—God. He will discipline them personally from this point (Heb. 10:31).

- B. The purpose for discipline in the individual is very much the same as the purpose for counseling an individual.

1. To keep them from going astray (Ps. 119:67; Hos. 7:11-12; Jer. 10:23-24; Pro. 10:17; I Cor. 5:5).

I used to wander off until you disciplined me; but now I closely follow your word.
Psalm 119:67, NLT

2. To keep them from the calamity of the wicked (Ps. 94:12-13; I Cor. 11:32).

Happy are those whom you discipline, LORD, and those whom you teach from your law. You give them relief from troubled times until a pit is dug for the wicked. Psalm 92:12-13, NLT

3. To bring them closer to God (Is. 26:16).

LORD, in trouble they have visited You, they poured out a prayer when Your chastening was upon them.

4. To make them wise (Pro. 22:15).

Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of correction will drive it far from him.

5. To bring them to an experience of abundant and eternal life (Heb. 12:9).

Since we respect our earthly fathers who disciplined us, should we not all the more cheerfully submit to the discipline of our heavenly Father and live forever? –NLT

6. To help them deal with sin and grow in righteousness in areas where they have been personally unsuccessful (Heb. 12:9-12).

For our earthly fathers disciplined us for a few years, doing the best they knew how. But God's discipline is always right and good for us because it means we will share in his holiness. No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening--it is painful! But afterward there will be a quiet harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way. –NLT

7. To teach them the right ways of God (Ps. 119:71).

The suffering you sent was good for me, for it taught me to pay attention to your principles. –NLT

8. To produce greater fruitfulness in their lives (John 15:2).

Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.

9. To restore the repentant believers (Gal. 6:1; II Cor. 2:7-10).

Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Galatians 6:1

Note: For more teaching on the topic of church discipline refer to the courses *Local Church*, Lesson 14 and *Pastoral Ministry*, Lesson 20.

IV. The fourth foundation for biblical counseling is establishing some initial commitments in the counselee.

A great concern that most counselors share is that they do not waste their time in the counseling process. Entering into the process of counseling can involve a major commitment of time on the part of the counselor. No one usually begrudges the time spent if it is spent profitably. However, if there is no progress or cooperation by the counselee, these times of counseling can lead to serious disappointment on everyone's part.

To ensure optimal success there are four important commitments that should be made by those entering into the counseling process.

A. A commitment to the will of God

When we make a commitment to the will of God we are acknowledging four things.

1. We acknowledge that God has a plan or a will for our lives (Col. 1:9-11; 4:12).

*For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of **His will** in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God...*

Colossians 1:9-11

*Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the **will of God**.* Colossians 4:12

2. We acknowledge that God's plan is a good plan and is to be desired (Jer. 29:11-14; John 10:10). God does not want to take the fun out of your life.

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Jeremiah 29:11

I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. John 10:10b

3. We acknowledge that there are other wills or plans from which to choose (Col. 4:12).

There is a struggle for the will of God in our lives. Paul writes in Colossians 4:12 concerning Epaphras “*who is one of you, a servant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all of the will of God.*” NIV says, “*He is always wrestling for you in prayer.*”

Knox translation says, “*that you will stand firm in the perfect achievement of all that is God’s will for you.*”

The fact that Paul and others prayed as such seems to indicate that there is a struggle for the will of God and that it is not automatic in our lives. Actually our life is a struggle because we are confronted with a choice of four wills.

a. My will (Mt. 26:39-42)

“My will” is the will of the flesh or the lusts (desires) of the flesh (I Tim. 6:9). We follow this will when all we want to do is satisfy the cravings of our flesh nature.

b. Their will (I Pet. 4:1-5)

This is the will that others have for you or the will of man (parents, friends, boyfriend/girlfriend, teachers and pastors).

Since Jesus went through everything you’re going through and more, learn to think like him. Think of your sufferings as a weaning from that old sinful habit of always expecting to get your own way. Then you’ll be able to live out your days free to pursue what God wants instead of being tyrannized by what you want. You’ve already put in your time in that God-ignorant way of life, partying night after night, a drunken and profligate life. Now it’s time to be done with it for good. Of course, your old friends don’t understand why you don’t join in with the old gang anymore. But you don’t have to give an account to them. They’re the ones who will be called on the carpet—and before God himself. I Peter 4:1-5 – The Message

c. Satan’s will (II Tim. 2:26)

*And that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the **devil**, having been taken captive by him to do **his will**. II Timothy 2:26*

This does not necessarily refer to a vile existence, but to someone who is going in the opposite direction to the will of God and as a result is working against the purposes of God.

d. God’s will

This is the ultimate goal that we all must seek (Mt. 7:21; 12:50; John 4:34; Eph. 1:5, 9, 11). In the Lord's Prayer we pray, "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." There is no problem in heaven. The struggle is here. God is looking for those who will know and do His will.

Not everyone who says to Me, "Lord, Lord," shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven." Matthew 7:21

But He answered and said to the one who told Him, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?" And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother."

Matthew 12:48-13:1

34 Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work." John 4:34

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. I John 2:15-17

4. We acknowledge that we have a personal responsibility to pursue the will of God (Phil 3:12-15).

Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you.

We must press toward the mark of the upward call in Christ Jesus. No one can do this for us.

If the people that we counsel are not committed to the will of God for their lives, we have no real ability to help them.

The counselor should not be afraid to ask the counselee directly, "Do you want God's will for your life?"

B. A commitment to the Word of God

The counselor has no innate authority. Their authority exists only in so far as they accurately represent the will and purpose of God as reflected in His word. The counselor can do very little unless the people that they counsel are willing to acknowledge that the Bible is God's word and that they are willing to bring their lives under the authority of the word of God (Ps. 19:7-11)

The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them Your servant is warned, and in keeping them there is great reward. Psalm 19:7-11

The counselor should not be afraid to ask the counselee directly, "Do you understand that God's word as reflected in the Bible is God's will for your life?"

C. A commitment to change

If a person is not walking in the perfect will of God, the only way for them to enter into it is to change something that they are doing.

People need to be reminded that change is a part of the Christian growth process. Our Christian walk is a walk of growth, progress, transformation, advancement, development, maturation and increase. All of us are on a progressive journey as God perfects that which concerns us (Phil. 1:6).

And I am convinced and sure of this very thing, that He Who began a good work in you will continue until the day of Jesus Christ [right up to the time of His return], developing [that good work] and perfecting and bringing it to full completion in you.
Philippians 1:6, Amp

Note the following verses that remind us to reach for more than what we have right now (Pro. 4:18; II Cor. 3:18; 10:15; Eph. 4:15; Rom. 12:1-2; I Th. 4:10; II Pet. 3:18).

The common definition of insanity is "Doing the same things over and over again and expecting different results."

Each person in the counseling process must be open to personal change. They are not to focus on what others are to be doing, but on what they are to be doing to facilitate a solution.

The counselor should not be afraid to ask the counselee directly, "Are you personally willing to change in order to better conform your life to God's word?"

D. A commitment to work

In order to arrive at a solution, the parties involved in the process must exert themselves. This means that they have to work. The work is not going to meetings with a counselor. The work is what is done between the counseling sessions.

The only way that the counselor has to test whether or not a person is willing to work is by giving homework and following up on the homework that is given. We will talk more about homework later.

The counselor should let the counsees know from the very beginning that there will be homework. They should be assured that the homework will never be something that is too difficult for them to do. However, it will be used to measure their personal commitment to the counseling process.

The counselor should not be afraid to ask the counselee directly, “Are you personally willing to work to make God’s will a reality in your life?”

E. A summary of the commitments

The four questions that come out of these commitments are the following:

1. Do you want God’s will for your life?
2. Do you understand that God’s word as reflected in the Bible is God’s will for your life?
3. Are you personally willing to change in order to better conform your life to God’s word?
4. Are you personally willing to work to make God’s will a reality in your life?

I am personally so committed to the need for the counselee to make these commitments that I have been known to have them sign statements reflecting their personal commitment to them. These commitments will definitely be tested throughout the process and it is good to use their formally signed commitment as a reminder to them of what they have done. This is obviously more critical in situations where the counseling process will continue over a significant period of time.

At any point that the counselee is no longer willing to make these commitments, the counselor can do very little to proceed. At this point the counselee many need to be warned concerning the destiny of a life that is lived outside of the will or God and the word of God.

V. The fifth foundation for biblical counseling is establishing a sense of personal responsibility in the counselee.

- A. Counselees need to face the reality that most solutions will not come from a source outside of them.

Counselees need to be informed that their solution will not likely come from the following sources outside of themselves.

1. The casting out of a demon.

Things that are often applied to demons or demonic activity are usually referred to in the Bible as “works of the flesh”. Works of the flesh cannot be cast out they must be forsaken or put to death (Gal. 5:16-21).

2. The prayers of others for healing.

There is no harm in soliciting the prayers of others while you are seeking help for a spiritual problem. However, their prayers will not become a supernatural remedy. They will never replace a person’s responsibility to work out their own salvation (Phil. 2:12-13). Their prayers are not going to get you out of bed in the morning and to work on time.

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

3. The taking of prescribed medication.

There are biological issues that can contribute to problems in a person’s life. Most situations, however, are not going to be fixed with a pill. The solution is the right application of the Gos-pill (Gospel).

4. The work of the counselor.

The counselor can be of help, but ultimately the responsibility for change falls squarely on the shoulders of the individual believer. Sometimes people go from counselor to counselor believing that their present counselor is not doing enough to help them. The counselor is simply a guide or a facilitator to help people understand their problems and sort out their personal responsibilities.

- B. Counselees need to face the reality that they are the key to their solution.

It should be noted that the 1st Century church faced every societal problem that we face today. They faced the occult, sexual sins of all sorts, prostitution,

homosexuality, murder, rape, child abuse, exposure of children, discrimination, and every other vile thing that proceeds out of the heart of mankind (Mt. 15:19).

In the church they faced all of the problems that we face in the church today including carnality, immorality, strife, covetousness, fornication and all of the other works of the flesh that man will have to deal with as long as he is “in the flesh” (Gal. 5:16-21).

Peter, Paul and the other New Testament writers often had to address these kinds of problems in the church. It is interesting that **never once** did Peter or Paul recommend that the solution to the problem was dealing with the demonic or expelling a devil. They always dealt with the person who had the problem. They always dealt with the people as if they had the power in Christ to change and do what was right. It was a matter of exercising their spiritual will in God’s direction.

Hence, their admonitions included such things as:

- Abhor that which is evil (Rom. 12:9)
- Abide in Christ (I John. 1:28)
- Abound more and abound (Thess. 4:1)
- Abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul (I Pet. 2:11)
- Abstain from sexual immorality (I Th. 4:3)
- Abstain from every form of evil (I Th. 5:22)
- Add to your faith virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love (II Pet. 1:5-7)
- Arm yourself with Christ’s attitude (I Pet. 4:1)
- Avoid profane and vain babblings (I Tim. 6:20; II Tim. 2:23; Tit. 3:9)
- Awake to righteousness (I Cor. 15:34)
- Be anxious for nothing (Phil. 4:6)
- Be content with such things as you have (Heb. 13:5)
- Be courteous (I Pet. 3:8)
- Be diligent to make your calling and election sure (II Pet. 1:10; 3:14)
- Be eager to witness to Christ (I Pet. 3:15)
- Be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18)
- Be followers of God (Eph. 5:1)
- Be holy in all your conduct (I Pet. 1:15)
- Be hospitable (I Pet. 4:9)
- Be kind and tenderhearted (Eph. 4:32)
- Be of the same mind (Rom. 12:16; II Cor. 13:1; I Pet. 3:8)
- Be patient unto the coming of the Lord (Jam. 5:7)
- Be reconciled to God (II Cor. 5:20)
- Be renewed in the spirit of your mind (Eph. 4:23)
- Be serious and watchful in your prayers (I Pet. 4:7)
- Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding (I Cor. 15:58)
- Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might (Eph. 6:10)
- Be tenderhearted (I Pet. 3:8)

- Be vigilant concerning Satan (I Pet. 5:8)
- Be zealous of good works (Tit. 2:14)
- Become complete (II Cor. 13:11)
- Build yourself up on your most holy faith praying in the Holy Ghost (Jude 20)
- Cast all your care on Him (I Pet. 5:7)
- Cast off the works of darkness (Rom. 13:12)
- Cleanse your hands, you sinners (Jam. 4:8)
- Cleanse yourself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit (II Cor. 7:1)
- Cling to what is good (Rom. 12:9)
- Clothe yourself with humility (I Pet. 5:5)
- Comfort the fainthearted (I Th. 5:14)
- Contend earnestly for the faith (Jude 3)
- Continue earnestly in prayer (Col. 4:2)
- Continue in the things that you have learned (II Tim. 3:14)
- Deny ungodliness and worldly lusts (Tit. 2:12)
- Depart from iniquity (I Tim. 2:19)
- Desire earnestly to prophesy (I Cor. 14:39)
- Desire spiritual gifts (I Cor. 14:1)
- Desire the sincere milk of the Word (I Pet. 2:2)
- Do not be carried about by strange doctrines (Heb. 13:9)
- Do not be conformed to this world (Rom. 12:2)
- Do not despise prophecies (I Th. 5:20)
- Do not be entangled again in slavery (Gal. 5:1)
- Do not be weary in well doing (Gal. 6:9; II Th. 3:13)
- Do not be wise in your own conceits (Rom. 12:16)
- Do not become [spiritually] sluggish (Heb. 6:12)
- Do not cast away your confidence (Heb. 10:35)
- Do not conform yourselves to the former lusts (I Pet. 1:14)
- Do not forsake the assembling of yourselves together (Heb. 10:25)
- Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God (Eph. 4:30)
- Do not grumble against one another (Jam. 5:9)
- Do not imitate what is evil, but what is good (III John 11)
- Do not love the world or the things of the world (I Jn. 1:15)
- Do not quench the Spirit (I Th. 5:19)
- Do not refuse Him who speaks (Heb. 12:25)
- Do not render evil for evil (I Pet. 3:9)
- Do not show partiality or favoritism (Jam. 2:1)
- Do not speak evil of one another (Jam. 4:11)
- Draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith (Heb. 10:22)
- Endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit (Eph. 4:3)
- Endure hardness (II Tim. 2:3)
- Establish your hearts (Jam. 5:8)
- Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith (II Cor. 13:5)
- Exhort one another (Heb. 10:25)

- Fear god (I Pet. 2:17)
- Fight the good fight of faith (I Tim. 6:12)
- Flee from idolatry (I Cor. 10:14)
- Flee sexual immorality (I Cor. 6:18)
- Flee these things and pursue righteousness (I Tim. 6:11)
- Flee youthful lusts (II Tim. 2:22)
- Follow peace with all men (Heb. 12:14)
- Follow in Christ's steps (I Pet. 2:21)
- Follow the faith (conduct) of those over you in the Lord (Heb. 13:7)
- Forbear one another in love (Eph. 4:2)
- Forgive one another (Col. 3:13)
- Gird of the loins of your mind (I Pet. 1:13)
- Give thanks always (Eph. 5:20)
- Giving diligence to make our calling and election sure (II Pet 1:10)
- Grow in grace and the knowledge of Christ (II Pet. 3:18)
- Guard what was committed to your trust (I Tim. 6:20)
- Have a walk worthy of your calling (Eph. 4:1)
- Have compassion (I Pet. 3:8)
- Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness (Eph. 5:11)
- Hold fast to that which is good (I Th. 4:21)
- Hold fast the form of sound words (II Tim. 1:13; I Cor. 15:2)
- Hold fast your confession of hope without wavering (Heb. 10:23)
- Honor all people (I Pet. 2:17)
- Honor the King (I Pet. 2:17)
- Humble yourself (I Pet. 5:6; Jam. 4:10; I Pet. 5:6)
- Imitate...Christ (I Cor. 11:1)
- Keep yourself unspotted from the world (Jam. 1:27)
- Keep yourself from idols (I John 5:21)
- Keep yourself in the love of God (Jude 21)
- Keep yourself in the love of God (Jude 21)
- Lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness (Jam. 1:21)
- Lay aside all malice, envy, and all guile (I Pet. 2:21; II Pet. 2:2)
- Let brotherly love continue (Heb. 13:1)
- Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth (Eph. 4:29)
- Let us offer the sacrifice of praise continually (Heb. 13:15)
- Let your conduct be worthy of the Gospel (Phil. 1:27)
- Let your conduct be without covetousness (Heb. 13:5)
- Let your speech always be with grace (Phil. 4:6)
- Live in peace (II Cor. 13:11)
- Live no longer for yourself (II Cor. 5:15)
- Love one another fervently (I Pet. 1:22; 2:17; 3:8; 4:8; I Jn. 4:7, 11)
- Make straight paths for your feet (Heb. 12:13)
- Maintain good works (Tit. 3:8, 14)
- Meditate on these things (Phil. 4:8)

- Meet urgent needs (Tit. 3:14)
- Minister to one another the gifts of God (I Pet. 4:10)
- Mortify your members which are on the earth (Col. 3:5)
- Obey those who have the rule over you (Heb. 13:17)
- Present your bodies a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1)
- Prove yourselves (II Cor. 13:5)
- Pray without ceasing (I Th. 5:17)
- Purify your hearts (Jam. 4:8)
- Purify your souls by obeying the truth (I Pet. 1:22)
- Purify yourselves (I John 3:3)
- Pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace (II Tim. 2:22; I Cor. 14:1)
- Pursue holiness (Heb. 12:14)
- Put off all bitterness and wrath (Eph. 4:31)
- Put off the old man (Eph. 4:22)
- Put on the armor of light (Rom. 13:12)
- Put on the new man (Eph. 4:24)
- Put on the whole armor of God (Eph. 6:11)
- Put on love (Col 3:14)
- Quench not the Spirit (I Th. 5:19)
- Reach forward to the mark of the high calling (Phil. 3:13)
- Reckon yourself dead to sin (Rom. 6:11)
- Resist the devil and he will flee from you (Jam. 4:8; I Pet. 5:9)
- Rest your hope fully upon His saving grace (I Pet. 1:13)
- Rejoice in the Lord always (Phil. 4:4)
- Return blessing for cursing (I Pet. 3:9)
- Run the race (Heb. 12:1)
- Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts (I Pet. 3:15)
- Seek those things which are above (Col. 3:1)
- Separate from the world (II Cor. 6:17)
- Serve by love (Gal. 5:13)
- Serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear (Heb. 12:28)
- Set your mind on things above (Col. 3:2)
- Shun profane and vain babblings (I Tim. 2:16)
- Speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15)
- Stand fast in the faith (I Cor. 16:13)
- Stand fast in the liberty by which Christ has made us free (Gal. 5:1)
- Stand fast in the Lord (Phil. 4:1)
- Strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees (Heb. 12:12)
- Submit one to another (Eph. 5:21)
- Submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake (I Pet. 2:13)
- Submit to God (Jam. 4:7)
- Test all things, hold fast to what is good (I Thess. 5:21)
- Test the spirits (I John 4:1)
- Think no evil (I Cor. 13:5)

- Think on these things (Phil. 4:8)
- Uphold the weak (I Th. 5:14)
- Walk as children of light (Eph. 5:8)
- Walk circumspectly (Eph. 5:15)
- Walk in the light (I John 1:7)
- Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside (Col. 4:5)
- Warn the unruly (I Th. 5:14)
- Watch and stand in the faith (I Cor. 16:13)
- Withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly (II Th. 3:6)
- Work out your own salvation (Phil. 2:12)
- Yield yourself to God (Rom. 6:13)

As can be clearly seen, the New Testament writers put a great deal of responsibility on the believer to live like a Christian. It is taken for granted that every believer has the power within them (i.e. the Holy Spirit) to deal with such issues.

VI. The sixth foundation for biblical counseling is an understanding of the principle of sowing and reaping.

A. God relates to us based on the principle of sowing and reaping (Gal. 6:7-9).

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.

1. This is true in the negative realms of life.

a. With the devious, God will show Himself shrewd (Ps. 18:26; Pro. 3:34).

With the pure You will show Yourself pure; and with the devious You will show Yourself shrewd. Psalm 18:26

b. Those who sow in iniquity will reap sorrow (Pro. 22:8).

He who sows iniquity will reap sorrow, and the rod of his anger will fail.

c. Those who sow the wind will reap the whirlwind (Hos. 8:7a).

They sow the wind, and reap the whirlwind.

2. This is true on the positive realms of life.

a. To the merciful God extends mercy (Ps. 18:25; Mt. 5:7).

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Therefore the LORD has recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in His sight. With the merciful You will show Yourself merciful; with a blameless man You will show Yourself blameless; with the pure You will show Yourself pure; and with the devious You will show Yourself shrewd. For You will save the humble people, but will bring down haughty looks. Psalm 18:24-27

- b. To those who forgive God extends forgiveness (Luke 6:37).

Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

- c. To the generous God extends generosity (Luke 6:38; II Cor. 9:6).

Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.

What we sow is what we reap, however, we usually reap greater quality and quantity.

- B. We will reap what we sow in the lives of others.

The law of sowing and reaping does not only apply to our relationship with God, it also applies to our relationship with each other. When we sow negative things into a relationship, we can only expect to get negative things out of that relationship.

