

# FOUNDATIONS

of Biblical Counseling



2024  
Grace  
Fellowship  
Church







Thank you for taking the time to attend this year's Counseling & Discipleship Training. We recognize the sacrifice it takes to be able to participate in a conference like this and we're grateful for the opportunity to host and serve you each weekend.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 tells us, "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 affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God." We have received much grace, and it is our joy to pass on what we have been freely given!

Our prayer is that your walk with the Lord is strengthened and challenged, equipping you to be able to walk with others in grace and truth—to the praise of His glory!

If you have questions or need some assistance, look for people in shirts that say "VOLUNTEER." They are servant-leaders of GFC and would be happy to assist you in any capacity .



**Erin Greenwood**  
*Interim Director of Counseling*  
Grace Fellowship Church

## Reminders



WiFi: **Grace Public**



**Lunch on Saturday is not provided**, but if you need recommendations, check out the Saturday Lunch Options page of your notes.



Online notes and other conference info will be updated at: **[graceky.org/cdt](http://graceky.org/cdt)**



**We will be recording the sessions.** When they are ready, we will email a link to the video recordings of the track you registered for.



### **Resource Center Hours**

September Weekend: Friday: 4:00PM-8:45PM / Saturday: 7:30AM-5:00PM  
October & November Weekends: Saturdays: 11:45AM-5:00PM

# Saturday Lunch Options



## **The Blind Squirrel**

8537 U.S. Hwy 42, Suite 6, Florence, KY - 1.6 miles



## **Valle Escondido (Mexican)**

8863 US 42, Union, KY - 2.0 miles



## **Boomtown Biscuits (Biscuit-based meals)**

9039 US 42, Union, KY - 2.3 miles



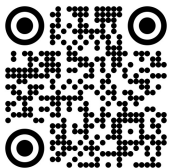
## **Panera Bread (Bakery/Soup & Sandwiches)**

9085 US 42, Union, KY - 2.6 miles



## **Grandma's Pizza**

8449 US 42, Florence, KY 41042 - 1.6 miles



## **Mai Thai (Thai)**

7710 US 42, Florence, KY - 3.0 miles



## **The Farmstead Market & Cafe**

9914 Old Union Rd, Union, KY - 2.9 miles

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# Friday Schedule

Sep 13, 2024

WKND 1

<i>5:00PM-6:05PM</i> <b>Brad Bigney</b>		What Makes Biblical Counseling Biblical?
<i>6:05PM-6:20PM</i>		BREAK
<i>6:20PM-7:20PM</i> <b>Brad Bigney</b>		Build Involvement
<i>7:20PM-7:35PM</i>		BREAK
<i>7:35PM-8:35PM</i> <b>Brad Bigney</b>		Give Hope
<i>8:35PM-8:45PM</i>		BREAK
<i>8:45PM-9:45PM</i> <b>Peter LaRuffa</b>		Gathering Data

# Saturday Schedule

Sep 14, 2024

WKND 1

<i>8:00AM-9:05AM</i> <b>Peter LaRuffa</b>	Discerning Problems Biblically
<i>9:05AM-9:25AM</i>	BREAK
<i>9:25AM-10:25AM</i> <b>Peter LaRuffa</b>	Providing Instruction
<i>10:25AM-10:45AM</i>	BREAK
<i>10:45AM-11:45AM</i> <b>Peter LaRuffa</b>	Giving Homework
<i>11:45AM-1:00PM</i>	LUNCH BREAK
<i>1:00-2:00PM</i> <b>Doug Markesbery</b>	Case Study/Observation
<i>2:00PM-2:20PM</i>	BREAK
<i>2:20PM-3:20PM</i> <b>Doug Markesbery</b>	Progressive Sanctification
<i>3:20PM-3:35PM</i>	BREAK
<i>3:35PM-4:35PM</i> <b>Brad Brandt</b>	Helping Counselors Understand How to Change