If we are experiencing negative fruit, it is likely that there has been some negative sowing. If we are going to change the fruit we must sow a new crop. Good seed brings forth good fruit. Bad seed can only bring forth a bad crop.

- C. Reaping does not immediately follow sowing.

When you sow a crop, the harvest does not come up immediately. There is a long growing season where that seed comes to maturity. The same is true in our relationships. What we are eating now is the fruit of seeds that have been sown some time ago.

As we begin to sow new seed, we will not see immediate change. We will still see fruit related to the old sowing. We sow new seed while we eat the old crop. When we finish eating the previous crop, the new seed comes to maturity and we start getting a much more desirable fruit (See diagram).



Lesson 10

Counseling Presuppositions

Besides what we have already discussed in previous lessons there are several presuppositions that must be in both the counselor and counselee alike if a solution is going to be found.

I. Some of the presuppositions have already been noted in the previous lessons.

- A. Every man, woman and child in the world is created by and accountable to God for their own life.
- B. God's desire is for everyone to live a purposeful and abundant life (John 10:10).
- C. Every believer has the power of Christ within them and the grace of God upon them to live according to the demands of the Scripture (Rom. 8:1-11).
 - 1. They have the faith of Christ.
 - 2. They have the love and the grace of God.
 - 3. They have the power of the Holy Spirit.
- D. The three main resources in the hands of the counselor are the Holy Spirit, the Word of God and the local church.

A freelance counselor does not have the benefit of pastoral support and the believing community.

- E. The measuring rod for our lives is the word of God and it is not arbitrary. Our situation does not supersede the word of God.
- F. Good sowing will always produce a good fruit or good reaping, eventually.

II. Some additional presuppositions are also important to acknowledge in the counseling process.

A. There are no unique problems (I Cor. 10:6-13).

Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. 7 And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." 8 Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; 9 nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; 10 nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. 11 Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. 12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. 13 No temptation has overtaken

you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

There are no unique problems. There may be unique aspects of the problem, but the root problem is one that is common to man.

People will want to convince you that their situation is unique and it requires unique consideration. There may be some unique features to their situation, but human beings are still human beings, God is still God and what has happened to them has happened and will continue to happen to many other people.

1. There may be unique external circumstances.
2. The superficial details associated with the problem may be unique (names, places and times).
3. The root causes on the inside of man are the same from person to person.

No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man...

I Corinthians 10:13

4. All of the difficulties that anyone may experience have been successfully handled by others (I Cor. 6:9-11).

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

5. When we insist that our problems are too big, we minimize the power of God and the faithfulness of God. God is bigger than all of our problems.

There is a certain amount of pride that is manifest in our hearts when we think ourselves to be so unique that even God is “stumped” by our problems.

B. Every human being shares certain common needs.

1. Billy Graham identified certain “responsive chords” in everyone’s heart.

Billy Graham was asked how he was able to communicate so effectively to the needs of mankind in his evangelistic preaching. He attributed it to understanding certain things about mankind. Most of these apply particularly to those who have not yet come to Christ (*Ministries Today*, Sept/ Oct, 1989).

- a. Life's needs are not totally met by social improvement or material affluence.
 - b. There is an essential emptiness in every life without Christ.
 - c. There are many lonely people desiring meaningful relationship.
 - d. People live with a sense of guilt.
 - e. There is a universal fear of death.
2. There are other needs that every person shares whether they have come to Christ or not.

These include:

- a. The need for a sense of purpose in life.
- b. The need for a sense of personal significance and worth.
- c. The need for personal security.
- d. The need for meaningful relationships.
- e. The need to love and to be loved.

When God created Adam and Eve, they had all of these things. They knew that their purpose was related to God's eternal purpose to subdue the earth. They had a sense of significance and worth because they were uniquely created in God's image and were His instrument to fulfill His purpose. They understood that no one else could do what God had designed them to do. They were secure in the Garden of Eden under the authority of God. They knew their boundaries and functioned freely within them. They had an open and mutual relationship with each other and with their Creator. They were loved and they loved in return.

Of course, after the fall most of that changed. This leads us to the next presupposition.

C. All human difficulties are ultimately the result of sin.

1. There are only three basic sources of all personal problems.
 - a. The direct work of demonic beings.
 - b. Personal sin or failure in our lives.

- c. Physical or organic illness or deficiency.
2. There are three enemies that are identified in Scripture against which we must contend—the world, the flesh and the devil.

These three realms must be examined in relation to each problem because they will affect how the problem is to be solved. Many problems will contain elements of all three dimensions. Solutions must often address specific battle plans in relation to each of them.

- a. The world speaks of a person's environment or the context of their living.

Many times a person's environment or living conditions are exerting a negative influence upon them. Part of the solution is to attempt to adjust the environment. There are times when a solution involves changing relationships around us, living conditions, work environments and other hobbies or activities that put us into a place of temptation.

- b. The flesh speaks of the person themselves and the internal lusts, desires or cravings that must come under God's control.

Many times it is a person's own attitude, actions and habit patterns that must change from the inside. There are many works of the flesh described in the Bible that must be put off and replaced with the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:16-25). This is the responsibility of every believer in Christ to cast off the works of darkness (Rom. 13:12) and mortify the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:24).

And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. 12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. 13 Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts. Romans 13:11-14

- c. The devil speaks of the spiritual realm of temptation arising from outside of the believer.

Believers must never be ignorant of Satan's devices. We must war against the continual bombardment from the devil just as Jesus did (Eph. 6:10-19; I Pet. 5:8-9).

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. I Peter 5:8-9

3. Ninety five percent of all problems in the life of the Christian arise from personal sin or failure.

When Paul addressed the problems of people in the churches in the New Testament he never recommended the casting out of a demon, but he always suggested that the believer had the power to change their behavior. We will address this more in a later session.

4. There are common types of sin that are most commonly manifested—pride, love of money, selfishness, blame shifting, gossip, slander, excusing, self-justification, etc.

Paul called sin what it was. He did not cloak things in medical terms or euphemisms. He spoke of jealousy, strife, homosexuality as opposed to emotional problems, immaturity, neurosis, etc.

You are not being kind to people to play down the sin aspect of the issue at hand. It is not “kindness” that would lead you to do this even though it may seem to be and even though your intentions may be good.

Anytime we mislabel the problem or the source of the problem we do people a disservice because we postpone any real solution. Jesus has provided a solution for sin. He did not die for neurosis, emotional problems, nervous disorders, alternative lifestyles and the like.

D. There is a biblical solution for every problem.

There are dynamic tools that God has placed in the hands of his people that have an application in almost every problem.

1. The dynamics of repentance, confession and a plea for mercy.
2. The dynamics of forgiveness, reconciliation and restitution.
3. The dynamics of faith to overcome contrary feelings.
4. Etc.

E. Problems left to themselves do not get better, in fact, they will always get worse.

F. Problems experienced by one’s parents are not inevitable in one’s own life and experience.

People talk a lot these days about generational curses. The Bible is clear that in Christ we are new creatures old things pass away all things become new (II Cor. 5:17). We are completely new creatures with a new nature. The sins of the fathers are not passed on to us (See: Jer. 31:29-30; Ezek. 18:1-32). We are of those who

inherit mercy through our Lord Jesus Christ (Ex. 20:6; Eph. 2:4-10; I Pet. 2:9-10; II Pet. 1:4).

G. God cares about all of our problems (Mt. 6:25-34; 11:28-29; I Pet. 5:6-7).

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. I Peter 5:6-7

H. Every Christian can change if they really want to change.

Every believer has the power of the Holy Spirit within them to help them to change. As a result every believer can change if three things are present in them.

1. They must want to change.
2. They must be willing to work to change.
3. They must understand how to change.

Change is not a matter of “can’t” but more a matter of “won’t.” It doesn’t matter how old one is, they can still change (Can’t teach an old dog new tricks.). People can change quickly even in areas that have been long standing in nature.

Paul on the road to Damascus is a great example of a man who had to change to be useful to the Lord. He did all of the following steps to change (Acts 9:3-9).

As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. 4 Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” 5 And he said, “Who are You, Lord?” Then the Lord said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads.” 6 So he, trembling and astonished, said, “Lord, what do You want me to do?” Then the Lord said to him, “Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.” 7 And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one. 8 Then Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened he saw no one. But they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. 9 And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

Steps to all change include:

- a. Acknowledging the Lordship of Jesus.
- b. Humbling yourself before Him and His word.
- c. Focusing on what you must do rather than what others must do (Acts 9:6).
- d. Being willing to enlist the help of others to support you in change.

- e. Concentrating on your new mission of doing good and sowing good seeds for a future harvest.

Paul and the other apostles always dealt with the people as if they had the power in Christ to change and do what was right. We will come back to this later

I. Whenever two or more Christians meet they can depend on God being present (Mt. 18:19-20).

Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.

Lesson 11-13 Counseling Preliminaries

I. Preparation for Counseling

A. The Counseling Setting

1. Counseling has been known to happen in some of the following places:
 - a. On the phone
 - b. At the altar
 - c. In the church lobby
 - d. Over a cup of tea or coffee
 - e. In the home
 - f. In an office
2. The place where the counseling takes place will depend upon the nature of the issue being discussed.

Much of the counseling that is exchanged in the body of Christ is very simple and can be done in the most casual of settings. However, when the counseling will extend to nearly an hour or over several sessions, it is best to meet in a more formal setting. This is true for a couple of reasons.

- a. It will help to accentuate the serious nature of the process.
 - b. It will bring the counselees on to neutral ground.
 - c. It will establish the counselor as the agenda setter.
 - d. It will help the counselor to restrict the length of the sessions.
3. The place where intense counseling takes place is important.
 - a. It should be warm and friendly (not hostile).
 - b. It should be private (sound proof).
 - c. It should be out of the flow of traffic.

B. The Counselee

As a rule, people are not used to going to formal counseling where they know they will be asked very personal and direct questions by someone that they may not know that well. As a result people that come for counseling may come with one or more of the following dispositions:

They may be feeling...

1. Anxious
2. Angry
3. Embarrassed
4. Guilty
5. Ashamed
6. Defensive
7. Hesitant
8. Resentful
9. Apprehensive
10. Doubtful
11. Suspicious
12. Nervous

One of the counselor's goals in the first session is to help the parties to relax. Much of this will be done by the personal demeanor and body language of the counselor.

C. The Counselor

Prior to engaging in a counseling process the counselor needs to be honest with themselves concerning his or her involvement with this particular case. Just as judges will at times take themselves off of a case that might generate charges of conflict of interest, so counselors may need to refer the counselee to another counselor.

The counselor should consider referring the counselee to another person when any one of the following is the case.

You should not counsel if...

1. As a counselor you know that you are completely out of your depth.
2. As a counselor you may have a conflict of interest regarding the case.
3. As a counselor you are too emotionally connected to one or more of the parties involved to be completely objective.
4. As a counselor you have had very negative experiences with one or more of the parties involved.

You do not want to go into a situation where you are prejudice toward someone in this process. Prejudice clouds our judgment and we will not be likely to give each person an equal hearing or equal justice.

5. As a counselor you have had an antagonistic relationship with them in the past.

You know that the counselee does not respond well to you or you that have a personality clash.

6. As a counselor you cannot see them in a reasonable timeframe or commit to the time that will be involved in bringing the issue to solution. Part of this involves counting the cost before you build.

D. Counseling Readiness

Not every person who initially expresses a desire for counseling is really ready to be counseled. This may not be able to be assessed until after the initial session, but at times you will know immediately.

What are some of the reasons why you may not engage someone in the counseling process?

1. They are not open to change; they only want others to change.

Some of these individuals only want an ear to listen to them. They may want nothing more than sympathy.

2. They have unrealistic expectations about the counseling process.

- a. Perhaps they have been to many other counselors and it has not worked; now they are coming to you.
- b. Perhaps they have said things to you that indicate that they believe it is the process that will fix their issues.

The counseling process is never the answer. It is the counselee's response to the process. Some will say, "I tried counseling and it didn't work." The real question is "Did they work?"

3. They are not willing to take the situation seriously enough to adjust their schedule to fit into your schedule (as a doctor or dentist appointment).
4. They are not willing to work when they are given assignments by the counselor.
5. They are not willing to invest time into discovering a solution, they want a quick fix.

Some people want you to fix a problem that has taken them several months or years to get into with a short phone conversation. In most cases to attempt to do so is a mistake on the part of the counselor. It is a mistake for the following reasons.

- a. In such cases it is impossible to get all the background that might have a bearing on the problem.

- b. In such cases it is impossible to hear the other side(s) of the story.
- c. In such cases it is impossible to read eye contact and body language.
- d. In such cases the counselor will not be at his or her best as a counselor.
- e. In such cases they are usually in the thick of it when they make the call and, therefore, not in the frame of mind to talk sensibly.
It is better to pray, give them a small assignment on which they can focus, set up an appointment and see them later.

E. The Time for Counseling

From a biblical point of view there is a difference between good timing and bad timing in dealing with your neighbor (Pro. 27:14).

If you shout a pleasant greeting to your neighbor too early in the morning, it will be counted as a curse! Proverbs 27:14, NLT

Jay Adams puts it this way, “Bad timing can turn the effect of an intended blessing into cursing. Good intentions, coupled with bad timing (thoughtless for another’s situation) can destroy good effort” (*Matters of Concern for Christian Counselors*, pg.24).

On the other had, when the time is right and everyone is at their best the results can be maximized (Pro. 25:11; Eccl. 3:1; Luke 12:42).

The right word at the right time is like a custom-made piece of jewelry...

Proverbs 25:11, Msg

There’s an opportune time to do things, a right time for everything on the earth...

Ecclesiastes 3:1, Msg

And the Lord said, “Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season?”

Luke 12:42

1. The time for the sessions should be optimal for all.
 - a. When everyone is fresh.
 - b. When emotions are under control.
 - c. When there is no need to rush.
2. The time for the sessions should be limited to a set length.

It is recommended that no more than an hour be allotted to any counseling session. The only exception should be when the end is clearly in sight.

F. The Personal Data Inventory

It is best before beginning what appears to be extended counseling for the counselee to fill out the Personal Data Inventory (See example following this lesson). This should be completed and submitted prior to the initial counseling session to save time in that session.

II. The Initial Counseling Session

There are several agenda items for the initial counseling session. Depending on the complexity of the problem little more may be able to be done at this time.

A. Open in Prayer

Prayer should be a big part of the counseling process. It should take place at the beginning and end of every session and sometimes in the middle when appropriate (Jam. 5:16).

Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

1. The counselor should spend time in prayer prior to the session asking the Lord for wisdom and supernatural insight.
2. The counsees should spend time in prayer prior to the session asking the Lord for a sensitive heart to hear and receive the voice of the Holy Spirit.
3. Special seasons of prayer and fasting may also be prescribed as homework over appropriate issues.

B. Review of the Personal Data Inventory

Here the counselor will seek to clarify or qualify answers that were given or not given on the form.

C. Brief Testimony

It is good to have them share a brief testimony of their life to give you a backdrop for their problems they may be having and also a better understanding of who they are and the extent of their relationship to the Lord. The testimony should focus on several things.

1. Where they were born.
2. What were the circumstances of their childhood.

3. How they came to the Lord.
4. What positive spiritual experiences they have had.
5. How they came to the church.
6. What is the main issue that is concerning them.

Additional for Couples

7. How they met as a couple.
8. What were the things that drew them to each other.

Note: During this time the counselor should be jotting down anything that he or she thinks may be valuable at some later time in the process.

D. Lay Out Ground Rules

The counselee(s) needs to know that you as a counselor are in charge of the gathering and that you will be establishing the ground rules as to how it will be run. They need to know that at any point in the process you feel it necessary, you will call them back to the ground rules. The ground rules can be summarized by the basic admonition to “behave like a Christian.” Specifically they include such things as the following:

1. We will not use foul language at any time in the counseling sessions.
2. We will speak to each other in respectful ways at all times.
3. We will never demean another person by our tone of voice, body language, sighing or groaning.
4. We will not interrupt the other person when he or she is talking.
5. We will not make unsupported assumptions about what the other person thinks or feels.
6. We will not make predictions about what another person will or will not do.
7. We will focus on what is edifying and helpful for a solution (I Cor. 10:23).
8. We will at all times seek the well being of the other (I Cor. 10:24).

E. Establish Initial Commitments

1. Establish their true salvation.

You cannot expect someone who is lost in sin and alienated from the life of God to be able to walk in the ways of God.

2. Establish their true desire for God's will.

Not everyone wants the will of God for their lives. Some people just want the problems to go away.

3. Establish their willingness to change.

Every counselee must realize that if they are going to have a different result in their life they will have to change what they are doing. To expect a different result without doing anything different is unreasonable. The changes that they will be called upon to make will be changes that make bring them closer to their personal goal of being more like Christ.

There are various types of counselees when it comes to the issue of change.

- a. There are those who really want change.
- b. There are those who want you to change for them.
- c. There are those that have no intention of changing. In this case they may just want the pressure off of them.
- d. There are those who want you to put pressure on their spouse or someone else to change.
- e. There are those who expect the process to work without change.
- f. There are those who have no friends and just want someone with whom to talk regularly and often.
- g. There are those who just want sympathy for their problem.
- h. There are those who want to change but their spouse will not (In this case all you can do is work with the open one, they are the key progress).

It is important that the counselee understands that he or she is not making changes to gain a blessing, to get the heat off, to change their spouse or to look good socially. It is important that they understand that they are making changes because they want to glorify God in their life. They are making changes because it is the right thing to do.

4. Establish their willingness to cooperate (meeting times).

As a counselor your time is valuable and it is very important that those you are counseling make personal sacrifices to meet with you the same way they would for a physician or medical practitioner.

5. Establish their willingness to conform to the standard of God's word.

The word of God is the will of God and the standard for every Christian's behavior. If you are going to be able to make any progress, all parties must acknowledge the authority of the word of God.

6. Establish their willingness to work (homework).

Your personal involvement as a counselor is based completely on their willingness to participate in the process. You will never give them homework that is too difficult for them to do, but if they do not do the homework that is given, there is no point in continuing to meet.

7. Establish their willingness to walk by principle and not by feelings.

You are actually calling them to a walk of faith. Many of the things that they will be given to do in this process will go against what their feelings are telling them to do. However, if they are going to succeed, they will have to do many things that they do not feel like doing. In this commitment we are asking for simple faith and obedience to the word of God. Such obedience on a personal level is not dependent upon what another person may or may not do. It is an offering to Christ.

F. Give a Simple Assignment (Basic Assignment, See Sample)

Assignments should be given after every session. The first thing that should be done in subsequent sessions is to examine the homework. The first assignment may have to do with simple prayer and Bible reading. If you can restore people to a strong personal devotional life with the Lord, you will have accomplished something great.

G. Give Hope

Remind them that the process of recovery will most likely take some time. In some cases it took them years to get into their problem and it will most likely take some time to walk out of their problem.

However, you want to reassure them that there is an answer and that it is to be found in God. If all you accomplish in the first session is to give hope, you will have accomplished much.

We will discuss this topic further in Lesson 16.

H. Close in Prayer

Note: Your personal demeanor in the sessions should be relaxed and never shocked. It should include positive body language and remaining somewhat detached emotionally (Pro. 17:27).

A truly wise person uses few words; a person with understanding is even-tempered.

III. Elements of the Counseling Process

We will be looking at all of these areas in more detail in the subsequent sessions. We are listing these areas here for the sake of giving us an overview of the process of counseling.

A. Gathering Information

The Bible makes it clear that when we answer a matter before we hear it we are being foolish (Pro. 18:13).

He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him.

What a shame, what folly, to give advice before listening to the facts! –NLT

Answering before listening is both stupid and rude. –Msg

Making sure that we have a full understanding of the issues and all of the pertinent facts is essential if we are to make a proper diagnosis and an appropriate prescription for change.

All too often when the counselor is in a hurry he or she will jump ahead in their mind and make an assumption as to where the counselee is going with their line of thinking. All too often the counselor will make a wrong assumption leading to the offering of advice before having a handle on the real issues. This will not only postpone a real solution, it will undermine the credibility of the counselor. The counselee will know when you are not on target and will lose confidence in you as a counselor. The effect may be so profound that the counselee may never open up quite as much as they would have had this not happened. They may even view you as incompetent to handle their problem.

In Lesson 14 we will be discussing gathering information.

B. Clarifying Statements

People love to speak in terms of sweeping generalities. The truth is that life is not lived in the abstract. All generalities must be clarified if true progress is going to be made. People will often make accusations about a person by using terms like “always” or “never.”

Most children will use generalities when they are trying to make a case for themselves. Perhaps the most common one is “Everyone is doing it.” The truth is not

everyone is doing it. If you can find one other person who is not doing it, then everyone is not doing it.

We will be discussing this more in Lesson 15, but suffice it to say that the counselor cannot let these types of statements go unchallenged. When they use them they are exaggerating and have the effect of putting themselves in a better light than is strictly the case and putting another person in a worse light than is strictly the case.

C. Instilling Hope

Instilling hope in the counselee is perhaps the main task of the counselor at the front end of the counseling process. There may be many reasons why the counselee sees his or her situation as hopeless. When you first hear what they have to say, that may even be your first thought about it. However, we know as Christians we have powerful resources available to us. There is no situation that is beyond God's ability to sort out. The counselor must build hope in the counselee based on the power of the Word of God, the grace of God and the Spirit of God.

We will be discussing how to instill hope in Lesson 16.

D. Breaking down the Problem

The best way to tackle complex problems is to break them down into their most basic parts. Often people's problems are the result of an accumulation of several failures or issues. If you can separate some of them out, you can take several small steps to a large solution.

We will be discussing how to break down a problem in Lesson 17.

E. Pinpointing Underlying Attitudes

All actions are based on a particular attitude or motivation. The problem may be stealing, lying or inconsiderateness, but the root issue might be laziness, selfishness, covetousness or pride. In Lesson 17 we will also be identifying some root attitudes that often serve as a basis for inappropriate behavior.

F. Affirming Foundational Commitments

Once the problem has been broken down and underlying attitudes have been identified, the counselor needs to revisit the original commitments to the word and will of God. This can be done by asking the counselee, "Are you willing to discover what God's word says about this area?" If humility is not at the base of our dialogue, the counselor can go no further. Unless there is a proper attitude at this point, we must go back and affirm the foundations for the counseling process.

G. Bringing the Counselee to a Place of Personal Confession of Failure (Pro. 28:13).

He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.

At some point the counselee needs confess his or her own failures (Jam. 5:16a). One way to do so is to have them write down what they feel their failures are. Many will not go past this point and admit any wrong. If they do not admit wrong, you may have to give them a biblical warning.

Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed.

H. Sharing Solutions and a Prescription for Change

Develop a scriptural prescription for change. Right diagnosis is essential to writing a proper prescription.

1. What actions and attitudes must be put off (Eph. 4:22-5:21; Col. 3:1-17)?
2. What actions and attitudes must be put on?
3. What activities can I do that will help?
4. What activities should I avoid doing?
5. Who can I go to for help?
6. Why am I doing all of this?

I. Giving and Checking Homework

Homework is an essential part of the counseling process. Homework should always be relevant to the matters at hand and simple enough that anyone who is even slightly motivated can easily accomplish it. Homework accomplishes two things. It gets the counselee involved in activities that are outside of their normal routines (breaking habit patterns) and it serves as a major barometer to measure the counselee's willingness to work or put out effort toward a solution.

We will be discussing homework more fully in Lesson 20.

J. Following Up on the Counselee

Habits are not changed overnight. Most counsees will need some kind of follow-up for the purpose of accountability. This can be done by:

1. Using additional meetings

2. Using additional homework
3. Using regular personal contact

IV. Motivating People to Change

A. Change is a normal part of the Christian life.

No one is perfect. No one is completely Christ-like in all of the realms of their personal life. It is not unusual for a Christian to have areas of imperfection in their life. However, it is a problem if they have no desire to grow or to change. The following material on change can be used when you need to motivate people toward change.

1. The Christian life is characterized by several concepts all of which reflect “change.”

These concepts include:

- Growth
 - Progress
 - Transformation
 - Advancement
 - Development
 - Increase
 - Maturation
2. There are many key verses that describe the experiences that are common to all Christians.
 - a. Proverbs 4:18

But the path of the just is like the shining sun, that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.

But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. –KJV

- b. II Corinthians 3:18

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

c. Ephesians 4:15

...but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ...

d. Romans 12:1-2

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

e. I Thessalonians 4:9-10

But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; and indeed you do so toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more;

f. II Corinthians 10:15b, NIV

Our hope is that, as your faith continues to grow...

g. II Peter 3:18

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.

h. Philippians 1:6, Amplified Bible

And I am convinced and sure of this very thing, that He Who began a good work in you will continue until the day of Jesus Christ [right up to the time of His return], developing [that good work] and perfecting and bringing it to full completion in you.

The walk with God is a progressive walk, on and on, deeper and deeper, more and more, right up until we meet the Lord whether through the grave or at the Second Coming of Christ.

That means that the only thing in the Christian life that is constant is change.

3. Nowhere are we instructed to become faint, to relax in our efforts, to settle down, to level off or to taper off as the years go by.

On the contrary we are instructed to:

- Stir ourselves up.
- Press toward the mark.
- Take the kingdom.
- Possess our inheritance.
- Lay hold of the will of God.
- Fight the good fight of faith.

All of these admonitions speak of taking an aggressive posture when it comes to issues of change.

B. Change is a command from the Lord Himself (Eph. 4:17-24).

This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, 18 having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; 19 who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. 20 But you have not so learned Christ, 21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: 22 that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, 23 and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

C. Change is a very difficult thing to do (Jer. 13:23, NIV).

Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Neither can you do good who are accustomed to doing evil.

1. There are some things that we can change.
 - a. We can change our personal attitudes.
 - b. We can change our actions.
 - c. We can change learned behavior and cultural tendencies.
 - d. We can change and break away from family characteristics (stubborn, hardheaded, alcoholic, etc.).
2. There are some things that we cannot change.
 - a. We cannot change other people.
 - b. We cannot change the past.

The past is gone. The effects of the past might remain in our lives but they can be removed through such things as forgiveness, restitution and reconciliation.

c. We cannot change our genetic or inherited characteristics.

3. We must focus on what we have the power to change.

All such change comes from a genuine heart of repentance. All true repentance leads to change. If it does not lead to change it is not true repentance but worldly sorrow, regret and self-pity.

D. Change is possible for anyone with the help of God.

E. The key to accessing God's help is having a personal willingness to change.

Personal Data Inventory

Date _____
Name _____ Phone _____ Cell _____
Address _____
Occupation _____ Business Phone _____
Sex _____ Date of birth _____ Marital Status: Single Married Separated Divorced Widowed
Education (last year completed) _____
Other training _____

HEALTH INFORMATION

Rate your health: Very good _____ Good _____ Average _____ Declining _____ Other _____
Date of last medical examination _____ Report _____
Your physician _____ Phone _____
Are you presently taking any medication? _____ What kind and for what purpose? _____

RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

Date saved _____ Check all that apply _____ Water Baptized _____ Spirit Baptized _____
City Life Church Partner _____ Participated in an Encounter, Date _____
Church attended in childhood _____
Church currently attending _____
Church attendance per month: (circle one) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10+ Partnership Date _____
Do you pray to God? Never _____ Occasionally _____ Often _____

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY BACKGROUND

Name of spouse: _____ Spouse's age _____
Address _____
Education (last year completed) _____
How long did you know your spouse before marriage? _____
How long did you date steadily? _____ Length of engagement _____
Marriage date _____ Husband's age when married _____ Wife's age when married _____
Have you ever been separated? _____ When and for how long? _____
Give brief information about any previous marriage _____

INFORMATION RELATING TO CHILDREN

Name of Child	Age	Sex	Education Status Years Completed	Marital Status

If you were reared by someone other than your biological parents, please briefly explain _____

Relationship with parents: Very good___ Good___ Average___ Below average___ Other___
 Have you talked with a Pastor/Counselor from City Life Church or any other church, or a licensed secular counselor about the present difficulty? Yes___ No ___
 If so, who and when? _____
 Have you ever been arrest or convicted of a crime? If yes, please explain: _____

VOCATIONAL INFORMATION

Where are you presently employed? _____
 List the types of jobs that you have held _____
 Have you ever been fired from a job _____ Explain _____

Please read the following carefully before you sign!

The counselors at City Life Church operate under the pastoral department of the church and utilize the Bible as their guide for all counsel given. They are not licensed counselors. In serving those who need counsel they will maintain confidentiality regarding information disclosed by the counselee. However, there may be times when a counselor may feel that it is in the best interest of the counselee to discretely share some information with the pastoral staff of the church for the purpose of bringing a solution to the problem or resolving a particular conflict. If you have questions regarding confidentiality and the counseling process, please discuss it with your counselor.

Counselee’s Signature _____

BASIC ASSIGNMENT

Name _____

Date Given _____ Date Accomplished _____

Areas for Consideration:

BASIC STEPS TOWARD SOLUTION:

1. Reaffirm your desire to live according to the word and will of God. Jesus is Lord of all.
2. Spend time in sincere prayer and seeking God and asking Him for your part of the solution to the problem. What does He want you to change or begin to do or not to do?
3. Keep notes on what God tells you during these times of seeking on the back side of this sheet.
4. Be prepared to share what God is saying to you in the presence of your counselor and/or your marriage partner.

Lesson 14-15

Gathering Information and Clarifying Statements

The Bible makes it clear that when we answer a matter before we hear it we are being foolish (Pro. 18:13).

He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him.

What a shame, what folly, to give advice before listening to the facts! –NLT

Answering before listening is both stupid and rude. –Msg

Making sure that we have a full understanding of the issues and all of the pertinent facts is essential if we are to make a proper diagnosis and an appropriate prescription for change.

All too often when the counselor is in a hurry he or she will jump ahead in their mind and make an assumption as to where the counselee is going with their line of thinking. All too often the counselor will make a wrong assumption leading to the offering of advice before having a handle on the real issues. This will not only postpone a real solution, it will undermine the credibility of the counselor. The counselee will know when you are not on target and will lose confidence in you as a counselor. The effect may be so profound that the counselee may never open up quite as much as they would have had this not happened. They may even view you as incompetent to handle their problem.

I. Methods of Gathering Information

A. Using the Personal Data Inventory

There are general things that you can glean from a close look at each of the categories covered in the Personal Data Inventory. In each of these areas you may find it necessary to ask a few other questions for the purpose of clarification. This will be especially true in the areas of the Personal Data Inventory that call for some further explanation (e.g. previous marriage, termination of employment, etc.). It is good to write down some of these questions in advance so that you do not overlook them in the actual counseling session.

1. Health Issues

Be aware that there are several things that can affect a person's attitude and actions relative to the issue of health. People who are on medication can be experiencing a number of side effects that can cause exaggerated or abnormal responses. Just like life cycles (menstruation, life change, etc) can alter a person's responses medications can do similar things especially when they are not administered in a proper dosage.

2. Religious Issues

The information gathered here can tell you to what extent Christ is the Lord or center of his or her life. It will also give you insight into why they are lacking in certain areas. Perhaps they do not have the power to overcome in certain areas because they are not taking full advantage of all of the spiritual tools that are available to them in Christ. Perhaps you perceive that they are not, in fact, Christians. If this is the case evangelism may end up being a primary activity in the counseling process.

3. Marriage and Family Issues

How couples initially met and got married can give you insight into the foundation upon which their relationship was built. Was it built on physical attraction, intellectual compatibility or some other common denominator? Part of the counseling process may include helping them to put a new foundation under their marriage.

If they have been married before, sometimes it is good to understand why the first marriage failed and whether any lessons were learned from that relationship. If things have not been properly resolved, the new relationships can be made to pay for the sins of previous relationships.

4. Parenting Issues

The relationship that one has had to parents can have a significant impact on how one lives their life in the present. It can cause them to be overly critical, careless, protective or sensitive to certain key issues. The role relationship of parental figures can also have a bearing on expectations in all relationships.

5. Vocational Issues

A person's vocational history can tell you a lot about a person in terms of their ability to work with others. It can also tell you about the ability to focus and commit themselves to long term relationships. A person who has a shaky employment history can also cause a certain amount of insecurity in those who depend on them for support.

B. Asking Direct Questions

1. There are some core questions that will help you to get started (Jay Adams, *Christian Counselor's Manual*, pg. 435).
 - a. What is your problem?
 - b. What have you done about it?
 - c. What can we do? or What is your expectation in coming here?

- d. As you see yourself, what kind of a person are you? Describe yourself.
 - e. What, if anything, do you fear?
 - f. Is there any other information that you think we should know?
2. There are follow-up questions to the above that will help you to dig a little deeper.

As the counselor asks the above questions, they will often trigger natural follow-up questions that will bring further clarity to the situation. The counselor must see him or herself much like a reporter who is trying to get to the bottom of a story.

Not all questions will be deemed by the counselor to be in need of follow-up. Some, however, must be followed-up if a full picture of the problem is going to be seen.

Just to give a couple of examples, note the following typical follow-up questions:

- a. Question #1—What is your problem?

The counselee may give you an answer as to what they perceive to be their problem. Some follow-up questions may include one or more of the following:

- What makes you feel this way?
- Has anyone ever told you that this was your problem?
- What did they say?
- Do you think that they were accurate in what they said? Why or Why not.
- What are the symptoms of this problem in your life?
- Have you always had this problem?
- When did you first start to realize that you had this problem?

Once you feel that you have exhausted the first question, you can move to the second question and treat it in much the same manner.

- b. Question #2—What have you done about it?
 - Why did you do that?
 - Do you feel like it helped you or hindered you?
 - If it did not help, why do you think it did not help?

The truth is that some of the things that they may have done about it up to this point have actually complicated the matter rather than moved them closer to a solution. This information can be helpful to you in that it may help you to unravel a rather complex situation.

c. Question #3—What is your expectation in coming here?

- What makes you feel it will be different this time?
- What do you feel you will do different this time?
- Why have you chosen to come to me (or to the church)?

The truth is that some people are not actually interested in what you have to offer. Some may only want “support” or a listening ear. This question will help you to determine what their expectations are and how they line up with your own.

In addition to using a logical progression of questions, it is important to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes the Holy Spirit will lead you to ask an unusual question out of context that can have the result of shocking the counselee into an unusually candid answer or get to a root that would normally require much more time to uncover.

C. Observing Body Language

1. The pitch or tone of voice (high pitched or rapid often reflects tension).
2. Noticeable change in facial expressions or posture.
3. The crossing of arms or legs at significant times.
4. The occasional sigh or groan.

D. Being Observant in Sessions

1. Continual interrupting of one party
2. Apparent domination of one party
3. Body language of listening party

E. Practicing Keys to Good Questioning

1. Avoid yes and no questions.
2. Ask specific questions that require specific answers.

3. Let new questions arise from previous answers or statements.
4. Make sure that the timing of a specific question is appropriate.
5. Ask the same question in different ways to check on the authenticity of the answer.

Unfortunately people will lie to you. Sometimes by asking a similar question a slightly different way will evoke a less guarded response.

6. Ask relevant questions that involve their past, the present and plans or concerns regarding the future.
7. Be aware of the person's social standing and ask questions in a manner that gives respect to who they are.
8. Use carefully constructed questions to interrupt rambling and get the counselee back on track.

II. The Importance of Listening

A. Listening involves concentration.

It takes less time to listen and understand than it does to speak. As a result your mind will want to run ahead or move to other things.

1. It involves paying careful, undivided attention when they speak.
2. It involves maintaining good eye contact with the person speaking (when not taking notes). This means removing any physical obstacles that hinder eye contact.
3. It involves minimizing distractions (i.e. cell phones, pagers, outside noise, visible activities).
4. It involves maintaining an appropriate distance from the counselee (not too close or too distant—arm's length).
5. It involves the counselor minimizing talk about him or her self.

B. Listening involves maintaining a positive climate for disclosure.

1. This includes giving responses that demonstrate interest (active listening).

- “I understand.”
- “Right”
- Etc.

2. This includes maintaining non-threatening voice tones.
3. This includes insuring the physical comfort of the participants.
 - a. Chair/Posture
 - b. Beverage
 - c. Tissues
 - d. Room Choice (good ventilation, relaxed not clinical)

C. Listening involves minimizing negatives that threaten disclosure.

When you do any of the following you stifle the openness and the honesty of the counselee.

1. This means that we never interrupt the counselee in mid-sentence or mid-thought.
2. This mean that we do not correct, challenge or dispute with them while they are answering our questions.
3. This means that we do not make judgmental statements especially in the information gathering stage of the counseling process.
4. This means that we do not make statements that reflect impatience or disgust on our part.
 - “What is it this time?”
 - “I can’t believe you would do that?”
 - “That was a stupid thing to do!”
 - “When will you ever learn?”
 - “I told you this would happen?”
5. This means that we do not feel like we must adjust every misstatement or poor word choice. We need to focus on the intent and meaning not the phraseology and the wording.
6. This means that we do not reflect negative body language.
 - a. Positive body language includes the following:
 - Nodding (not nodding off)

- Good eye contact
- Good facial expressions
- Good posture (slightly forward in chair)
- Expressing appropriate emotions

All of these things say, “I am interested in you and what you have to say.”

b. Negative body language includes the following:

- Nodding off or yawning
- Slouching
- Crossing Arms
- Looking at watch or clock repeatedly
- Looking away or staring off into space
- Playing with any object

All of these things say, “I am not really interested in anything that you have to say.”

7. This means that we do not go overboard in giving positive strokes and thereby actually reinforce negative behavior.

D. Good listening involves good note taking.

The counselor should never counsel without paper and pencil in hand. Ask the counselee for permission to take notes and explain to them the purpose for this.

1. The purpose of note taking.

- a. To glean and record clues to root problems.
- b. To list out future agenda items.
- c. To do for us what even a good memory cannot do.

2. The service your notes will provide.

- a. They will help you to remember to ask certain questions of clarification without having to stop the counselee in mid-conversation.
- b. They will help you remember things that were said from session to session.
- c. They will help you to keep a record of homework and homework results.
- d. They will help you refresh your memory over long periods of time.

Occasionally you will get someone that comes back to you with another problem much later. At times people's recollection of advice and counsel that they received is different than yours. These notes can help to settle an argument.

3. Guidelines for successful note taking.
 - a. These notes are for your eyes only.
 - b. These notes should contain your own code words.
 - c. These notes should be kept in a safe place.
 - d. These notes should be destroyed when no longer needed.

III. The Importance of Clarifying Statements

One of the common practices of people who come for counseling is using words and phrases that often put themselves in the best light but, in fact, are not completely accurate. When gathering facts for the purposes of discovering a solution it is important to get as much accurate information as is possible. Therefore, the counselor will have to graciously interrupt the counselee at times with questions of clarification to help them express themselves in more accurate terms.

A. There are common statements that must be clarified.

1. This includes exaggerations and sweeping generalities.

Counselees often use exaggeration to make their point but in doing so they often make the situation out to be much worse than it really is.

- a. There are certain words that characterize most exaggerations including words like "all, everybody, everything, always, never, anything and no one."

Here are some typical ways in which these words may be used in the counseling setting.

- "My husband never helps me around the house."
- "She always puts me down in public."
- "Everybody is against me."
- "No one truly cares."
- "I have tried everything to fix this."
- "My wife always puts me down no matter what I do."
- "He never cleans his room."
- "My parents never expressed love."

- b. These words need to be challenged and clarified by the counselor.
2. This includes common euphemisms.

A euphemism is a more acceptable word that is used in place of a less acceptable word. It literally is a word that sounds better. This is often applied to swear words in order to tone them down and make them more acceptable in a public setting (e.g. darn for damn or heck for hell, etc.).

In the counseling process counselees rarely like to call things what the Bible calls them. Most of the time when the Bible speaks of wrong behavior it speak of it in terms of some form of “sin.” The word “sin” is not a popular word in our everyday speech. However, if the root of sin is not exposed, there can be no biblical or lasting solution to people’s problems. Confession and repentance for the root causes are still key steps toward wholeness.

Some examples of euphemisms include the following:

- a. Emotional problems

No one really has an emotional problem. In reality their emotions are working just as they are programmed to do. We may be very emotional, but what are the things that are contributing to this result?

- b. Alcoholism

The Bible never uses the word “alcoholism.” It speaks of the sin of drunkenness. As long as we see things as diseases, we will not have a biblical remedy for them. We must seek a medical solution.

- c. Behavioral problems

- d. Eating disorders

3. This includes all non-specific terminology.

There are many words that the counselee will use to describe his or her situation that are very general. If these are not clarified and brought into the world of the specific the counselor will not be able to prescribe specific solutions.

Note the following examples:

- a. The counselee may suggest, “My husband doesn’t love me.”

Love in this context can mean many things. If the counselor is not careful her or she may jump to a wrong conclusion regarding the issue of love. One way to clarify this statement is to ask the counselee, “In what way does your husband communicate to you that he does not love you?”

The answer may be something like, “He works late hours at the office and I don’t get to see very much of him on weekdays. If he really loved me, he would make it a priority to get home earlier.”

That bit of clarification will change the whole discussion about “love.”

- b. The counselee may suggest, “My husband is inconsiderate.”

Rather than the counselor admonishing the husband to be more considerate, it would be appropriate to ask, “In what way does your husband demonstrate to you that he is inconsiderate?”

The answer may be something like, “My husband always wants to watch sports on TV and I would like to see other things like the cooking channel.”

Or:

- “He leaves his dirty clothes on the floor.”
- “He doesn’t replace the cap on the toothpaste.”
- “He cuts off other drivers when he drives.”
- “He doesn’t give tips in restaurants.”
- “He doesn’t use deodorant on his day off.”

- B. There are common excuses that must be challenged.

1. I don’t have the time.
2. I can’t do it.
3. I don’t have the energy.
4. I’ve done my best.
5. I tried but it didn’t work
6. It’ll never work.

Note the following chart from Jay Adam’s Christian Counselor’s Manual, page 107-108 for possible responses.

Typical Counselee Remarks	Typical Counselor Responses
“I can’t!”	“Do you mean that you can’t or won’t?” or, “God says that you <i>can</i> .”
“I have done everything that I could.”	“Everything? What about...”