# What Makes Biblical Counseling Biblical?

*Brad Bigney / Grace Fellowship Church*

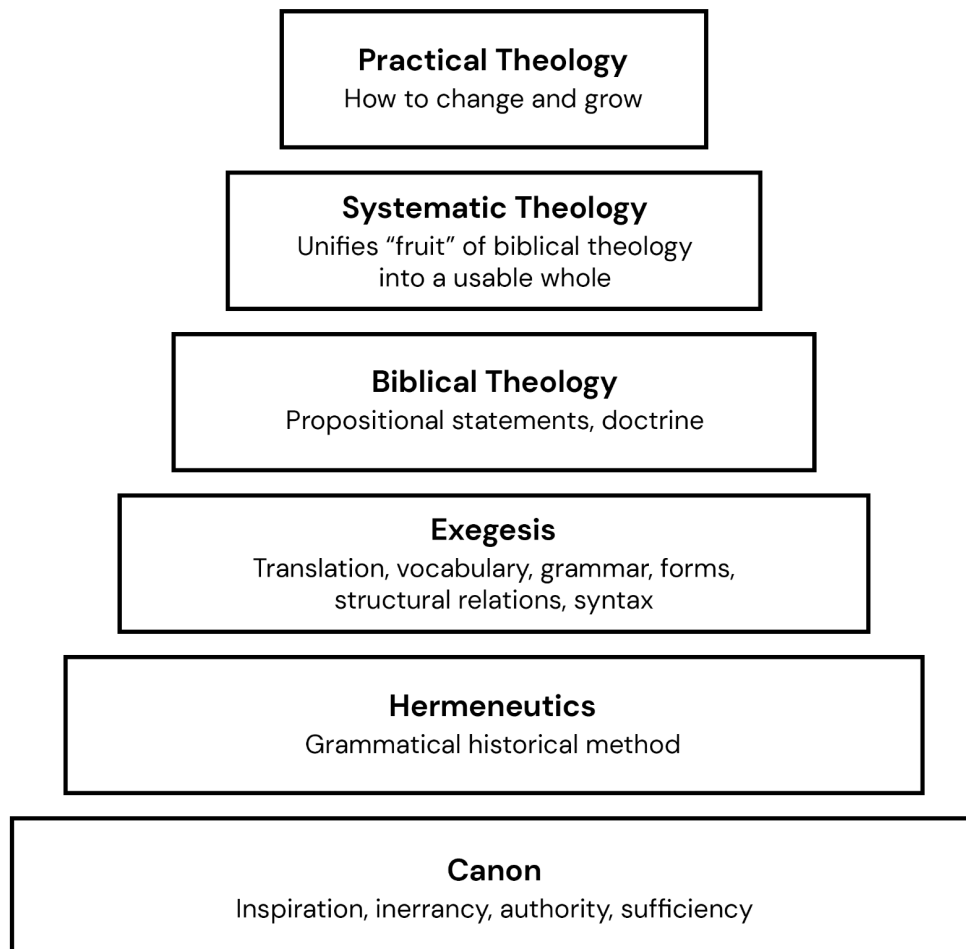
## Introduction:

Why is this topic needed?

1. Because not all counseling that proposes to be **biblical** truly is.
2. Because all of us need to be **growing** as biblical counselors.
3. Because all of us need **caution** in our “cutting” and “pasting.”

## I. When It Recognizes The Bible As Foundational.

### A. Theological Pyramid





"I know that theology is not stylish in this generation of Christians. When our friends think of going for help for their souls, they usually think in terms of their feelings and egos — their innerness, their hearts — and quite naturally gravitate to counselors, psychologists, and psychiatrists — something along the lines of the therapeutic.

But in matters of the Christian life, and especially prayer, it is the theologian we want at our side, to help us start with God, not just end up with God as a court of last resort... We Christians need theologians far more than we need psychologists."

~ Eugene Peterson, *The Wisdom of Each Other*, pp. 49–50

"Few ministers and priests think theologically. Most of them have been educated in a climate in which the behavioral sciences, such as psychology and sociology, so dominated the educational milieu that no true theology was being learned. Most Christian leaders today raise psychological and sociological questions even though they frame them in scriptural terms. Real theological thinking, which is thinking with the mind of Christ, is hard to find in the practice of ministry. Without solid theological reflection, future leaders will be little more than pseudo-psychologists, pseudo-sociologists, pseudo-social workers. They will think of themselves as enablers, facilitators, role models, father or mother figures, big brothers or big sisters, and so on, and thus join the countless men and women trying to help their fellow human beings to cope with the stresses and strains of everyday living. But that has little to do with Christian leadership."

~ Henri Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus*, pp. 65–66,  
as quoted by John Piper, *God's Passion for His Glory*, p. 25

**Biblical Counseling** = Coming **alongside** someone with God's Word, filled with the Spirit, giving **hope** and **help** from God's Word, staying with them long enough for them to experience **lasting** change – from the inside out.