“I’ve tried that but it didn’t work.”	“Did you <i>really</i> try? How many times? For how long? In what way? How consistently?” (Get the details: “precisely, what <i>did</i> you do?”)
“I did my best.”	“Are you sure? Tell me precisely <i>what</i> you did.” or, “Remember the <i>best</i> is what God says to do. Did you...?”
“ <i>No one</i> believes me, etc.”	“Can’t you think of <i>one</i> person who does? How about some more?” or, “I believe you...”
“I could <i>never</i> do <i>that</i> .”	“Never is a long time. Really, how long do you suppose it might take to learn? By the way, if you think hard enough you will discover that you have learned to do a number of things that are just as hard (or harder). Take for instance...”
“If I had the time, I’d do it.”	“You do. We all have 24 hours each day; it all depends on how you slice the pie. Now let’s work on drawing up a schedule that honors God.”
“Don’t blame me...”	“Are you saying that you are not responsible? God says...”
“Don’t ask me...”	“But I am asking you. Who else would know? I am sure that you know the answer. Think hard; I’ll help you by asking some other related questions, and perhaps we can come up with it.”
“I guess so.”	“Are you really guessing or is that what you believe (think)?”
“You know how it is...”	“No, I don’t know; can you explain it more fully?”
“But I’ve <i>prayed</i> about it.”	“Fine! Then what did you <i>do</i> ?” or, “Have you prayed for help to discover what God’s Word says to <i>do</i> about the problem?” or, hat, exactly, did you pray?”
“I’m at the end of my rope.”	“Which end? Perhaps you are beginning to uncoil your problem for the first time.”
“I have a need to...”	“Is it a need or only a desire? (or habit)”
“I’m just one of those people who has to...”	“Yes, I’m sure you are; but Christ wants you to become a different sort of person.”
“That’s just the way I am.”	“Doubtless, but God says that you can be different.”
“That is impossible.”	“What you mean, of course, is that it is very difficult.”
“There are all sorts of (too many) objections to doing that.”	“Would you mind naming six or seven so that I can see what sort of things you have in mind and determine what it will take to answer them?”
“You can’t teach an old dog new tricks.”	“Perhaps that is true - but you are not a dog. You were created in the image and likeness of the living God! He knows you and commands you to change.”
“It’ll never work.”	“It is God’s way and it <i>always</i> works when people abandon that attitude.”
	“If you are a child of God, as you claim, you will. You are

“I’ll never forgive him!”	going to live with him for eternity; why don’t you forgive him and begin to get used to it now?”
“I don’t do anything half way, so…”	“Are you sure? Can’t you think of some things that you do? For instance, what about…”
“Everything [one] is against me…”	“No, you are wrong. If you are a Christian that Bible says the opposite: ‘If God be for us, who can be against us?’ (Romans 8:31)”
“How do you feel about…?”	“May I tell you what I think, or may I only discuss my emotions?”

C. There are common questions that will help bring clarification to counselee’s statements.

1. How? Or in what way?

This question will help the counselor to understand the way in which a particular problem is manifest. It should lead to a specific activity that is objectionable.

2. What for? Or why?

This question will help the counselor to determine the motive or the intention of the person who was acting in a certain way.

3. How often?

This question will help the counselor to determine the frequency of the problem and whether or not it is a pattern of behavior or an isolated incident.

4. When?

This question will help the counselor to determine whether or not there is a time when the activity in question is more or less likely to occur. It will help you to understand the context of the event or statement.

Lesson 16 Instilling Hope

Instilling hope in the counselee is perhaps the main task of the counselor at the front end of the counseling process. There may be many reasons why the counselee sees his or her situation as hopeless. When you first hear what they have to say, that may be your first thought about it as well. However, we know as Christians we have powerful resources available to us. There is no situation that is beyond God's ability to sort out. The counselor must build hope in the counselee based on the power of the Word of God, the grace of God and the Spirit of God.

I. There are significant reasons why the Christian can have hope in any situation.

A. Because of whom God is.

1. God is love (Jer. 31:3; Rom. 8:37-39; I John 4:8, 16).

Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:37-39

2. God is faithful (Lam. 3:22-23; I Cor. 10:12-13; II Th. 3:3; I Pet. 4:19).

Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

Lamentations 3:22-23

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

I Corinthians 10:12-13

But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.

II Thessalonians 3:3

Notice from the Psalms what God does for me in His faithfulness, He...

- Accomplishes what concerns me (Ps. 57:2; 138:8).
- Acts on my behalf (Ps. 68:28)
- Anoints my head with oil (Ps. 23:5; 92:10).
- Answers me (Ps. 20:6; 34:4; 65:5; 86:7; 91:15; 118:5, 21; 119:26; 120:1).
- Bears my burden daily (Ps. 68:19).
- Blesses me (Ps. 5:12; 67:6; 107:37; 112:2; 115:12, 13).
- Blesses me with peace (Ps. 29:11).
- Blesses my children (Ps. 147:13).

- Break off my bands (Ps. 107:14).
- Brings forth my righteousness as the light (Ps. 37:5).
- Brings me into a broad place, a place of abundance (Ps. 18:19; 66:12).
- Brings me near to Him (Ps. 65:4).
- Brings me out of darkness and the shadow of death (Ps. 71:20; 107:14).
- Brings me out of distress (Ps. 25:17).
- Causes me to lack nothing (Ps. 34:9-10).
- Causes me to rule in the midst of my enemies (Ps. 110:2).
- Chooses me for His inheritance (Ps. 33:12; 65:4).
- Comforts me (Ps. 23:1; 86:17; 94:19).
- Conceals me in times of trouble (Ps. 27:5).
- Counsels me (Ps. 16:5; 32:8).
- Covers me with His wings (Ps. 91:4).
- Crowns me with compassion, loving-kindness (Ps. 103:4) and glory (8:5).
- Deals bountifully with me (Ps. 13:6; 16:7; 140:7).
- Defeats my enemies (Ps. 21:8-12).
- Delivers me (Ps. 18:17, 43; 37:40; 91:14; 97:10).
 - From fear (34:4)
 - From trouble (Ps. 34:17-19; 54:7)
 - From death (Ps. 33:19; 56:13).
 - From destruction (Ps. 107:20).
 - From my enemies (Ps. 18:48).
 - From deadly pestilence (Ps. 91:3).
 - From the devil's traps (Ps. 91:3).
- Does great things for me (Ps. 126:2; 107:15, 21).
- Encamps around me (Ps. 34:7).
- Enlarges my heart (Ps. 119:32).
- Enlarges my steps (Ps. 18:36).
- Enlightens my eyes (Ps. 19:8).
- Establishes me (Ps. 37:23; 89:29).
- Fills my hungry soul with what is good (Ps. 107:9).
- Forgives me (Ps. 32:5; 78:38; 85:2; 86:5; 99:8; 130:4).
- Girds me with strength for battle (Ps. 18:39).
- Gives His angels charge over me (Ps. 91:11).
- Gives me eternal life (Ps. 21:4).
- Goes before me (Ps. 68:7).
- Guards me in all my ways (Ps. 91:11; 121:7; 127:1).
- Guides me (Ps. 31:3; 48:14).
- Heals me (Ps. 30:2; 103:3).
- Hears me when I call out to Him (Ps. 4:3; 22:24; 34:15-17; 40:1; 55:19; 145:19).
- Hears my prayers (Ps. 6:9; 31:22; 116:1).
- Helps me (Ps. 37:40; 86:17; 118:13; 124:8).
- Hides me in the secret place (Ps. 27:5; 31:20).

- Holds my hand (Ps. 37:24).
- Illuminates my darkness (Ps. 18:28).
- Keeps me (Ps. 145:20).
- Keeps my feet from slipping (Ps. 18:36).
- Leads me (Ps. 23:2; 31:3; 77:20; 139:10).
- Lifts me up (Ps. 27:5; 30:1).
- Redeems me (Ps. 43:20; 49:15; 103:4; 130:8).
- Remembers me (Ps. 9:12; 136:23).
- Rescues me (Ps. 18:19, 46; 34:6; 81:7; 91:15; 136:8).
- Restores me (Ps. 14:7; 19:7; 23:3; 53:6; 85:1).
- Revives me (Ps. 71:20; 119:93; 138:7).
- Saves me (Ps. 7:10; 20:6; 37:19-40; 38:22; 55:16; 91:16).
- Sets me on high places (Ps. 18:33).
- Strengthens me (Ps. 18:32; 29:11).

3. God cares about us (I Pet. 5:6-7).

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

I Peter 5:6-7

4. God will never forsake us (Heb. 13:5).

For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

5. God is always working to complete that which concerns us (Phil. 1:6, Amp).

And I am convinced and sure of this very thing, that He Who began a good work in you will continue until the day of Jesus Christ [right up to the time of His return], developing [that good work] and perfecting and bringing it to full completion in you.

B. Because of what God can do.

A good definition of hope is confidence in God's ability to restore our lives to such an extent that we can experience a fresh start in facing life's challenges. Our hope is not dependent upon what we can do, but on what God can do.

1. With God all things are possible (Mt. 19:26; Mark 10:27; Luke 1:27; 18:27).

The things which are impossible with men are possible with God. Luke 18:27

2. God can do what man cannot do.

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Hebrews 11:1

C. Because of the resources that are available to us.

1. We have the Holy Spirit (Refer to Lesson 3).
2. We have the Word of God (Rom. 15:4, Refer to Lesson 3).
3. We have the grace of God (II Cor. 9:8; I Tim. 1:12-16).

And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.

II Corinthians 9:8

And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life. I Timothy 1:12-16

D. Because of whom we are in Christ.

If I am a Christian, then...

1. I am a child of God (John 1:12).
2. I have direct access to the Heavenly Father (Eph. 2:18).
3. I am a new creation in Christ Jesus (II Cor. 5:17)
4. I am a member of Christ's spiritual body (I Cor. 12:27).
5. I am forgiven (Eph. 1:7).
6. I am a citizen of heaven (Phil. 3:20).
7. I am God's temple (I Cor. 3:16).
8. I am God's workmanship (Eph. 2:10).
9. I am seated with Christ in heavenly places (Eph. 2:6).
10. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me (Phil. 4:13).

II. There are certain people who especially need a sense of hope.

It is critical that we build a sense of hope in the counselee so that he or she will be motivated to work on the problem. If people do not have hope, they will often give up on or give in to the circumstances.

Jay Adams in his *Christian Counselors Manual* lists eleven people who especially need hope (page 41-46).

1. People with long standing problems.

It is easy for people to feel that if they have lived with something the better part of their life that they must live with it for the rest of their life. The truth is that both Jesus and His disciples healed many people with long standing problems (e.g. the man born blind, the woman with the issue of blood for twelve years, the lame man at the gate beautiful). Never count God out. While it may take some time to resolve because of the long term nature of the problem, God is the God of new beginnings.

2. People with particularly difficult problems.

People usually know when their problems are difficult or extremely complex. They may have even been fed information from the world of psychology that their problem is due to a genetic disposition and they will just have to learn to live with it or manage it.

3. People who have been improperly labeled by psychiatrists or others (schizophrenic, catatonic, etc.).

Once a person accepts a particular label regarding a certain behavioral activity it is very difficult to free them. In some cases they have accepted that "This is who I am."

4. People who are harassed by fear.

5. People whose hopes have been dashed repeatedly.

Maybe they have tried counseling before and everyone has just thrown up their hands in despair.

6. People who have tried and failed.

Maybe they have tried the very things that you will be suggesting, but for one reason or another they failed in the process.

7. People who are old and find it difficult to change.

Some people have accepted the false notion that "You can't teach an old dog new tricks." That statement is not true in the canine world and it is not true in the world of human beings.

8. People who are in a state of depression, clinical or otherwise.

9. People who have or are contemplating suicide.
10. People who have suffered life-shattering experiences.
 - a. It may be the loss of a person through death, relocation, adultery or divorce.
 - b. It may be the loss of a significant possession through theft, fire or natural disaster.
 - c. It may be the loss of a position on the job or a reputation in the community.
11. People who are without Christ (Rom. 8:24).

III. There are some assurances that you can give to people that will help to give hope.

- A. We can assure them that God has an answer.

Even if you as a counselor are completely at a loss as to how to help the person, we always know that God has an answer. The problem is never too big for him. He is never stumped. He is never unsure of Himself. He never accepts defeat.

- B. We can assure them that we will help them.

We can help them because the weapons of our warfare are mighty. The counselor must project hope by expressing personal confidence in God, His Word and the individual work of the Holy Spirit.

- C. We can assure them that others have had this problem and by God's grace have overcome (I Cor. 6:9-11; I Tim. 1:12-16).

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. I Corinthians 6:9-11

Nothing is outside of the realm of help, change and growth.

- D. We can assure them that it is God's purpose to bring positives out of what appear to be negatives (I Cor. 11:19; II Cor. 4:16-18; Rom. 8:28). God wants you to have something that is even better than what you had before.

Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we

do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

II Corinthians 4:16-18

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

Romans 8:28-30

1. God wants to give beauty of ashes.
 2. God wants to give the oil of joy for mourning.
 3. God wants to give a garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.
- E. We can assure them that God not only wants to fix their problem, He wants to make them a testimony to His grace and power. He not only wants to fix your marriage, He wants to make it a model marriage (Is. 61:1-7).

“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; 2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn, 3 To console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.” 4 And they shall rebuild the old ruins, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the ruined cities, the desolations of many generations. 5 Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the foreigner shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers. 6 But you shall be named the priests of the LORD, they shall call you the servants of our God. You shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory you shall boast. 7 Instead of your shame you shall have double honor, and instead of confusion they shall rejoice in their portion. Therefore in their land they shall possess double; everlasting joy shall be theirs.

IV. There are some cautions in relation to instilling hope.

- A. We must be careful not to give false hope.
1. False hope is misplaced hope.

Our hope must be in God and His Word and not on the counselor’s ability, the parties involved or any other external factor.

2. False hope is hope that denies reality.

Hope is not wishful thinking that does not demonstrate a good grasp of reality. There are certain things that will never be the same.

3. False hope is hope that is based on results without change.

To hope that the counseling process will work without a serious commitment to work and to change by the parties involved is false hope.

- B. We must be careful not to minimize the effort that will be needed.

The problems are very real. It will take real effort. It will be tough, but there is no question that in Christ it is doable.

- C. We must be prepared to rebuild hope at various stages in the counseling process.

Lesson 17

Breaking down the Problem

I. There are several aspects to nearly every problem.

A. There are surface problems or symptoms.

These are the things that are most visible to even a casual observer. Some of these symptoms may include both attitudes and actions.

1. Relational conflict (parents, spouse, in-laws, neighbors, co-workers, employers, etc.)
2. Pornography
3. Substance abuse
4. Explosive fits of anger
5. Sleeplessness
6. Procrastination
7. Physical problems (ulcer)
8. Depression
9. Stealing
10. Physical abuse
11. Cheating
12. Financial mismanagement

B. There are surface causes.

These are often the things that may have triggered the most recent episode. A person who has fit of anger may have responded to someone cutting him off on the highway or giving him poor service of one kind or another. There may be certain settings or things that seem to trigger such behavior and they may appear to be part of the cause for such behavior. However, the real cause for such behavior is most likely much deeper.

C. There are underlying attitudes.

All actions are based on an attitude. It is helpful to discover some of the underlying “whys” for people’s behavior.

For instance:

1. The problem may be lying, but the underlying attitude may be a fear of man (Pro. 29:25) or a lack of trust in God’s ability to provide.
2. The problem may be stealing, but the underlying attitude might be laziness (Eph. 4:28) or a lack of patience to wait for God to supply.

3. The problem might be inconsiderateness of others, but the underlying attitude may be a lack of appreciation for one's dependency on others.

D. There are root problems or causes.

The root problem is usually much deeper and is usually the cause of a multitude of other problems that are tied to the same root. If problems are going to be solved in a permanent way, the root must be discovered and dealt with (Mt. 3:10; 7:15-20; 12:33-35).

The fruit in a person's life is indicative of the root that is feeding or inspiring it. If we do not deal with the root we are only going to be trying to manage the behavior not changing the person.

And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Matthew 3:10

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. 16 You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? 17 Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Therefore by their fruits you will know them. Matthew 7:15-20

Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit. Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. Matthew 12:33-35

II. There are common roots to a variety of problems.

All behavior makes sense when you identify the root.

A. The Bible makes reference to several roots of sinful behavior.

1. The love of money (I Tim. 6:10)

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

The love of money or the desire for wealth can cause people to compromise their standards and alter their behavior in a variety of ways. Love of money often

translates itself into a love for comfort, ease, power, pleasure and all of the other things that accompany wealth or that money can buy.

2. The love of self (II Tim. 3:2)

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! II Timothy 3:1-5

Self-love is an issue that pervades nearly everything that we do. The language of self is the subject of many books and materials ranging from self-esteem, to self-help, to self awareness, to self image, to self worth to personal identity, to personal space and on and on.

- a. There are those that say that we cannot love others until we can properly love ourselves (Mt. 22:39). This statement itself comes from an attitude of selfishness and the desire to make selfishness sound spiritual.

In order to come to this conclusion they use one of the most often repeated statements in the Bible, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Lev. 19:18; Mt. 22:39; Mark 12:31; Luke 10:27; Rom. 13:9; Gal. 5:14; Jam. 2:8).

The conclusion that they draw from this is that you cannot properly love your neighbor unless you properly love yourself. This viewpoint is exemplified in such books as *Love Yourself* by Walter Trobisch. This is a book that is published by a Christian publisher.

One statement that is made in this book is as follows, “It was difficult for her to love others because she did not love herself enough. It is impossible for us to accept the other one as he is if we have not accepted ourselves as we are” (Intervarsity Press, 1976, pg. 10-11).

It is important for us to know that the Bible never teaches this. It never teaches us to love ourselves. The solution to any problem that was addressed by Jesus or the apostles was never, “You need to love yourself more.”

- b. The Bible presumes that we do love ourselves (Eph. 5:28-29).

When it says that we are to love our neighbor as ourselves it means that we are to love our neighbor as we already love ourselves.

So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.

When Paul indicated that men were to love their wives as Christ also loved the church he was speaking of the same love that we are to demonstrate toward our neighbor. This love is characterized by the following:

- It is an unconditional love (Rom. 5:6-8).

We can understand someone dying for a person worth dying for, and we can understand how someone good and noble could inspire us to selfless sacrifice. But God put his love on the line for us by offering his Son in sacrificial death while we were of no use whatever to him. –Message

Christ's love was not earned or deserved by anything that we did or could potentially do for Him. Christ's love was demonstrated by dying so that we could live. Christ's love was unconditional in the sense that there were no strings attached. He had no "ifs" attached to His gift of love (i.e. "I will do this...if you will do that.).

- It is a volitional love (Deut. 7:7-8).

The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

It was an act of His will. He chose to set His love on us. It was calculated and deliberate. It was not a decision based on His emotions. It was not based on what we could do for Him. There was nothing about our beauty, our strength, our potential contribution to Him that made Him want us. It was based on promises made and covenants given in the past.

- It is an intense love (Eph. 5:1-2, 25).

Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma. Ephesians 5:1-2

An intense love is a love that gives itself and puts forth a strong effort. The truth is that you get out of a relationship what you put into the relationship. An intense love is ardent, strained, exerted to a high degree, unremitting, excessive, fervent, very deep and very strong. An intense

love means seizing every opportunity to express that love. This is not something that you make a side issue. It is a primary focus.

- It is an unending love (Rom. 8:38-39; Jer. 31:3; Heb. 13:5; Deut. 31:8).

For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:38-39

The LORD has appeared of old to me, saying: "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you."
Jeremiah 31:3

For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."
Hebrews 13:5

And the LORD, He is the One who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed.
Deuteronomy 31:8

This love is not based on all of the right conditions being present. It is consistent in both the good times or bad times.

- It is an unselfish love (Phil. 2:1-7).

Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and sympathetic? 2 Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one heart and purpose. 3 Don't be selfish; don't live to make a good impression on others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourself. 4 Don't think only about your own affairs, but be interested in others, too, and what they are doing. 5 Your attitude should be the same that Christ Jesus had. 6 Though he was God, he did not demand and cling to his rights as God. 7 He made himself nothing; he took the humble position of a slave and appeared in human form. 8 And in human form he obediently humbled himself even further by dying a criminal's death on a cross.

–NLT

This kind of love puts the other person's desires and interests ahead of itself. This kind of love does not cling to its own rights. A slave has no rights. This kind of love expects nothing in return; it has only the expectation of service. This kind of love requires taking the humble position (humbling ourselves). This kind of love means dying to self daily.

- It is a purposeful love (Eph. 5:25-27).

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

Christ's love works for our improvement. He has a vision of what we can be. He found us one way, but He is going to love us into a "glorious condition."

All of these expressions of God's *agape* love do not leave a lot of room for fostering increased self love.

The reason why we have spent so much time on this is that so much of your counseling will be persuading people to die to themselves and live for others. They will want to argue, "What about my happiness?" "He or she is not meeting my needs!" We constantly have to remind people that the road to true happiness and lasting fulfillment is one of service to God and others (Mark 10:43-45).

Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.

- c. The Bible presumes that we all tend to look out for ourselves (Phil. 2:3-4, 21).

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

Philippians 2:3-4

For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus.

Philippians 2:21

- d. The Bible teaches that we are to die to ourselves (Mt. 10:38-39; 16:24-25; Luke 9:23; Gal. 2:20).

Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it."

Matthew 16:24-25

Luke's Gospel tells us that we must take up our cross "daily" (Luke 9:23).

- e. The Bible tells us that we are to love as Christ loved (I John 4:7-11). This kind of love is always giving and always puts the needs of others above its own sense of comfort and satisfaction.

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. 9 In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

3. Pride (Pro. 16:18)

Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.

Pride was the original sin found in Satan. He wanted the top spot in the universe. He wanted to be in charge. He wanted others to worship him. He wanted it to be all about him (Is. 14:12-14; Ezek. 28:17).

There are many characteristics of the proud as seen in the Bible:

- They are dependent on their own abilities (Dt. 8:11-18; Obad. 3).
- They are confident in their wealth (Ps. 52:7; Rev. 3:17).
- They are boastful (I Sam. 2:3; Ps. 10:3; 73:8).
- They promote themselves (Pro. 17:19; 30:13; Mt.23:12).
- They glory in self accomplishment (Pro. 25:27; I Cor. 4:6-10; Gal. 6:3).
- They despise the less fortunate (Ps. 10:2; Pro. 11:12; 14:21; Zeph. 2:10).
- They do not seek God (Ps. 10:4).
- They do not trust in God (Ps. 52:7).
- They are pure in their own eyes (Pro. 30:12).
- They are disobedient (Ps. 119:21, 69).
- They think evil thoughts (Mark 7:21).
- They believe themselves to be wise (Rom. 1:22).
- They reject correction (Pro. 10:17; 15:5).
- They despise instruction (Pro. 15:5).
- They are mockers (Pro. 3:34).
- They are quarrelsome (Pro. 13:10; 28:25; I Cor. 4:6).
- They are never satisfied (Hab. 2:5).

- B. All of these root conditions amount to the same thing—pride, selfishness, self-centeredness.

We all tend to nourish three of our most favorite objects of affection—Me, Myself and I.

III. There are many things that can compound a person's problem.

A. There are lifestyle issues.

1. Time management
2. Financial management
3. Relationship issues (e.g. in-laws)
4. Occupational stress (e.g. police, fireman)

B. There are stress factors

1. Death of a loved one
2. Personal tragedy
3. Natural disaster
4. Relocation
5. Job loss
6. Financial reversal

C. There are physical issues.

1. Physiological changes (e.g. puberty, menstrual cycle, pregnancy, change of life).
2. Sleep issues
3. Disabilities

While these can complicate the counseling process, it is still the goal to bring bad behavior under the control of the Holy Spirit.

IV. Complex problems must be broken down into smaller parts.

A. This involves identifying specific problem areas (Refer to Supplement 1 to this lesson that enumerates some of the problem area that we are likely to face in the end times).

1. Specific problems can lead to specific solutions.
2. Generalization must be clarified by the counselee.

Examples of generalities:

- a. He doesn't love me. What does that mean?

Clarifying questions include:

In what way does he not love you? What does he do that gives you the impression that he does not love you?

- b. He is inconsiderate. What does that mean?

Clarifying questions include:

In what way is he inconsiderate? What does he do that gives you the impression that he is inconsiderate?

- c. He is sloppy. What does that mean?

Clarifying questions include:

In what way does he demonstrate sloppiness?

- B. This involves pinpointing underlying attitudes.

- C. This involves tracing the problem back to the root.

If the counselees are Christian they will at some point see themselves in the mirror. Part of our job is to help them see self and see sin for just what it is. Hopefully the response will be one of repentance and confession of failure in which case the counselor can move toward a solution. True solutions always involve a death to self.

- D. This often involves prioritizing problems and taking them on one issue at a time.

Supplement 1 to Lesson 17

Sins of the Last Days according to II Timothy 3:1-5

Biblical Description	Synonyms	Antonyms
Lovers of their own selves	Fond of themselves, selfish, utterly self-centered	Selfless, considerate, others orientated
Covetous	Lovers of money, greedy, envious, motivated by money, grasping	Generous, liberal, self-sacrificing
Boasters	Full of big words, blow one's own horn, talk big, show off	Modest, accurate, grasping reality
Proud	Arrogant, conceited, insolent swagger, self-important, inflated, condescending, cocky, intolerant	Humble, lowly, submissive, unassuming, meek not weak
Blasphemers	Railers, irreverent, profane, sacrilegious, cursing/swearing	Reverent, benevolent, pious
Disobedient to parents	Rebellious to authority, disrespectful, obstinate, unmanageable, stubborn, defiant	Obedient, compliant, well behaved, manageable, submissive,
Unthankful	Thankless, inappreciative, critical	Appreciative, grateful, praising
Unholy	Worldly, wicked, corrupt, immoral, unsanctified, indecent, shameless	Spiritual, godly, moral, honest, virtuous, devout, righteous
Without natural affection	Unloving, hardhearted, callous, without familial love, insensitive	Caring, sympathetic, kind, warm-hearted
Trucebreakers	Irreconcilable, uncommitted, unforgiving	Conciliatory, loyal, committed, forgiving
False Accusers	Slanders, malicious gossips, scandal-mongers, liars	Truthful, discreet, accurate, reliable, authentic, faithful
Incontinent	Lacking restraint or self-control, intemperate, given to excess, given to anger	Temperate, controlled, moderate, balanced, coolheaded, easygoing
Fierce	Savage, brutal, uncivilized, barbaric, cruel, sadistic, ruthless	Merciful, gentle, calm, peaceful, civilized, tender, compassionate
Despisers of those that are good	Hateful, hostile to what is good, intolerant of those who practice good, enemies of decency	Promoters of good, lovers of good and those who practice that which is good.
Traitors	Betrayers, treacherous, faithless, devious, two-faced	Loyal, dependable, trustworthy, reliable, safe
Heady	Headstrong, reckless, defiant, adventurers, impulsive, rash, headlong with passion, hot-headed, bent on having one's own way, presumptuous	Manageable, cautious, cooperative, team player, principled, controlled
High-minded	Puffed up, lifted up in mind, swollen with self importance	Humble, treating others with respect, valuing the contribution of others
Lovers of pleasure	Feeling driven, love sensual and vain amusements, lives for the moment	Principle driven, driven by a passion to achieve destiny, able to see big picture
Having a form of godliness	Want to be perceived to be good, maintaining a religious facade, hypocritical, counterfeit, make-believe piety	True, proven, demonstrated, tested, tried, confirmed, real, substantial
Denying the power of God	Stranger's to God's power, having no personal experience with God, resisting its influence in their lives	Their relationship to God is a living, vibrant part of all that they do. They live putting God in His rightful place.

- 1. Lovers of their own selves.** There will be people who have a supreme regard for their own interests and activities with a total disregard for the rights and comforts of others. The word here literally mean “fond of self”. These individuals make “self” the central object of living and trample on anything and anybody that interferes with that.
- 2. Covetous.** There will be people who will make money their goal in life. Every endeavor is evaluated on the basis of what it will produce or what it will cost in dollars and cents. This word literally means “fond of silver.”
- 3. Boasters.** There will be people who go to great extremes to make you believe that they are something other than what they really are. This includes people who attempt to display a style of living that is above their means, people who pretend to be “macho” or “together” when they are really empty. The word itself means “empty pretender.”
- 4. Proud.** There will be people who enjoy putting others down so that they might appear above them. These are people who with pride, arrogance and foolish presumption brag about their position, power, wealth, education, and despise others of lower station and treat them with contempt.
- 5. Blasphemers.** There will be people who love to insult. Pride always begets insult. This can be directed toward God by those who continually insult God by casting doubts on His true nature and character. This can be directed toward other people in cutting and hurting remarks or actions that wound others.
- 6. Disobedient to Parents.** There will be those who manifest obstinate opposition to parents. It is a sign of a decaying society when youth loses respect for the aged and when they fail to recognize the debt that they owe to those who gave them life.
- 7. Unthankful.** These are people who have little or no regard for the contribution that others have made in their lives. They owe everything to themselves and themselves alone.
- 8. Unholy.** There will be those who refuse to recognize even the ultimate decencies of life. The Greek word does not so much mean that men will break written laws, it mean that they will offend against the unwritten laws, which are part and parcel of the very essence of life. To the Greeks, for a brother to marry a sister, a father to molest a child, men to live with men would offend against the fundamental decencies of life. The person who is mastered by his lower passions will gratify them in the most shameless ways. The man who has exhausted the normal pleasures of life, and is still not satisfied, will seek his thrill in abnormal and shameful pleasures.
- 9. Without Natural Affection.** The word here for “affection” refers specifically to “family love”. This refers to people, particularly parents who will not possess a normal, healthy love for their children. The Romans practiced “exposure” of unwanted children. This has been the practice of the heathen throughout the ages. Not only a sacrificing of sons and daughters

to their gods, but other wicked practices as well. The ancient Persians would bury unwanted children alive. In most of the Grecian states the killing of infants was not merely permitted, but actually enforced by law. The Spartan lawgiver expressly ordained that every child that was born should be examined by the men of the tribe, and if it was found weak or deformed, it should be thrown into a deep cavern at the foot of Mt. Taggetus. Aristotle encouraged the exposure of children who were naturally feeble and deformed in order to prevent an excess of population. How similar to abortion practices in our day.

- 10. Trucebreakers.** This Greek word literally means “a pouring out of life.” It indicates that there will be those who are not willing to pour out their lives for another. It refers to those who cannot be persuaded to enter into a covenant.
- 11. False Accusers.** The Greek word here comes from the word for “devil”, the accuser of the brethren. It refers to those who have entered into a close relationship with Satan where they begin to manifest his traits and attributes, where they move at his prompting especially when it comes to inciting division through contentions and quarrels.
- 12. Incontinent.** There will be those who lack any self-control, who lack any restraint, who lack power over carnal desires. It relates specifically to food, sex and the tongue.
- 13. Fierce.** There will be those who are savage, who love brutality (think of modern blood sports). It won't be long before we return to the days of the gladiators and lions.
- 14. Despisers of those who are good.** This word literally means, “hostile to virtue”. It speaks of those who are opposed to goodness and good people.
- 15. Traitors.** There will be those who betray their friends.
- 16. Heady.** This is a word that literally means “falling forward” and refers to those who intentionally sin or fall with no regard for the consequences.
- 17. High-minded.** There will be those who are inflated with self-conceit.
- 18. Lovers of Pleasure.** This refers to those who have taken up vain amusements. Those who are ruled by their senses, who give in to any and all passions. It speaks of the “whatever feels good” lifestyle.
- 19. Form of Godliness.** These are all people who may be church goers who put on a good outward appearance but are not pure within.
- 20. Denying the Power of God.** There will be those who have some semblance or appearance of religion, but they do not allow it to exert any influence on their lifestyle. It imposes no restraint on their passions and carnal lifestyle, but in all respects they live as if they had none.

Lesson 18

Using Scripture in Counseling

When specific problems are identified we are now in a position to share biblical principles that apply to these areas.

I. **There are several things that we must believe about the Scripture.**

A. It is the word of God (I Th. 2:13).

For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.

When you got the Message of God we preached, you didn't pass it off as just one more human opinion, but you took it to heart as God's true word to you, which it is, God himself at work in you believers! –MSG

It is not just one of many other opinions on a given subject.

B. It represents the will of God (Rom. 12:2).

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

It is not just a general will for all mankind, it is represents God's will for every man, woman and child on planet earth.

C. It is the ultimate authority over the believer's life (Deut. 4:1-2; Rev. 22:18-19).

Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you to observe, that you may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers is giving you. You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.

All other authorities in our life are subject to this authority. All other opinions are subject to God's opinion.

D. It gives us an accurate view of the heart of man (Ps. 51:5; Jer. 17:9; Rom. 7:15-25).

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?
Jeremiah 17:9

No matter how we feel about the matter, it is God's analysis that is true and must serve as the basis for our discussion.

- E. It gives us all that we need to live godly in Christ Jesus (II Pet. 1:2-4).

Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

We do not need the word of God plus something else. We need to align ourselves to the word of God and we will have all that we need to live godly in Christ Jesus.

- F. It will thoroughly equip us for every good work (II Tim. 3:16-17).

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

This indicates that the word of God is completely adequate in equipping us for anything that we may do.

“The idea is, that whatever good work the man of God desires to perform, or however perfect he aims to be, he will find no deficiency in the Scriptures, but will find there the most ample instructions that he needs.” –Barnes Notes

- G. It is powerful in and of itself to reveal hearts and affect change (Ps. 107:19-20; Is. 55:10-11; Heb. 4:12).

Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and He saved them out of their distresses. He sent His word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions. Psalm 107:19-20

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. “For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it. Isaiah 55:9-11

- H. It must not be mixed with humanistic thought (I Cor. 2:14).

But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

When the word of God is mixed with other things it loses its purity and it loses its power. To blend the word of God with the false tenets of psychology is to turn fresh water into salt water and sweet water into bitter water.

- I. It is the standard by which we measure all activity (Is. 8:19-20).

And when they say to you, "Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter," should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living? To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

The word of God and the demands of Scripture are the only measuring rod that we are to place up against our lives. We do not measure ourselves against the experience of others. We measure ourselves against God's expectation of us.

- J. It gives an accurate assessment of human behavior (I Cor. 6:9-11).

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

The word of God categorizes many things that we call sickness as sin. It does not do this because it is archaic and outdated but because it is accurate and forthright.

- K. It has the power to set our thinking straight (Ps. 33:4).

For the word of the LORD is right, and all His work is done in truth.

As we allow the word of God to wash over our minds and hearts it has the power to restore right thinking to us. Most of the problems that we encounter in life can be traced to wrong thinking on our part. In order for this to happen, however, we must be willing to submit our thinking to God's thinking and give up all argument with Him on each and every point where there is controversy.

- L. It can give us certainty in an age of uncertainty; it is a sure foundation and it offers a sure reward (Ps. 119:89; I Pet. 1:25; I John 2:17).

All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away, but the word of the LORD endures forever.

I Peter 1:24-25

II. There are several ways that the Scriptures will assist us in the counseling process.

The Scriptures can assist the counselor in...

A. Labeling the specific problem.

When we use biblical labels we have biblical solutions.

B. Locating specific passages that relate to the problem (See Supplement).

C. Identifying scriptural principles that may apply to the situation.

You will not always be able to find a specific verse that addresses a specific problem, but there may be a principle that applies to this situation.

D. Identifying scriptural solutions to the specific problem.

E. Developing a biblical plan of action.

Biblical plans of action will always include words like repentance, confession, forgiveness, restitution, reconciliation, putting off and putting on.

F. Following through on the biblical plan of action.

1. For this we need grace.
2. For this we need the power of the Holy Spirit.
3. For this we need positive encouragement.

III. There are certain times when it is appropriate to use the scripture to challenge the counselee.

A. When the counselee seems to be resisting you or accusing you of being too hard.

B. When the counselee does not consider their activity to be sinful.

C. When the counselee needs to be warned of ultimate judgment and accountability.

D. When the counselee needs to be assured of God's promises to them.

E. When the counselee doubts God's love and genuine concern for them.

F. When the counselee feels like their situation is hopeless.

G. When the counselee needs a challenge to live by faith not by feelings.

IV. There are several ways to use the scripture in the counseling process.

- A. Reading specific scriptures that apply to problem or solution areas.
- B. Giving homework assignments may include Bible reading and memorization.

When involved in counseling it is good to bring your Bible to every session and place it in a way that it is clearly visible by all. This becomes a silent and symbolic reminder that the Word of God is our authority.

Supplement to Lesson 18

Key Verses for Common Situation

Afflictions (Rom. 8:28; II Cor. 4:17; Heb. 5:8; 12:11; Rev. 3:19)

Anger (Gen. 4:5-7; Ps. 7:11; Pro. 14:17, 29; 15:1, 18; 19:11, 19; 20:3, 22; 22:24; 24:29; 24:15, 18; 29:11, 22; Mark 3:5; Eph. 4:26-32; Jam. 1:19-20)

Anxiety and Worry (Ps. 43:5; Pro. 12:25; 14:40; 17:22; Mt. 6:31-32; Phil. 4:6-7, 19; I Pet. 5:7)

Bereavement and Loss (Deut. 31:8; Ps. 27:10; 119:50, 92; I Cor. 6:10; Phi. 3:8)

Change (Ezek. 36:25-27; Mt. 16:24; Eph. 4:17-32; Col. 3:1-14; I Th. 1:9; II Tim. 3:17; Heb. 10:25; Jam. 1:14-15; I Pet. 3:9)

Comfort (Ps. 23:4; Lam. 3:22-23; Mt. 5:4; 11:28-30; John 14:16-18; Rom. 15:4; II Cor. 1:3-4; II Th. 2:16-17)

Confidence (Ps. 27:3; Pro. 3:26; 11:26; Is. 30:15; Gal. 6:9; Eph. 3:11-12; Phil. 1:6; 4:13; Heb. 10:35; I Pet. 2:9)

Death (Ps. 23:4; Ps. 116:15; Lam. 3:32-33; Rom. 14:8; II Cor. 5:1; Phil. 1:21; I Th. 5:9-10; II Tim. 4:7-8; Heb. 9:27; Rev. 21:4)

Disappointment (Ps. 43:5; 55:22; 126:6; John 14:27; II Cor. 4:8-9)

Discouragement (Josh. 1:9; Ps. 27:4; 43:5; John 14:1, 27; 16:33; Heb. 4:16; I John 5:14)

Envy (Tit. 3:3; Jam. 3:14-16; I Pet. 2:1)

Faith (Rom. 4:3; 10:17; Eph. 2:8-9; Heb. 11:1, 6; 12:2; Jam. 1:3, 5-6; I Pet. 4:7)

Fear (Ps. 27:1; 56:11; Pro. 3:25; 10:24; 29:25; Is. 51:12; John 14:27; Rom. 8:31; II Tim. 1:7; I John 4:18)

Forgiveness (Ps. 32:5; Ps. 51; 103:3; Pro. 28:13; Is. 1:18; 55:7; I John 1:9; Jam. 5:15-16)

Forgiving Others (Mt. 5:44-47; 6:12; Mark 11:25; Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13)

Friendship (Pro. 18:24; Mt. 22:39; John 15:13-14; Gal. 6:1, 10)

Growing Spiritually (Eph. 3:17-19; Col. 1:9-11; 3:16; I Tim. 4:15; II Tim. 2:15; I Pet. 2:2; II Pet. 1:5-8; 3:18)

Guidance (Ps. 32:8; Is. 30:21; 58:11; Luke 1:79; John 16:13)

Help or Divine Care (II Chr. 16:9; Ps. 34:7; 37:5, 24; 46:1-2; 55:22; 91:4; Is. 50:9; 54:17; Heb. 4:16; 13:5-6; I Pet. 5:7)

Laziness (Pro. 12:24, 27; 13:4; 15:19; 18:9; 26:13-16; Mt. 25:26)

Loneliness (Ps. 23; Ps. 27:10; Is. 41:10; Mt. 28:20; Heb. 13:5)

Love of God (John 3:16; 15:9; Rom. 5:8; 8:38-39; I John 3:1)

Lying (Ex. 20:16; Pro. 12:19, 22; Eph. 4:25; Col. 3:9)

Obedience (I Sam. 15:22; Ps. 111:10; 119:2; Mt. 6:24; John 14:15, 21; Jam. 2:10; I John 3:22)

Peace of Mind (Is. 26:3; John 14:27; 16:33; Rom. 5:1; Phil. 4:7; Col. 3:15)

Persecution (Mt. 5:10-11, 10:22; Acts 5:41; 9:16; Rom. 8:17; II Tim. 3:12; Heb. 11:25; I Pet. 2:20)

Praise and Gratitude (I Sam. 12:24; Ps. 34:1; 50:23; 51:15; 69:30; 107:8; 139:14; Eph. 5:20; Heb. 13:6; 13:15)

Protection (Ps. 23:4; 32:7; 34:7, 17, 19; 91:1, 11; 121:8; Is. 43:2; Rom. 14:8)

Provision (Ps. 34:10; 37:3-4; 84:11; Is. 58:11; Mt. 6:33; II Cor. 9:8; Phil. 4:19)

Resentment (Pro. 26:24-26; Heb. 12:15)

Sickness (Ps. 41:3; 103:3; Mt. 4:23; John 11:4; Jam. 5:15-16)

Sin (Is. 53:5-6; 59:1-2; John 8:34; Rom. 3:23; 6:23; Gal. 6:7-8)

Sorrow (Pro. 10:22; Is. 53:4; John 16:22; II Cor. 6:10; I Th. 4:13; Rev. 21:4)

Strength (Deut. 33:25; Ps. 27:14; 28:7; Is. 40:29-31; 41:10; II Cor. 12:9; Phil. 4:13)

Suffering (Rom. 8:18; II Cor. 1:5; Phil. 1:29; 3:10; II Tim. 2:12; I Pet. 2:19; 4:12-13; 4:16; 5:10)

Temptation (I Cor. 10:12-13; Heb. 2:18; Jam. 1:2-3, 12-14; I Pet. 1:6; II Pet. 2:9; Jude 24)

Trust (Ps. 5:11; 18:2; 37:5; Pro. 3:5-6; Is. 12:2)

Victory (II Chr. 32:8; Rom. 8:37; I Cor. 15:57; II Cor. 2:14; II Tim. 2:19; I John 5:4; Rev. 3:5; 21:7)

Note: A good resource for other topical treatments in the Bible is *Nave's Topical Bible* or any other topical Bible.