**B. Implications:**

1. Level six without levels 1-5 is not biblical **counseling**.
2. Levels 1-5 without level six is **incomplete** and ineffective.

**1 Tim. 4:16** "Watch your life and doctrine closely..."

**Matt. 7:24** "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock."

**C. Questions I need to ask:**

1. Is it possible that some of what I'm doing in level six isn't firmly grounded in Levels 1-5?
2. Is it possible that I have not put a sufficient amount of effort into developing Levels 1-5?

## II. When It Recognizes the Bible As Sufficient.

**2 Pet. 1:3-4** "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and excellence,<sup>4</sup> by which He has granted to us His precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire."

A. ...because of the effect of a thinker's presuppositions.

B. Therefore, the Bible must have active functional control even to the degree a concept is emphasized in the model.

## III. When It Can Be Derived and Understood By Any Growing Believer.

A. Biblical counseling does not have a "gnostic flavor."

B. Biblical counseling produces an increased confidence on the part of qualified believers.

**2 Cor. 2:14** "But thanks be to God, who always leads us to triumph in Christ Jesus, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place."

## IV. When It Is "Elastic" Enough to Grow With the Counselor's Understanding of Scripture.

# Presuppositions of Biblical Counseling

A “presupposition” is a preceding condition that’s necessary if you’re going to understand what follows. So, what are some of the presuppositions of biblical counseling? Or what are some of the conditions that you need to have in place in order to really understand biblical counseling?

Dr. Stuart Scott, Professor of Biblical Counseling at Southern Seminary, lists the following presuppositions:

- I. The God of the Bible is the Sovereign **Creator** and **Sustainer** of the universe.
  - A. God will not allow anything to come into our lives which is beyond our control that will permanently damage or hinder His best for our lives (1 Cor. 10:13; Phil. 1:6; Rom. 8:28–29; 1 Thess. 5:18; Lam. 3:37; James 1:2; Eph. 1:11).
  - B. There is a **redemptive** value in every problem. God can use it for our **good**. God is far more concerned about our **character** than He is in removing the problem. Our character has value in this life and for eternity (Phil. 2:13; Jude 24; Eph. 3:20; 1 Tim. 4:7–9).
- II. Man was created in God's image as a **responsible** being. One cannot make **excuses** before his Creator (Gen. 1:26–27; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 20:11–15; Ezek. 18:2ff). \*If one does not act responsibly, there will be emotional consequences.

- III. Sin is thinking or acting **independently** of God and results in both temporal and eternal misery. God's laws are not optional for Christian and non-Christian alike (Prov. 14:14; Ps. 14:1; 2 Cor. 10:4-6; Prov. 23:7; Prov. 13:15).
- IV. The Bible is the only **complete** and **authoritative** source which was written specifically to provide both the answers to man's behavioral problems and the means for man's behavioral changes. It is totally **sufficient** in these areas.
- A. Man can only change in two ways: external and internal.
- B. Only God can change the internal as well as the external (Rom. 10:14-17; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Thess. 5:23-24).
- V. Apart from **organically** caused factors, all of man's voluntary thought and behavior is moral, for which man is responsible before God and his neighbor (2 Cor. 5:10; Matt. 12:33-37; Mark 7:18-23).
- VI. Every functional behavioral problem which man experiences is a result of **failure** to love God or man or both as the Bible says he should (Matt. 22:37-40).
- VII. Regeneration by the Holy Spirit is a **prerequisite** for biblical change and obedience on the part of the counselee (1 Cor. 1:18-2:16; 2 Cor. 5:17).