Lesson 19 Sharing Solutions

I. There are some things that lay the foundation for sharing solutions.

One you have pinpointed the problem areas and identified certain sinful behavior the counselor must assist the counselee in doing three things that will help to prepare them to receive biblical solutions.

A. We prepare them for solutions by re-affirming the foundational commitments.

1. Do you still have a desire for the will of God in this area?
2. Are you willing to accept that God's word is His will for you in this area?
3. Are you interested in what God's word says about this area?

If humility is not evident at this point the counselor can go no further. Unless there is a proper attitude toward the word of God and a willingness to adapt their lives to that word, there is no foundation for the counseling process. The counselor may have to remind the counselee that the only thing that a biblical counselor has to offer is God and His word.

B. We prepare them for solutions by bringing them to a place of personal repentance and confession of failure (Pro. 28:13; Jam. 5:16).

He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy. Proverbs 28:13

Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. James 5:16

1. True repentance involves several things.

True repentance results when we “come to our senses” or when we are restored to our “right mind.” A good pattern for what takes place when true repentance occurs is patterned by the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:17-21).

But when he came to himself, he said, “How many of my father’s hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! 18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, 19 and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.’” 20 And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. 21 And the son said to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.”

- a. He realized he had a problem.
- b. He understood that it was he who had to change.
- c. He was willing confess that he had sinned both before God and man.
- d. He was willing to face those whom he had wronged.
- e. He prepared a careful speech so that he would confess accurately.
- f. He made a plan and followed through on that plan.
- g. He refused to blame anyone else for his condition.
- h. He did not presume upon the mercy of others.
- i. He was willing to do what he could to right the wrongs for which he had been responsible.

While the father received him as a son and gave him the robe, the ring and the fatted calf, the prodigal did not know how his father would respond and was willing to be treated like a servant in the house rather than a son in the house.

- 2. Confessing one's sin accomplishes several things.
 - a. It helps the counselee to take personal responsibility for what has been done.
 - b. It helps to pinpoint the specific areas that require change or adjustment.
 - c. It helps to develop a prescription for change.
 - d. It can serve as a basis for genuine hope for changed behavior (Mt. 5:3-6).
- C. We prepare them for solutions by assisting them in asking for forgiveness from God and other offended parties.

God is always the first party to have been offended by our sinful behavior. However, many times we have others who have been offended as well. The more we can make confession and seeking forgiveness a part of the process of counseling the better platform that we will have for changed behavior.

Some people have never learned the proper way to ask for forgiveness. The counselor may have to help the counselee with the specific words to use. Too often our efforts to apologize can end up making matters worse or at best can complicate the situation.

Some people do not seem to have the ability to form words with their mouth such as "I am sorry" or "I was wrong." It is like a foreign language that they have never spoken.

When asking God or another person to forgive us we must take full responsibility for what we have done without blame shifting or offering excuses. Excuses only amount to self-justification.

A good pattern for asking for forgiveness would be the following:

“I am sorry for (name the sin), I know I was wrong and there is no excuse for my behavior toward you, would you please forgive me for what I have done and pray for me that I will be able to change.”

At some point the counselee will be tempted to offer an excuse or to shift blame. This is done when other words are added to the simple statement above.

1. A true apology is to be made without offering excuses.

A true apology does not make additional statements like, “I know I was wrong, but (lame excuse) . Lame excuses include statements like...

- I was tired.
- I had a rough day at work.
- My boss railed on me today.
- I didn't get enough sleep.
- I have a headache.
- My father was this way.
- My older brother picked on me when I was little.
- Etc., Etc., Etc.

2. A true apology is to be made without blame shifting.

A true apology does not make additional statements like, “I know I was wrong, but (accusation) . Blaming others or making accusations will add statements like...

- You aren't so great yourself.
- If you hadn't done what you did, I wouldn't have done what I did.

3. A true apology is best made person to person.

In certain cases it can be made through a phone call or letter. Letters have a lot of value because there is a permanent record of what was said and the wording can be well thought out. Sometimes when we speak “of the cuff” we choose inappropriate words and can reoffend someone with whom we are attempting to reconcile.

For additional teaching on forgiveness especially related to “forgiving oneself” refer to the course *Victorious Christianity*, Lesson 15-17.

II. There common solutions to many problems.

Some people have gotten into the problems that they have because they do not live as a Christian. What they need is a complete reorientation of their life. If they expect the counseling process to have long term benefits, they must be willing to change the orientation of their spiritual compass to include the basics of the Christian life.

These include (but are not limited to) the following:

- A. Personal Prayer
- B. Family Devotions
- C. Regular Bible Reading
- D. Church Attendance
- E. Tithing and Giving to the Poor
- F. Local Church Involvement (Serving)
- G. Building Christian Friendships and Relationships
- H. Participating in Christian Small Groups
- I. Balanced Living (Diet, Exercise, Sleep)

If people would just do these things they would be surprised at how little they would need counseling in the future.

The temptation will be to look at all of this as simplistic. The truth of the matter is that the life of the Christian is both simple and difficult. The early believers did some basic things that set them up for success (Acts 2:42).

In some cases encouraging this person to go through an Encounter Weekend may lay a solid foundation for a reorientation of their life.

III. There is a specific prescription for specific problems.

The right diagnosis is critical for the writing of a proper prescription.

- A. There are several questions that can serve to assist in making a proper prescription.
 - 1. What actions and attitudes must be put off?

Illustration: “Stop It!”

Here we identify the specific things that we are hoping to shed.

- a. This includes habits that need to be broken.
- b. This includes specific actions or responses that need to change.
- c. This includes unbiblical attitudes toward certain things.

Many of the things we are asking people to put off have become almost second nature to them and if this behavior has continued over a long period of time may be thoroughly entrenched in the person. These are often activities that have become so much part of them that they are not always aware when they are actually doing them.

2. What actions and attitudes must be put on?

Not only must we turn away from our sin, we must also turn to the Lord. It is one thing to put off the old man, it is another thing to put on the new man (Eph. 4:22-24).

...that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

The following verses deal with this putting off and putting on process: Romans 13:12-14; Ephesians 4:17-5:20; Colossians 3:1-14.

The following chart gives us a summary of these verses.

Put Off The Old Man	Put On The New Man
Works of Darkness	Armor of Light
Lying	Speaking the Truth
Stealing	Honest Labor
Corrupt Communication	Edifying Conversation
Bitterness	Kindness
Wrath	Tenderheartedness
Anger	Forgiveness
Malice	Love
Fornication	Worship of God
Uncleanness	Goodness
Filthy Language	Truth
Foolish Talking	Carefulness
Drunkenness	Filled with the Spirit

Covetousness	Generosity
Evil Desires	Mercy
Idolatry	Humility
Selfishness	Serving Others

Just as we once yielded our physical bodies to unrighteousness and sin, we are to now yield our members to righteousness and holiness (Rom. 6:12-14).

Jesus taught this same principle of replacement. You cannot just cease doing something, you must do something in its place because nature loves a vacuum (Mt. 12:43-45).

When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. Then he says, "I will return to my house from which I came." And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation.

3. What activities should I avoid doing?

Some common things include:

- a. Staying away from places where I am tempted to do this.
- b. Withdrawing from people who live the same way.
- c. Altering my driving habits and other established routines.

4. What activities can I do that will help?

A lot of what is done here is the opposite of the above.

- a. Go places where the right behavior is reinforced.
- b. Build relationships with people who live the right way.
- c. Establish new routines that reinforce my new decision.
- d. Burn or destroy those things that reinforce the bad behavior (e.g. pornography, alcohol, drug paraphernalia, cigarettes, etc.).

5. Where can I go for help?

Here the counselor can put down his or her own name. Right now you are their best help. Later on this may be another person to whom they have become open and accountable.

6. Why am I doing all of this?

We do not make change to gain a blessing, to get the heat off or to force another person to change. We do it to glorify God and because it is the right thing to do. It is the way Christians live.

B. There are some questions that will help to glean facts that assist in determining an appropriate prescription.

1. How long have you had this problem?
2. How often does this problem occur?
3. Is there something that happens that seems to trigger this behavior?
4. When is it most likely to occur?
5. Is there a particular setting where this would most likely occur?
6. Is there a setting where this would never occur? Why or Why not?
7. Is there anyone else who has brought this to your attention?
8. Is there anyone that you feel you can trust to help give accountability in this area?

The answers to all of these questions will help you give advice regarding their change in behavior.

Supplement to Lesson 19

Problems and How They were Addressed in the Epistles

Verse	Problem	Cause	Solution
Romans 6:1-23	Disobedience, Selfishness, Sin	Yielding our members as instruments of unrighteousness, sinful lusts	Obedience in baptism, death to self, submission to God, yielding our members as instruments of righteousness, cultivating godly desires.
Romans 7:15-8:17	Sin	Innate sinful tendencies of the flesh, the law of sin and death, living according to the flesh	The indwelling Christ and the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, live according to the Spirit, put to death the deeds of the body, be led by the Spirit.
Romans 12:9-21	Hypocrisy, Personal Relationships, Sloth, Pride, Strife, Etc.	Wrong Attitudes	The implications in all of Paul's admonitions is that these believers have the power to control their attitudes and behavior in these areas.
Romans 13:11-14	Revelry, Drunkenness, Licentiousness, Lewdness, Strife, Envy	Making provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.	Cast off the works of darkness, put on the armor of light, walk properly, put on Christ and make no provisions for the flesh.
I Corinthians 1:10-11	Strife, Divisions and Contentions	Spiritual Pride	Speak the same thing, be perfectly joined together.
I Corinthians 5:1-13	Sexual immorality, by inference: covetousness, idolatry, drunkenness, extortion, Etc.	Yielding to the fleshly appetite of lust.	Deliver to Satan for destruction of the flesh. Purge out the old leaven. Do not keep company with them. Put away yourself from the wicked "believer" (i.e. excommunication).
I Corinthians 6:9-11	Fornication, Idolatry, Adultery, Homo-sexuality, Thievery, Reviling, Extortion	Sin, separation from God and unbelief	Being washed, sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.
I Corinthians 6:12-20	Sexual Immorality	Sin against the body	Flee sexual immorality. Glorify God in your body.
I Corinthians 9:24-27	No spiritual momentum	Lack of diligence	Run to win, be temperate, discipline your body.
I Corinthians 15:33	Bad Habits	Evil Company	Awake to righteousness, do not sin.
II Corinthians 4:7-15	Depression, Discouragement	Circumstances and Reversals	A spirit of faith, a confession of faith (vs. 13) and an eternal perspective (vs. 16-18).
II Corinthians 6:11-7:1	Communion with works of darkness	Lack of a separated life	Do not be yoked together with unbelievers, be separate, cleanse yourself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit.
II Corinthians 7:5-7	Downcast	Tribulation	Comfort of the Holy Ghost and godly relationships.
II Corinthians 12:20-13:6	Uncleanness, Fornication, Licentiousness	Not acknowledging Paul and the Word as authority in their lives.	Repentance and self examination.
Galatians	Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanness, Licentiousness, Idolatry, Sorcery, Hatred, Contentions, Jealousies,	Works (lusts) of the Flesh	Walking in the Spirit, Crucifying the

5:16-26	Outbursts of Wrath, Selfish Ambitions, Dissentions, Heresies, Envy Murders, Etc.		flesh.
Ephesians 4:17-5:21 (See also Colossians 3:5-17)	Licentiousness, Uncleanness, Greediness, Lying, Stealing, Corrupt Communication, Bitterness, Wrath, Anger, Clamor, Malice, Fornication, Uncleanness, Covetousness, Filthiness, Foolish Talking, Coarse Jestng, Evil Desire, Idolatry, Blasphemy	Walking like the Unsaved in Carnality	Put off the old man (conduct), be renewed in the spirit of your mind, put on the new man (righteousness and holiness). Put away the negative activity and speak truth, steal no more, give to those in need, speak to edify, be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, walk in love, give thanks, walk as children of light, have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, walk circumspectly, do not be drunk with wine, be filled with the Spirit, praise and worship God and submit one to another. Put on love. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.
Ephesians 6:10-18	Struggle against Principalities and Powers, Rulers of Darkness	The wiles of the devil, the fiery darts of the wicked one.	Put on or take up the armor of God including truth, righteousness, the gospel, faith, the word of God, prayer, watchfulness and stand your ground.
Philippians 2:1-11	Conceit, Selfish Ambition	Pride	Put on humility, esteem others as better than you, look out for the interests of others, become obedient.
Philippians 3:17-21	Walking as Enemies of the Cross	Their god is their belly	Walk according to a good example and the pattern set by leadership.
Colossians 2:4-15	Taken captive by philosophy and empty deceit.	Deception, Persuasive words	Walking in Christ, Understanding Christ's dominance over all principality and power, what happened to you at your baptism and what Jesus accomplished on the cross.
I Thessalonians 5:1-11	Spiritual Sleep, Walking in Darkness	Being sons of darkness	Watch, be sober and put on faith, love and the hope of salvation.
II Thessalonians 3:6-15	Disorderliness, Idle, Busybodies	Carnal believers	Work and mind your own business.
II Timothy 2:25-26	Opposition to Truth	Taken captive by Satan	They need to come to their senses.
II Timothy 3:1-4:5	End Time Attitudes: Proud, Blasphemers, Disobedient, Unholy, Unloving, Unforgiving, Traitors, Head-strong, Empty Religion, Evil Men and Impostors	Love of money, of pleasure and of self	Continue in the things you have learned, continue in the Scripture, preach the Word (4:2), convince, rebuke, exhort with longsuffering and teaching (4:2).
Titus 1:10-16	Insubordinate, Idle Talkers	Love of money	Rebuke them that they may be sound in the faith.
Titus 3:11	Divisive Man	He is warped	Reject
Hebrews 3:7-14	Departing from the living God	Evil heart of unbelief	Hear his voice, do not harden your heart.
Hebrews		Being content with a	You need to be re-taught, feed on solid

5:12-6:3	Immature Christianity	shallow experience in God	food and exercise your spiritual senses. Lay again the foundations (6:1-3)
Hebrews 10:36-39	Backsliding	Drawing Back	Endurance and believing (faith) to the saving of the soul.
Hebrews 12:1-11	Habitual, Ensnaring Sin		Lay aside, run forward, look at Jesus, consider the cross, endure chastening, submit to God.
Hebrews 12:14-17	Falling Short, Defilement, Fornication	Root of Bitterness	Pursue peace with all men, and holiness, repentance (by implication, vs. 17).
James 1:12-15	Sin and Death	Own lusts + Temptation (from the devil) = Sin	Endure temptation (i.e. resist and work through).
James 1:21-25	Filthiness and Overflow of Wickedness	Own lusts (vs. 14)	Lay aside, receive the Word, become a hearer and doer of the Word, continue in it.
James 4:1-10	Wars, Strife, Murder among believers	Desire for pleasure within man, covetousness	War against those desires, submit to God, resist the devil, draw near to God, cleanse your hands, purify your hearts, repent, humble yourselves.
James 5:16	Trespases		Confession and Prayer
James 5:19-21	Wandering from Truth	Error of his way	Turn him back
I Peter 4:1-6	Licentiousness, Lusts, Drunkenness, Revelries, Drinking Parties, Idolatries	Lusts of the Flesh	Arm yourself with the mind of Christ who lived not in the flesh, but lived for the will of God. Do not run with the crowd that does these things.
I Peter 5:8-9	Suffering (vs. 9)	The roaring lion's attacks	Resist him with unwavering faith and the knowledge of how he works [Don't roar back].
II Peter 1:5-11	Stumbling, Barrenness, Uselessness, Blindness	Lack of Diligence	Be diligent to make your calling and election sure. If you do the prescribed things, you will never fall and you will have an abundant entry in to the eternal state.
II Pet. 2:9-22 with Jude 5-15	Uncleanness, Reveling, Adultery, Covetousness, Licentiousness	Presumption and Self Will, Walking in the Flesh	There is no solution given for these individuals. It should be noted that these are professed believers who offer liberty that leads to bondage.
Revelation 2:1-7	Left First Love		Remember, repent and do as you once did (i.e. the first works).
Revelation 2:12-17	Doctrine of Balaam and Nicolaitans		Repentance
Revelation 2:18-29	Sexual Immorality		Repentance, Holding fast to the truth
Revelation 3:1-6	Defiled Garments		Hold fast and repent
Revelation 3:14-22	Luke-warmness		Be zealous and repent

Lesson 20

Giving and Checking Homework

I. **There is an important purpose in giving and checking homework.**

A. Homework has great value for the counselee.

1. Homework helps us measure a person's sincerity and willingness to work.
2. Homework establishes a sense of accountability for what has been discussed.
3. Homework helps us disciple people over a long period of time.

One of the goals of the counseling process is to lead people into a place of self-discipline. The exercises that are part of the homework in the counseling processes can help people to establish new patterns of behavior.

- a. We want solutions to become habits.
- b. We want habits to become lifestyle.

4. Homework paves the way for the counselee becoming independent of the counselor.

With homework assignments it becomes clear that it is their work and not the counselor's work that will effect lasting change.

5. Homework helps us to measure and maintain steady progress.

The last thing that we want to produce is a professional counselee. A professional counselee is all talk and no action.

6. Homework helps people to see that they actually can do things that they do not feel like doing.
7. Homework can help the counsees to stay focused between the actual counseling sessions.

There may be a week or a month between counseling sessions. The natural tendency for the counselee will be to concentrate only when in the actual sessions themselves. Homework will help keep the counselee engaged in gaining solutions to their problem throughout the whole period of time between sessions whatever the frequency of those session may be.

8. Homework can help people to get on track with new patterns of behavior.

9. Homework can create a measure of hope.

This is especially true for married couples. When both parties are willing to do homework it makes the statement to the other, “I am willing to work on this relationship” or “This relationship is worth my personal investment.”

- B. Homework also has value for the counselor.

1. It forces the counselor to prepare in advance for coming sessions.
2. It helps the counselor to stay focused on the issues.
3. It helps keep the focus on solutions rather than problems.

II. There are some fundamental guidelines for giving homework.

- A. Homework assignments should be easy to do (if there is a willingness to do them).
- B. Homework assignments should be understood clearly by the counselee.
- C. Homework should be relevant to the focus of the counsel.
- D. Homework should begin with some form of the basic assignment (See Lesson 13).

III. There are other considerations relative to the giving and checking of homework.

- A. Homework should be checked immediately after the prayer to open each session.

1. If the homework was not completed...
 - a. Find out if there was any confusion as to how to do the homework.
 - b. Give them an opportunity to give a reason why it was not completed.

Sometimes the reason that they give reveals certain things about them that might be contributing factors to other problem areas of their life, such as...

- A lack of discipline
 - A lack of cooperation from the other party
 - A lack of taking the homework seriously
 - Procrastination
 - Poor time management
- c. If the reason is anything other than an act of God, send him or her home and set up another appointment.

- d. In this case remind them of the purpose for the homework and that if they are not serious about it, you cannot and will not take it seriously either.
2. If the homework was completed they should be given the opportunity to share the results of the homework.

There are some questions that the counselor can ask to gain more information from the homework assignment.

- a. Did you find this assignment easy or difficult to do?
 - b. If it was difficult, why do you feel that it was difficult?
 - c. Did you feel that the exercise was productive?
 - d. What do you feel that you learned from the doing of it?
 - e. Would you ever do something like this without it being an assignment?
- B. Homework results can be kept in a personal notebook reserved for that purpose.

Having an official notebook for homework will affirm the importance of homework as a part of the counseling process.

1. In this book they will write down the homework assignment that has been given.

They should write it down before they leave the room. This will help to keep them from forgetting the exact nature of what was said. You may even have them read to you what they have written to avoid any possible misunderstanding or confusion regarding the assignment.

2. In this book they will record the results of their assignment.
3. In this book they will take notes during the counseling sessions.

IV. There is a wide range of homework assignments that can be given.

A. Time Management Issues

1. Keep a log of everything that you did this week noting the actual times.
2. Memorize some scriptures that deal with accountability to God for our life.
3. Develop a schedule for your normal weekly flow of activity including all of your major responsibilities.
4. Listen to *Life Management II*, Lessons 5-6 on Time Management.

B. Parenting Issues

1. Keep a log of each time that you raised your voice to one of your children and the context in which it happened.
2. Discuss the issue of child discipline with your spouse and come up with three primary guidelines on which you can both agree.
3. Spend a quality five minutes with each child individually each day where you discuss their day affirm your love to them.
4. Conduct family devotions three days each week and record what you did and the results.
5. Plan a family outing that is especially geared for the ages of your children.
6. Plan a regular weekly family night with your children and keep a record of what you did.
7. Plan a family vacation and begin budgeting for it.
8. Listen to the CD series on parenting from the Family Issues course and fill in the notes. Be prepared to discuss your observations.

C. Marriage Issues

1. Spend 15 minutes per day in prayer and Bible reading with each other.
Ask the following questions from the passages read:
 - a. Is there an example for me to follow?
 - b. Is there a promise for me to claim?
 - c. Is there a sin for me to avoid?
 - d. Is there a special thought or teaching or insight about God?
 - e. Is there a special application for my life today?
2. Go out on a date this week that is completely planned by the husband.
3. Give each other one conscious and sincere compliment each day. Keep track of your own statements.
4. Work out a solution that you both can agree to regarding _____.
5. Make a list of activities that you both enjoy that could serve as a basis for regular dates.

6. Pray together each night before you go to bed.
7. List five areas that you are happy with in your marriage, two issues that you know you need to work on in your marriage and two issues that you feel the other person needs to work on.
8. Listen to the marriage series from the Family Issues course and fill in the notes. Be prepared to discuss your observations.

D. Financial Issues

1. Keep record of every purchase that you made this week.
2. Bring your shopping list and shopping receipts.
3. Fill out a budget worksheet and a list of all outstanding bills.
4. Contact each of your creditors, apologize for your lateness, assure them of your sense of responsibility and inform them of your proposed payment plan. Record the results of each call.
5. Open a savings account and make an initial deposit. Establish guidelines as to how that money can be used.

E. Personal Issues

1. Keep track of every time that you lost your temper including with whom, when and what led up to it.
2. Do a Bible study on anger and the fruit of it in one's life.
3. Write a letter to your father and forgive him for past sins against you. Bring the letter to the next session. Do not send it until I have approved it.
4. Give a full six hours each working day to look for work. Bring a record of all calls made, all resumes delivered and all interviews conducted.
5. List three long term goals that you have for yourself and when you hope to achieve them. Evaluate your progress in relation to each goal.
6. Listen to *Life Management II*, Lesson 7-12 on money management.

V. **Some resources that will help with assignment ideas for the counselor.**

A. Wayne Mack has developed a number of homework manuals available from his website at mackministries.org.

1. *A Homework Manual for Biblical Counseling: Personal and Interpersonal Problems* (Vol. 1).
2. *A Homework Manual for Biblical Counseling: Family and Marital Problems* (Vol. 2).
3. *A Christian Growth and Discipleship Manual: A Homework Manual for Biblical Living* (Vol. 3).
4. *Strengthening Your Marriage*

B. Some other books include the following:

Christian Therapist's Notebook: Homework, Handouts, and Activities for Use in Christian Counseling by Phillip J. Henry, Lori Marie Figueroa, and David R. Miller

Remember that no matter what resource you use for the counselee's homework, review it ahead of time to be sure it is consistent with your belief system.

Lesson 21

Counseling Cautions

There are a number of cautions that are important to be aware of in the ministry of counseling. Some of these we have alluded to earlier in the course and others we are stating for the very first time. We are repeating some of them for the purpose of emphasis.

I. There are some cautions relative to the counseling schedule.

A. Work counselees into your schedule.

You do not want to continually take time away from your family or other responsibilities for the counseling ministry, especially since all counseling is given for free. Most of the time when people seek professional help they have to pay for the counselor's time. In this case their payment is not money but the sacrifice of some time off from work to accommodate to your schedule. People who are not willing to invest some of their resources into solving their problems are not yet desperate enough.

There may be some exceptions to this general rule depending on the circumstances of the parties involved, but you should be in control of that decision and the one making the judgment in each case.

B. Keep counseling sessions to a specified length.

Counseling sessions should have a time limit for the sake of both parties. When counseling sessions go too long they begin to be counterproductive. The first session might be longer because there will be a significant amount of information gathering. However, all subsequent sessions should be within the context of one hour or less.

C. Give ample time in between sessions so that they can work some things out.

Sometimes, meeting every week can be too often. It is often difficult for people to make significant attempts at change in that amount of time. Twice a month or once a month may be better unless the urgency or intensity of the problem demands greater frequency.

D. Don't be afraid to take a "time out" from counseling.

There may be season where you feel it would be wise to take some time off from counseling. Sometimes the intensity of the counseling process can magnify or keep a constant focus on negatives rather than focusing on positives. At some point as well you may feel you have said all that you can say; now it is time for them to absorb the truth into their lifestyle.

E. Know when to end the counseling process.

If the counseling process has continued for some time, the counselees can become dependent on the process. They may actually enjoy the fellowship that takes place during the sessions. At some point the counselor will have to decide when enough is enough. The termination of the process should be celebrated as a graduation to the next step.

II. There are some cautions relative to the counselor.

A. Be sure you hear all sides of a matter before you render judgment.

Resist the urge to empathize with the person who came to you first. Resist the urge to identify with a particular gender. Women are not always right and men are not always wrong.

When more than one person is involved, it is best to get the parties together to discuss the problem with everyone in the same room. People tend to be more guarded and more accurate with their comments when the other party involved is actually present.

B. Don't answer a matter before you hear it.

We have already emphasized this before, but it is worthy of another mention. Take the time necessary to give appropriate attention to the problem at hand gathering as much information as is necessary to fully understand the situation. Efforts to rush the process will usually delay true change.

C. Don't presume that people know the Bible or the basic principles of the Bible.

It is surprising how many Christians do not have a regular plan of Bible reading. Many of those who do have a regular plan still may have a difficult time applying to the word of God to their own lives. The counselor may have to take more time with the word than would be their normal inclination.

D. Don't counsel when you are emotionally and physically exhausted.

If you are emotionally drained it will be very difficult for you to give your best concentration to the matter at hand. However, there may be times when you will need to reschedule for the sake of everyone in the counseling process. This is why it is best to try to schedule counseling at optimum times for your personal alertness.

E. Don't counsel over your head but refer counselees to where they can get help.

We have touched on this before as well. However, it is so important that you do not allow pride to enter into this process. You must hold the well-being of the person being counseled above your personal ego issues.

F. Don't pontificate.

Resist the urge to preach at people. Try to listen to yourselves through the ears of others. Preaching tends to give the impression that you have never had a problem and that you are intolerant of those who do. It will not be helpful in establishing rapport and a sense of openness with the counselee.

G. Follow the guidelines that have been given by leadership.

If you have been delegated authority by leadership to counsel, never go beyond the established guidelines without the prior permission of those from whom you were given those guidelines. Do not assume that the situation in which you find yourself is an exception to the rule. At times you may have to push the "pause button" on the process to await a decision from those over you in the Lord.

H. Do not contradict or question counsel that has been given to the counselee by another minister or counselor without checking out their statements.

People will often report what another counselor said to them. Unfortunately they will often misrepresent what they have been told, exaggerate what they have been told or leave some important details out from what they have been told. It is best to call a "time out" so that you can check out some of the detail of their report.

I. Guard your tongue so that you do not have to repent yourself (Col. 4:6).

Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.

There are many sins of the tongue listed in the Bible including such things as gossip, backbiting, slander, tale bearing and the like. None of these things should be practiced by the counselor.

This leads to a whole discussion of confidentiality in the counseling process. We do not want to take the time here to discuss all of the ramifications of confidentiality. We give extensive treatment to this subject in the course titled Pastoral Ministry, Lesson 11-12. For our discussion in this course we will focus on some of the practical implications of confidentiality.

1. We have a responsibility as Christians to operate under the laws of love, faithfulness and edification.

If we are going to exercise our Christian duty, it has to put certain cautions into us.

- a. Watch what you share with your spouse and other leaders concerning matters of counsel. Learn to unload on God. We do not want others to pick up an offense that they do not have grace to handle.

- b. Be careful at home especially in front of the children not to discuss the problems of the people.
- c. Do not repeat stories of the failures of others especially when you do not have all of the facts (Ex. 23:1).

You shall not circulate a false report. Do not put your hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness.

- d. Do not allow request for prayer to become a cover for gossip.
 - e. Do not use people and their problems in joking with other leaders.
2. We have a responsibility as Christian counselors to operate with a commitment to the Lord, to the person and to our designated role as a counselor. We do not want to betray people's trust.
- a. Make sure your counseling office is sound proof. If it is not. Talk soft.
 - b. Make sure your waiting area is not the center of traffic flow.
 - c. Keep counseling notes under lock and key. When it is clear that the case is closed, destroy counseling notes that might be incriminating.
 - d. Ask permission to share with other leaders or pastors for your own outside advice and counsel.

J. Be careful about what you identify to be the source of the problem.

The diagnosis of the problem flows directly into determining the solution to the problem. There are four main sources from which problems can arise.

1. Demonic Activity

If the problem is diagnosed as demonic activity the solution requires some form of deliverance ministry. It should be remembered that this is very rare among those who are truly born-again. In all of Paul's dealing with church problems and problem believers in those churches, he never once suggested that the problem was demonic in nature.

If someone tries to treat a person as if they are troubled by a demon when they actually have a physical problem they will not be able to remedy the problem by dealing with the demonic.

The solutions to the problems must be consistent with the correct diagnosis of the problem.

2. Physical Illness

If the problem is diagnosed as brain disease the solution requires either a miracle of healing or treatment by a professional in the medical field.

3. Chemical Imbalance

If the problem is a chemical or hormonal imbalance due to some change of life (pregnancy, puberty, menopause, etc.) the solution to the problem may include prayer but more often than not will involve some assistance from the medical profession.

4. Living and Lifestyle Issues

Research psychiatrist E. Fuller Torrey says that about 5 percent of those who come to a psychiatrist are people with organic brain disease, about 75 percent are people with problems of living, and the other 20 percent “will require closer examination to make a final judgment.”

—*The Death of Psychiatry*, Torrey, page 195

If the issues are living and lifestyle related, we can apply all of the principles of biblical counseling that we have learned in this course.

Praying for a marriage to be healed or trying to cast out a demon is not the answer for most situations. The answers will involve a major lifestyle change on the part of the one being counseled.

K. Learn to keep mercy and truth in perfect balance (Ps. 85:10; 40:11; 89:14; 61:7; Rom. 11:22).

Again, I refer you to the course on Pastoral Ministry, Lesson 6, where we go into more detail on the balance between mercy and truth that is seen in the life and ministry of Jesus.

Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed.

Psalm 85:10

Do not withhold Your tender mercies from me, O LORD; let Your lovingkindness and Your truth continually preserve me. Psalm 40:11

Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; mercy and truth go before Your face. Psalm 89:14

He shall abide before God forever. Oh, prepare mercy and truth, which may preserve him! Psalm 61:7

Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. Romans 11:22

1. Jesus knew when to be the kind, compassionate, forgiving minister of mercy.
2. Jesus also knew when to be the rebuking, correcting and cleansing minister of justice (Luke 17:3).

BAL	A	NCE
<p>The Mercy Counselor</p> <p>Mercy Compassion Forgiving Acceptance Patience Grace Staff Peace Goodness</p>		<p>The Truth Counselor</p> <p>Truth Correcting Rebuking Judgment Intolerance Law Rod Sword Severity</p>

3. The counselor must know when to be merciful and when to be tough (Ezek. 34:16-17; II Sam. 22:26-28; I Cor. 4:21).

I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick; but I will destroy the fat and the strong, and feed them in judgment. And as for you, O My flock, thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I shall judge between sheep and sheep, between rams and goats."
Ezekiel 34:16-17

With the merciful You will show Yourself merciful; with a blameless man You will show Yourself blameless; with the pure You will show Yourself pure; and with the devious You will show Yourself shrewd. You will save the humble people; but Your eyes are on the haughty, that You may bring them down. II Samuel 22:26-28

4. The counselor who must wound must also be prepared to close up the wound (Deut. 32:39; I Sam. 2:6-7).

The LORD kills and makes alive; He brings down to the grave and brings up. The LORD makes poor and makes rich; He brings low and lifts up.

I Samuel 2:6-7

If the counselor opens wounds and does not bind them up it will lead to infection or bitterness in the counselee. There must be a balance between cutting and binding up. You must have a sensitivity to know when to do what.

Part of this process is to let the counselee know what you are doing and why you are doing it. The counselor should be able to say “Why am I doing this? Why am I being so hard? I am doing this because I care about you. I am doing this because I am interested in your recovery. If you know the truth you can eventually be free.”

L. Don't make promises that you cannot keep.

III. There are some cautions when counseling members of the opposite sex.

While counseling with members of the opposite sex is to be avoided if it is at all possible, there are a few times when it cannot be avoided. In such cases you should observe the following guidelines.

- A. Make sure that there are other people nearby who are aware of the counseling session.
- B. Make sure you are in a room into which others can see.
- C. Make sure to sit in a way that there is an object (such as a table or desk) between you and the counselee.
- D. Make sure that you do not touch the counselee physically during the session when offering comfort or prayer (you may shake hand at beginning and end).
- E. Explain to the counselee your guidelines so that they understand and do not take your apparent coolness personally.
- F. Make sure that you do not enter into “indiscreet” discussions about personal or sexual matters.
- G. Make sure to get a member of the same sex involved as soon as possible.

Lesson 22

Using Illustrations in Counseling

I. There are several things that using illustrations in counseling will accomplish.

Different people learn in different ways. People learn by seeing, hearing and doing. The more the counselor can incorporate the various means of learning into the counseling process, the greater the possibility of a positive result from the process. Illustrations are a way to add another dimension to the learning process.

A. Illustrations will help to throw light on or clarify the truth.

The actual word illustrate is related to the word “illuminate” which means to throw light on a subject. It is to remove darkness or clouds of confusion.

B. Illustrations will help the counselee to remember or retain the truth.

If the illustrations are relevant, timely and clear, they can stay in a person’s mind longer than an exhortation without an illustration.

C. Illustrations will lighten the atmosphere and keep the session from becoming too “heavy.”

In some settings where the counseling process has been fairly confrontational in nature, a well placed illustration can lighten the atmosphere and make the truth more palatable.

D. Illustrations will demonstrate the pathway for repentance, change and recovery.

Think of the story of the prodigal son (Luke 15). It teaches many things about the process of recovery.

Refer to Lesson 19

1. He realized he had a problem.
2. He understood that it was he who had to change.
3. He was willing confess that he had sinned both before God and man.
4. He was willing to face those whom he had wronged.
5. He prepared a careful speech so that he would confess accurately.
6. He made a plan and followed through on that plan.
7. He refused to blame anyone else for his condition.
8. He did not presume upon the mercy of others.

9. He was willing to do what he could to right the wrongs for which he had been responsible.
- E. Illustrations can present material that can be looked at more objectively.

When the discussion of a problem becomes quite personal and the counselee becomes quite defensive, an illustration can break the tension and move the focus to something more impersonal. A good illustration can help to separate the actual parties present from the problem. When this happens the problem can be attacked more objectively.

- F. Illustrations can help establish hope.

When stories are shared of other persons who have come through the same thing and prospered, it can lead to hope.

II. There are several sources from which illustrations may come.

Illustrations can come from many sources.

- A. Illustrations may come from your own life and experience.

Personal examples are a tremendous aid in the counseling process. In a sense they can provide a form of modeling, imitation or discipleship. This is a type of mentorship that flows from God to us. The Son imitated the Father (John 5:19, 30). Paul imitated Jesus (I Cor. 11:1). Paul enjoined his followers to follow him (I Cor. 4:16; 11:1; Phil. 3:17).

Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ. I Corinthians 11:1

For you know that you ought to follow our example. We were never lazy when we were with you. We never accepted food from anyone without paying for it. We worked hard day and night so that we would not be a burden to any of you. It wasn't that we didn't have the right to ask you to feed us, but we wanted to give you an example to follow. II Thessalonians 3:7-9, NLT

When you can see others do the same thing that is being asked of you, it gives courage, hope and serves as a practical guide.

This would be especially true when you are dealing with overcoming hardship. You want to be careful not to hold yourself up as the shining example of everything. When you are the perfect parent, the perfect husband, the perfect employee it may come across as arrogant or proud. When you present yourself as someone who has had to face similar challenges it makes your life more relevant to the counselee.

Personal illustrations may include:

1. Personal victories over life dominating sins.
 2. Financial victory over debt.
 3. Personal dealings of God in specific areas of character development.
 4. Growth in areas of family responsibilities.
- B. Illustrations may come from the lives of others (Heb. 6:11-12; 13:7).

And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. Hebrews 6:11-12

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, NIV

Be sure that any story you use about another person is public knowledge or that you have been given permission by the person to use it as an illustration.

This can be a delicate area, but there are people who are seen to be a model of Christianity and are respected by others who can serve as great illustrations. When you can share something of the journey that they went through to get to where they are it can offer hope to those struggling with similar problems.

- C. Illustrations may come from things you already know about the counselee (Phil. 2:12).

Perhaps you can encourage them by things that the Lord has already done in their lives. You can remind them of victories that the Lord had brought in their lives in the past and how he has provided for them.

- D. Illustrations may come from historical figures.

Biographical material can always be valuable especially when the people with whom you are talking have had similar problems. This is especially true if the people in the illustration are generally well known and well respected.

Here are a couple of examples:

1. For people who have tried to do something and failed over and over again.

You can tell them about Abraham Lincoln who is considered one of the greatest U.S. presidents ever. He had a string of failures before he was elected to the highest office in the land.

1831 – He failed in business

1832 – He was defeated for state legislature

1833 – He again failed in business
1834 – He was elected to the state legislature
1835 – His sweetheart died
1836 – He had a nervous breakdown
1838 – He was defeated for speaker of the house
1840 – He was defeated for Congress
1846 – He was elected to Congress
1855 – He was defeated for Senate
1856 – He was defeated for Vice President
1858 – He was defeated for Senate
1860 – He was elected President!

2. For people who feel that they are too old to start over.

You can tell them about a man who lived in the southern United States who had a service station and restaurant business but went bankrupt at the age of sixty five. It appeared that all was lost. As he assessed his condition he took stock of what he could do.

He knew how to do one thing well—fry chicken. He thought he might be able to sell his knowledge to others. He kissed his wife good-bye and in a battered old car, with a pressure cooker and a can of specially prepared flour he set out to sell the idea to other restaurants.

It was tough going and he often slept in the car because there was not enough money for a hotel room. A few years later he had built a nationwide, franchised restaurant chain called Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC). The man's name was Colonel Sanders.

E. Illustrations may come from fictitious stories, movies or songs.

To be effective as illustrations the stories that are used should be commonly known or at least known by the counselee. Also, it is important that when illustrations are drawn from these sources they are in good taste and do not call into question your maturity as a counselor.

F. Illustrations may come from the world of nature.

1. This includes the animal kingdom.

Even the Bible used the animal kingdom to exemplify certain behavior. For instance it uses the ant as a role model of diligence and advanced planning (Pro. 6:6-11).

Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise, which, having no captain, overseer or ruler, provides her supplies in the summer, and gathers her

food in the harvest. How long will you slumber, O sluggard? When will you rise from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep—So shall your poverty come on you like a prowler, and your need like an armed man.

2. This includes the plant kingdom (sowing, fertilizing, watering, pruning, reaping, etc.).

An illustration of life coming out of death is found in the whole cycle of the seed (John 12:24-25).

Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

3. This includes the natural processes (seasons, tides, new moons, erosion, sowing and reaping, etc.).

Jesus often used illustrations from nature.

- a. He spoke of the four different kinds of soil and the yield that could be expected from them (Mt. 13).
- b. He spoke of the rain, flood and wind beating against the house of the wise and the foolish man (Mt. 7:24-27).
- c. He spoke of the power of leaven in the measures of meal (Mt. 13:33; I Cor. 5:6).

G. Illustrations may come from everyday objects with which they may be familiar.

1. Computers and how they work
 - a. They do what they are programmed to do.
 - b. They can only give you what you put into them.
2. Household objects
3. Automobiles
4. Vocations (Doctors, Plumbers, Electricians, Etc.)

H. Illustrations may come from the Bible.

1. People of the Bible

- a. The faith of Abraham
- b. The suffering of Job
- c. The heart of David
- d. The servant spirit of Joseph
- e. The determination of Joshua and Caleb
- f. The humility of Moses

2. Parables of the Bible

- The two debtors (Luke 7:41-50)
- Sewing a new patch on old garment (Mt. 9:16).
- Putting new wine into old wineskins (Mt. 9:9:17).
- Sowing of seeds in the field (Mt. 13:3-23).
- The wheat and the tares (Mt. 13:24-30, 36-43)
- The mustard seed (Mt. 13:31-32)
- Leaven (Mt. 13:33)
- The treasure hidden in the field (Mt. 13:44).
- The pearl of great price (Mt. 13:45-46)
- The dragnet (Mt. 13:47-50)
- The good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37)
- The rich fool (Luke 12:16-21)
- The barren fig tree (Luke 13:6-9)
- The great supper (Luke 14:15-24)
- Building a tower (Luke 14:28-30)
- Going to war (Luke 14:31-33)
- The lost sheep (Luke 15:3-7; Mt. 18:10-14)
- The lost coin (Luke 15:8-10)
- The prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32)
- The unjust steward (Luke 16:1-8)
- The rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31)
- The unprofitable servants (Luke 17:7-10)
- The persistent widow (Luke 18:1-8)
- The Pharisee and the publican (Luke 18:10-14)
- The unforgiving servant (Mt. 18:23-35)
- The householder (Mt. 20:1-16)
- The two sons (Mt. 21:28-31)
- The vineyard (Mt. 21:33-44)
- The marriage supper (Mt. 22:2-14)
- The faithful and wise servant (Mt. 24:45-51)
- The wise and foolish virgins (Mt. 25:1-12)
- The talents (Mt. 25:14-30)

3. Metaphors from the Bible

- a. The potter's wheel (Is. 64:8)
- b. The shaping of an arrow (Is. 49:1-2)
- c. The refining of gold (Ps. 66:10)
- d. The shepherd and sheep (Ps. 23)

I. Illustrations may come from the world of sport.

Paul used athletics often to illustrate his challenges to people. He talked of runners in a race (I Cor. 9:24; Heb. 12:1). He spoke of boxers and how they fight (I Cor. 9:26-27).