- VIII.** The only behavioral changes in man which are **pleasing** to God and are ultimately beneficial to men are those which are affected by means of the Holy Spirit applying the Word of God in sanctifying power to the will and mind of the counselee in accordance with biblical methods and directives (John 17:17; 1 Pet. 2:2; Col. 3:1-17; Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:23).  
\*The proper motivation will be one of love and gratitude.
- IX.** All **methodology** must grow out of biblical principles and practices. Thus, non-Christian content or methods have no necessary place in biblical counseling (2 Cor. 6:14-18; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Col. 2:6-10; 1 Pet. 1:13-21).
- X.** The biblical counselor should **expect** and see results from biblical counseling (1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Rom. 15:13; Rom. 8:28-29; Phil. 4:13; 2 Pet. 1:3-4; Eph. 3:20).
- XI.** Biblical counseling requires and includes church **accountability** and discipline where that is biblically necessary. Thus, biblical counseling should ultimately be done under the authority of some church. Church discipline is corrective in design and only for professing Christians (Matt. 18:15-17; Gal. 6:1; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; Matt. 7:1-5).
- XII.** God requires and equips **all believers** to counsel to one degree or another. Additionally, God holds the officers of the churches responsible to counsel as a part of their life calling (Matt. 18:15-17; 1 Tim. 3:4-5; Rom. 15:14; Titus 2:9ff; 2 Tim. 4:1-2; Heb. 13:17; Gal. 6:1).
- XIII.** Man's basic needs are to **know** God (be forgiven and know His person) and **glorify** God. By man's meeting these needs, his other secondary needs are met as a by-product: safety, acceptance, belonging, properly evaluating himself (1 Cor. 10:31; 2 Cor. 5:9; Phil. 1:6; Matt. 6:33; Jer. 9:23-24).

- XIV.** The ultimate **goals** of the counselor (encourager) for the counselee (needy one) are:
- A. To allow him to acquire the biblical perspective and practical theology relative to his presenting problem(s).
  - B. To facilitate a meaningful walk with God in Christ-like behavior (Isa. 55:8-9; Jer. 9:23-24; Rom. 8:28-29; Phil. 2:1-11; 3:10).

### **Recommended Resources**

*Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*, Paul Tripp

*Biblical Counseling and the Church*, Bob Kellemen

*A Theology of Christian Counseling*, Jay E. Adams

# Build Involvement

## Key Element of Biblical Counseling

*Pastor Brad Bigney / Grace Fellowship Church*

### 3. Build Involvement

**Gal. 6:1-2** "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. <sup>2</sup> Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

A. Establish the kind of relationship with the individual that will lead to them not only telling you their concerns but also being willing to accept your counsel. Building involvement creates an opportunity to meet the counselee's need.

B. You build involvement when you:

#### 1. Demonstrate compassion

**Matt. 9:35-36** "And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, healing every sickness and every disease among the people. <sup>36</sup> But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd."

**The Message** "When He looked out over the crowds, His heart broke. So confused and aimless they were, like sheep with no shepherd."

If you just hate sin and love the Bible, you're not ready to be a biblical counselor. You need more. You need compassion.



- a. Consider what it would be like to be in the counselee's position

**Phil. 2:20-21** "I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare. <sup>21</sup> For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ."

- b. Consider what it would be like for you if the counselee were one of your family members

**1 Thess. 2:7-8** "But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children. <sup>8</sup> 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."

- c. Think about how you can practically show them compassion – in the way that you pray for them... in the way that you rejoice and weep with them... and by the fact that you keep telling them how you care for them, and love them, etc.

**Acts 20:31** "Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn (noutheteo) everyone night and day with tears."

**Gal. 4:19** "...my little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you."

**The Message** "Do you know how I feel right now, and will feel until Christ's life becomes visible in your lives? Like a mother in the pain of childbirth."

Effective biblical counseling is like child-birth as we stand by them and groan with them... and pray for them until Christ's life becomes more visible in their lives.

**John 3:30** "He must increase, but I must decrease."

2. Be careful and cautious whenever you're counseling the opposite sex
  
3. Show respect for the counselee
  - a. Use proper verbal communication

**2 Tim. 2:24-25** "And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. <sup>25</sup> Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth."

**1 Thess. 5:14** "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all."

"Only when we begin to see that theology is not merely about repeating back answers but instead more like caring for a garden can we care well for others. Good gardeners have been trained to pay attention to the soil in their hands and not just the instructions in a book. From the book they have learned about soil: what is needed, what to add, and how to care for it. But in the end, nothing can replace examining the dirt itself, for no two patches of the land are the same. Each person is coming from a different circumstance, with specific challenges and needs, with individual strengths

and temptations. Part of loving well is figuring out what response is needed and appropriate in a given circumstance...”

~ Kelly Kapic, *Embodied Hope*, p. 25

- b. Use proper nonverbal communication (position, eye contact, voice, etc.)
- c. Take the counselee seriously
- d. Express appropriate confidence in him
- e. Welcome his input
- f. Continually thank them for coming – and tell them how well they’re doing
- g. Maintain biblical confidentiality

But this will look very different than the secular model of what “confidentiality” means.