J. Illustrations may come from the stages of human growth and development.

K. Illustrations may come from human biological systems.

- 1. The digestive system
- 2. The respiratory system
- 3. The nervous system
- 4. The skeletal system
- 5. The circulatory system

III. There are guidelines that apply to the use of illustrations.

A. Make sure that the illustration is needed.

If your admonitions are already clear there is no need to belabor the point. An illustration is important when you are communicating something that the counselee is finding difficult to understand or to accept.

B. Make sure that the illustration is credible.

If the illustration is not believable it will be difficult for the counselee to accept the implications of the example or the application of it to their situation.

C. Make sure that the illustration is relevant or appropriate.

In other words, it should truly illustrate what you are emphasizing. The illustration should add to not detract from. It should not be difficult to draw a parallel to what you are trying to say in this situation.

D. Make sure that the illustration is obvious.

If the illustration has to be explained then it is not a good illustration.

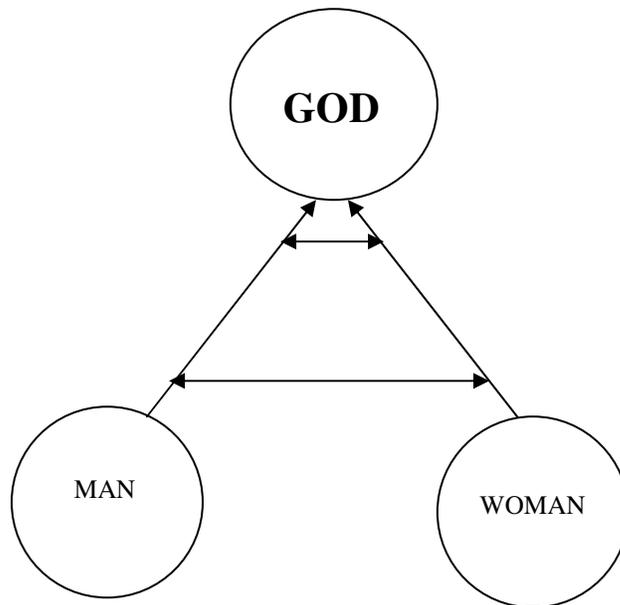
IV. There are charts or diagrams that can be used as illustrations.

Begin to keep a file for charts or diagrams that help you to explain concepts.

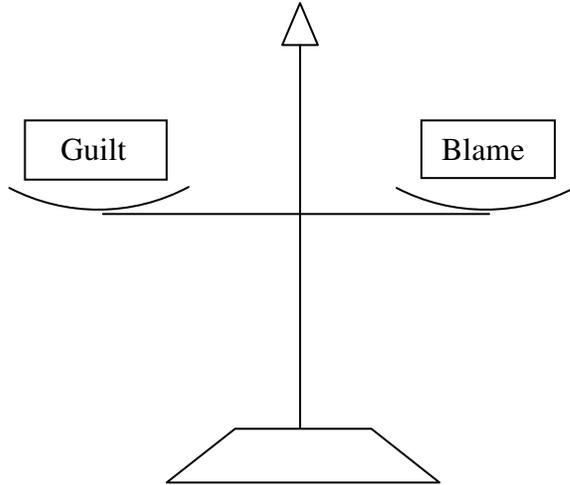
The law of sowing and reaping (See Lesson 9).



How marriage relationships can come together.



How guilt and blame are balanced.



Lesson 23

Common Counseling Questions

There are many areas that could have been covered in this course that did not fit into a specific topic under discussion. For these issues we will answer some commonly asked questions relative to the counseling ministry and process.

A. What are the dangers of being dedicated to the primary ministry of counseling?

There are several things that people who do a lot of counseling need to be aware of.

No one is emotionally built to handle one problem after another without the danger of several things happening.

1. They can become cynical about life wondering if there are any stable people left in the world.
2. They can begin to carry people's problems which can become integrated in their own life. Most people can handle one or two other problems, but when they start piling up they can take their toll.
3. They can become clinical or callous to the problems of people. This is perhaps the most dangerous of the three. This is most likely a defense mechanism to avoid the first two issues.

People that are involved in counseling should also be involved in other aspects of church life. Counseling should be just one of the many things that they do. When this is the case it is much easier for the counselor to stay balanced.

B. What are some guidelines for how a counselor should introduce themselves to the counselee?

Those involved in pastoral counseling need to define themselves to the counselee. That is they need to make it clear who they are and who they are not in relation to the counseling process.

1. Do not portray yourself as a professional counselor, psychologist or psychotherapist.
2. Do not imply that you have professional qualifications when you do not.
3. Keep your terminology biblical instead of clinical. In other words avoid using the terms of psychology when you really do not have the training or authority to do so.
4. Do not present yourself as someone who has "arrived" in relationship to all areas of life.

5. Let the counselee know that the Bible is the basis for your advice. Be sure to have one sitting on the table or in plain view as you give counsel.

C. What are some important guidelines when counseling with minor children?

Because of the serious issue of child sexual abuse and the frequency of false accusations being made in this area, it is wise to observe additional cautions.

1. It is important that parents or guardians are aware of any counseling that occurs in relation to their child.
2. It is wise to have another adult present when children are counseled.
3. The counselor should never go into a child's home unless the parents are present.
4. The counselor should never meet with a child in a private or secluded place alone.

D. What are some ways to confront people without becoming confrontational?

This may sound like a funny question. However, the more you can assist people in coming to their own evaluation of themselves the less it will seem like you are dictating to them. One great technique in this arena is to learn how to turn direct statements into questions. For instance, instead of telling a married person that they have a strong will, you might ask the question, "Would you or your spouse say that you have a strong will?" When this is done, many times the person will admit that they do without you as a counselor having to make an accusation.

The more the counselee can walk the road of self-discovery, the easier it will be to get them to buy into their problem and begin to work toward a solution.

E. When is it inappropriate to hear the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

There are times in the counseling process when you may have to stop the counselee from revealing all. The fact of the matter is, you do not need to hear all of the intricate details of shameful, sinful behavior. This is true whether it is sexual activity or some other type of bad behavior. If we are not careful we can relish hearing about such things. Unfortunately, those images can actually become a snare to us.

At times when a married couple is involved and infidelity is the issue, the offended party will want to know every detail. What did you do? How often did you do it? Where did you meet? Was he or she better than me? Etc., Etc, Etc.

All of these questions need to be discouraged because they can only make the matter worse. We need to know that there has been a breach of trust, to what degree and the actual violation involved, but beyond that we need to be careful about digging too deep additional details.

F. What should be in the heart of counselor at all times?

In the heart of the counselor should be a love for people and a genuine care and concern for them. The purpose of counseling or confrontation is to assist people the same way a caring father or mother would assist their own children. Many times you will ask yourself the question when dealing with people, “If these were my children, what would I say to them? How would I treat them?”

To be a good counselor you must be a people person. Notice the following verses that demonstrate the heart needed to minister to people. This is the heart of a shepherd.

I Corinthians 4:14-15

I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn you. For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

Philippians 1:3-8

I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, 4 always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, 5 for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, 6 being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ; 7 just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace. 8 For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ.

I Thessalonians 2:3-12

For our exhortation did not come from error or uncleanness, nor was it in deceit. 4 But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts. 5 For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness--God is witness. 6 Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. 7 But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children. 8 So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us. 9 For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God. 10 You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; 11 as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father

does his own children, 12 that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

G. What are some common complaints that people have expressed regarding their counselors?

Whether these accusations are true or not, some counselees can develop some of the following impressions from their counselors.

1. The counselor was not really listening to me, they seem to be disinterested.
2. The counselor seemed to be distracted whenever I tried to explain my situation.
3. The counselor seemed to be in a hurry to go somewhere.
4. The counselor treated me like I was a student in the classroom who was acting up.
5. The counselor didn't take me seriously; he acted as if my problem was a joke.
6. The counselor seemed to care more about himself than he did me.
7. The counselor gave a clear impression that he didn't know what to do.
8. The counselor wandered away from my problem and simply talked of others that he had helped.
9. The counselor listened but gave no suggestions, no direction, no motivation and no insight.

H. How important is the issue of sleep?

We live in a world where people do not get proper sleep. In dealing with people this can have a major influence on problems that they are experiencing.

Sleep deprivation can have serious effects on your health in the form of physical and mental impairments. Inadequate rest impairs our ability to think, to handle stress, to maintain a healthy immune system and to moderate our emotions. In fact, sleep is so important to our overall health that total sleep deprivation has been proven to be fatal (lab rats denied the chance to rest die within two to three weeks).

Without adequate rest, the brain's ability to function quickly deteriorates. The brain works harder to counteract sleep deprivation effects, but operates less effectively. In such a case concentration levels drop and memory becomes impaired.

In addition, the brain's ability to problem-solve is greatly impaired. Decision making abilities are compromised and the brain falls into rigid thought patterns that make it difficult to generate new problem-solving ideas. Other typical effects of sleep deprivation can include:

- hypertension
- irritability
- slower reaction times
- slurred speech
- tremors.

I. What are three all-important areas in data gathering?

The following thoughts are taken from *Coping with Counseling Crises* by Jay Adams, pages 28-29.

Three all-important areas in the data gathering process are:

1. The persons involved in the crisis.

Who are they? In what ways are they involved? Are there others besides those who are immediately apparent to the counselee?

2. The relationship of the counselee to each person involved and their responsibility to each party.

Does he owe money? Must he seek forgiveness? Has someone slandered his name?

3. The issues that need to be resolved.

What are they? Of what sort?

J. What are some things that may cause failure in the counseling process?

1. The counselor gets emotionally involved and becomes too sympathetic to the excuses given by the counselee.

In this case the counselor may not hold the counselee responsible for their actions and “let them off the hook.” The counselor must uphold the truth that there is no situation that can occur for which we do not have God’s grace to do the right thing (I Cor. 10:13).

No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

2. The counselor comes to a conclusion too quickly without hearing all of the facts or all of the sides of an issue.

3. The counselor becomes offended by the person they are counseling and takes the matter personally.
4. The counselor takes sides in an issue because of some factor totally unrelated to the problem.
5. The counselor overemphasizes his or her involvement over that of the Spirit and the Word.

The effect of this is making the counselee overly dependent upon the counselor and putting them into a position where they can never be totally released from counsel.

K. What are some things that you have learned about the counseling process?

1. No change will be permanent unless the person is changed on the inside. External conformity is only behavior modification and it will not last unless the heart is changed.
2. No problem is ever solved until it is solved according to the Word of God.
3. No matter how much you care about people, you cannot fix everyone.
4. After all is said and done, people are freewill beings and will do what they want to do.
5. People who resist the counseling process or balk at the advice they are given often end up worse than before they confronted truth.
6. People who are not open and walk out on your counsel will eventually have to face the truth and may come back to you if you keep the door open.

L. What is the ultimate motivator when it comes to moving people toward biblical behavior?

When nothing else works, people need to understand that they will ultimately give account to God for how they respond to the admonitions of His word. They need to know that every believer will appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences. II Corinthians 5:10-11

1. This judgment involves believers only and does not deal with the issue of forgiven sin and the salvation of the believer (Eph. 1:7-8; Is. 43:25).

2. This judgment concerns the believer's faithfulness to all the will of God (Luke 12:42-48).

And the Lord said, "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? 43 Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. 44 Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has. 45 But if that servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk, 46 the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. 47 And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. 48 But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more."

Lesson 24

Counseling Resources

I. Counseling Resource Books

The following list, while hardly exhaustive, will provide a basic reference tool for selecting materials to help those we are serving to become more conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. The books may vary in their emphasis and in their approach but they have been selected because they point to the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit ministering through the Word of God as the keys to affecting permanence and productive change.

You will find that some of the authors actually disagree in their approach to methodologies, psychology, and supernatural phenomena (e.g. demonic oppression, deliverance, gifts of the Holy Spirit, etc.). The authors also vary in the extent to which they address a particular problem or need.

A. *The Renewed Mind* by Larry Christensen

This is a very basic but outstanding book built on the premise that significant changes can take place in our lives as our minds are renewed to simple biblical truths. The author makes clear the distinction between what God has done and what we are to do as a result. This is a brief but helpful presentation on the difference between faith and grace and law and works.

He also addresses such topics as temptation, guilt, and forgiveness; the timing of God in the affairs of our lives, the power to forgive; the place of faith and patience; the purpose of trials and afflictions, and some helpful principles of prayer.

The Renewed Mind is a help for discipleship as well as a counseling tool for the very basic areas needed for growth in the life of a Christian.

B. *Common Care Counseling Course and Materials* by Terry & Cheryl Edwards and Bill Rose Kimball

This is by far one of the best resources for the Christian Counselors. It is designed for the Christian who wants to be of service to those in need around him. The course and its material offer specific practical helps for solving the most basic problems that we face as believers.

This course and its booklets also provide guidelines for counseling and specific scriptural instruction in 16 basic problem areas. Subjects covered include worry, fear, anger, depression and condemnation... just to name a few. Each booklet can be used for instruction, discipleship, counseling and accountability; all with a view toward effecting change in the life of a believer.

C. *Competent to Counsel* by Jay Adams

Adams clearly presents the authority of biblical counseling in sharp contrast to the humanistic approaches offered not only in secular society today but also in the church. He particularly emphasizes the finished work of Jesus Christ, the power of the Word of God and the Holy Spirit, the personal responsibility of every believer and the ability of Christians to serve one another in the counseling process.

While this volume primarily addresses the foundations of counseling, it also offers practical instruction in the counseling process.

D. *The Christian Counselor's Manual* by Jay Adams

As the title suggests this tool is a comprehensive handbook of counseling procedures and practices and their application to many of the problems that we will confront as counselors. Adams discusses the responsibility of the counselor and the counselee, the actual counseling session, the variety of approaches to various problems, the use of homework and accountability, and the various scriptures that apply to each of these problems and situations.

This work is invaluable as a textbook for instruction as well as a handbook for application.

E. *Christian Counseling/ A Comprehensive Guide* by Gary R. Collins, PhD

This book like Jay Adams' Counselor's Manual is a comprehensive textbook of problems, needs and issues requiring the assistance of a competent counselor. This work is extraordinarily thorough in its selection of counseling problems and its biblical solutions to those problems.

Collins deals with personal issues such as depression, anger and guilt; single/marital problems, family issues such as child-rearing, adolescents, and vocational counseling; and other issues such as finances, drugs and alcohol, grief and life traumas.

This also would be an invaluable addition to a counselor's library.

F. *More Than Redemption* by Jay Adams

Not a book of "how-to's" *More Than Redemption* is a study in the various doctrines that are foundational to all counselors. Jay Adams discusses the relationship between God and man, the affects of sin, and the role of the church in the counseling process. These are just a few of the theological themes that are presented as a means of helping us understand the root causes and basic solutions to the counseling problems that we face.

G. *Handbook for Helping Others* by Kenneth Stafford

This handbook gives basic yet very helpful material for counselors. It presents basic Christian counseling methods and topical helps for specific needs and problems.

H. *Strengthening Your Marriage* by Wayne Mack

This book is full of teaching outlines and homework assignments on issues related to building a strong marriage. He deals with understanding God's purpose for marriage, the responsibilities of the wife, the responsibilities of the husband, communication in marriage, finances in marriage, sexual unity in marriage, raising children and family devotions. Wayne Mack has a website where other materials can be found including the homework manuals that were referred to in Lesson 20 of this course.

I. *The Peace Maker* by Ken Sande

This book is a biblical guide to resolving personal conflict. A key work of every counselor is bringing people back together, restoring relationships and resolving conflict. This book has become a classic work on these areas of counsel.

J. *The Premarital Counseling Handbook* by H. Norman Wright

Norman Wright has become a household name in the area of premarital counseling. This book brings together some of his best material and gives alternative resources from which the counselor may draw including three other books that he also authored, *How to Speak Your Spouse's Language*, *So You're Getting Married*, and *Before you Say I Do*.

K. *How to Counsel from Scripture* by Martin and Deidre Bobgan

This book is a great resource for the counselor. It focuses on the issue of change including methodology for change, the dynamics of change and key elements in the change process. It has some good discussions on the receiving and giving of love, the receiving and giving of forgiveness and the difference between inner and outer change.

L. *Crisis Counseling* by H. Norman Wright

This book is a good book when dealing with specific crisis issues. It has chapters on such themes as depression, suicide, death, divorce, wayward children, teenagers, life transitions and post-traumatic stress. It also has a chapter on the process of intervention.

M. *Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage in the Bible* by Jay Adams

This is perhaps the best book on the subject today. The object of the book is to truly discover what the Bible teaches in this area. At all times it attempts to balance mercy and truth.

II. School of Ministry Resources

School of Ministry can be an important resource to the counselor when dealing with various issues. The following are some of the topics that are discussed at length in school of ministry.

Topic	Course Title	Lesson(s)
Repentance	Victorious Christianity Ministering to Personal Needs	Lesson 5-9 Lesson 1-4
Faith	Victorious Christianity	Lesson 10-12
Water Baptism	Victorious Christianity Ministering to Personal Needs	Lesson 13 Lesson 5-6
Holy Spirit Baptism	Victorious Christianity Ministering to Personal Needs Holy Spirit	Lesson 14 Lesson 7-8 Lesson 10-11
Speaking with Tongues	Holy Spirit	Lesson 12
Hearing and Doing	Victorious Christianity	Lesson 3-4
Receiving Forgiveness	Victorious Christianity	Lesson 15
Forgiving Others	Victorious Christianity	Lesson 16
Forgiving Yourself	Victorious Christianity	Lesson 17
Taming the Tongue	Victorious Christianity	Lesson 18-20
Understanding Affliction	Victorious Christianity	Lesson 21-23
Eternal Judgment	Victorious Christianity	Lesson 24
Healing	Ministering to Personal Needs	Lesson 9-10
Discovering Life Purpose	Life Management I	Lesson 4-6
Finding My Place in the Body	Life Management I	Lesson 7-12
Stewardship	Life Management II	Lesson 1
Setting Goals/Priorities	Life Management II	Lesson 2-3
Time Management	Life Management II	Lesson 5-6
Prosperity and Success	Life Management II	Lesson 7-8
Financial Management	Life Management II	Lesson 9-10
Tithing	Local Church	Lesson 12
Getting out of Debt	Life Management II	Lesson 11-12
Choosing a Career	Life Management III	Lesson 6
Honesty in Work	Life Management III	Lesson 7
Excellence in Work	Life Management III	Lesson 8-9
Ethics in Business	Life Management III	Lesson 11-12
Sharing Your Faith	Evangelism	Lesson 5
Marriage Covenant	Family Issues	Lesson 3
Marriage Roles	Family Issues	Lesson 4

Loving Your Spouse	Family Issues	Lesson 5, 10
Communication in Marriage	Family Issues	Lesson 6
Resolving Conflict in Marriage	Family Issues	Lesson 7
Sex in Marriage	Family Issues	Lesson 9
Parental Responsibilities	Family Issues	Lesson 11
The Value of Children	Family Issues	Lesson 12
Child Discipline	Family Issues	Lesson 13-14
The Atmosphere of the Home	Family Issues	Lesson 15
Family Devotions	Family Issues	Lesson 16
Successful Family Living	Family Issues	Lesson 18
Dating for a Believer	Family Issues Social Roles and Relationships	Lesson 19-20 Lesson 11-12
Divorce and Remarriage	Family Issues	Lesson 21
The Blended Family	Family Issues	Lesson 22
Grand Parenting	Family Issues	Lesson 23
Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit	Holy Spirit	Lesson 9
Prophecy	Holy Spirit	Lesson 18-19
Church Discipline	Local Church Pastoral Ministry	Lesson 14 Lesson 20
Local Church Commitment	Local Church	Lesson 15
How to Pray	Prayer & Personal Bible Study	Lesson 2
Prayer Models	Prayer & Personal Bible Study	Lesson 3-4
Activities of Prayer (Journaling)	Prayer & Personal Bible Study	Lesson 5
Fasting	Prayer & Personal Bible Study	Lesson 8
Reading the Bible	Prayer & Personal Bible Study	Lesson 9-11
Israel and the Church	Walking in Present Truth	Lesson 8-9
Relationship to Authority	Social Roles and Relationships	Lesson 3
Relating as a Christian	Social Roles and Relationships	Lesson 4
Cultivating Friendships	Social Roles and Relationships	Lesson 5-7
Moral Purity	Social Roles and Relationships	Lesson 8
Romantic Relationship	Social Roles and Relationships	Lesson 9-10
Engagement	Social Roles and Relationships	Lesson 11-12
The Authority of the Bible	Basic Doctrine I	Lesson 3-8
The Faithfulness of God	Introduction to Counseling	Lesson 16
The Power of the Devil	Basic Doctrine I	Lesson 15-18
Angels	Basic Doctrine II	Lesson 7-9
Heaven and Hell	Basic Doctrine II	Lesson 19-20
Eschatology	Basic Doctrine II	Lesson 21-24

III. The Internet is a good source for counseling resources.

While it is absolutely critical to screen the material that you find on the internet and be sure that it is in line with the principles of biblical counseling that you have learned in this class, it is amazing how much material is out there and available for free. There are

articles and outlines on nearly every subject that you could name. Some of the material you will find is very good and useful, some of it is not so good and not so useful. However, often the counselor will be able to find some good material on the subject of their choice.