Here’s what we have spelled out in the initial paperwork that everyone reads and signs before they begin counseling with us:

**Confidentiality:** Confidentiality is an important aspect of the counseling process, and we will carefully guard the information you entrust to us. However, because we are continually training others to be effective counselors we ask that you agree to allow counselors in training to be present during your sessions. There are four other situations when it may be necessary for us to share certain information with others: (1) When a counselor is uncertain of how to address a particular problem and needs to seek advice from another pastor or elder in this church; (2) when a counselee attends another church and it is necessary to talk with his or her pastor or elders; (3) when there is a clear indication that someone may be harmed unless we otherwise intervene; or (4) when a person persistently refuses to renounce a particular sin and it becomes necessary to seek the assistance of others in the church to encourage repentance and reconciliation (see Prov. 15:22; 24:11; Matt. 18:15-20). Please be assured that our counselors strongly prefer not to disclose personal information to others, and they will make every effort to help you find ways to resolve a problem as privately as possible.

4. Be sincere

a. Be real

b. Be honest about your skill, qualifications, strengths, weaknesses, goals, and agenda

“I’m not a medical doctor.”

“I’m not an attorney or legal expert.”

“I’m not a financial planner.”

5. Provide loving, firm control of the session
  
6. Gather data thoroughly before giving advice (Prov. 18:13, 15, 17)

### **Recommended Resources**

*The Christian Counselor's Manual*, Jay Adams

*Embodied Hope*, Kelly Kapic

*Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*, Paul Tripp

# Give Hope

## Key Element of Biblical Counseling

Pastor Brad Bigney / Grace Fellowship Church

### 4. Give Hope

#### a. Biblical hope is a sure thing

**Heb. 6:18-20** “God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged.<sup>19</sup> We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain,<sup>20</sup> where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.”

Biblical hope = A confident expectation of future blessing, based on the **character** and promises of God.

Examples:

- You can't promise that an unfaithful spouse will return.
- You can't promise that children will be obedient and respectful.
- You can't promise that your counselee's infirmities will disappear.
- But you can promise that God is always who He says He is and that His promises are always true. With His help, your counselee can persevere and become more Christ-like and more pleasing to Him.

#### b. Biblical hope is rooted in Scripture

**Rom. 15:4, 13** “For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope... <sup>13</sup> May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

c. Biblical hope has several **benefits**

i. It does not disappoint.

**Rom. 5:5** “Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”

ii. It changes our grieving.

**1 Thess. 4:13** “But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.”

iii. It helps by reorienting us (momentary vs. eternal).

**2 Cor. 4:8–10, 16–18** “We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; <sup>9</sup> persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. <sup>10</sup> We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body... <sup>16</sup>

Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. <sup>17</sup> For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. <sup>18</sup> So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”

Use Wayne Mack's book, *Down But Not Out ~ How to Get Up When Life Knocks You Down*.

d. A lack of hope has **negatives**

- i. Despair (Ps. 42:5).
- ii. A sick heart (Prov. 13:12).

e. Ways to **give** hope:

i. Point people to the **promises** of God

1 Cor. 10:13; Rom. 8:18–29; James 1:2–4; Rom. 5:1–5; Gen. 37–50 (the story of Joseph)

Use resources like *Christ and Your Problems* by Jay Adams.

ii. Point people to the biblical **pictures** that God gives.

**Jer. 17:5–8** "Thus says the LORD: 'Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart departs from the LORD. <sup>6</sup> For he shall be like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see when good comes, but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land which is not inhabited. <sup>7</sup> Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, and whose hope is the LORD. <sup>8</sup> For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river, and will not fear when heat comes; but its leaf will



be green, and will not be anxious in the year of drought, nor will cease from yielding fruit.”

iii. Point people to the **Savior** of hope!

Use Gospel narratives — get them to see Jesus.

See list of Bible reading assignments (end of outline) that bring them face to face with Christ and how He responded to broken sinners.

iv. Give an appropriate **testimony**.

- Your own
- Brooklyn Tabernacle Church in NY – website testimonies
- Your observer(s) that are sitting in with you
- Former counselees or someone else in your church family
- The writers of Scripture

**Lam. 3:19–26** “Remember my affliction and roaming, the wormwood and the gall. <sup>20</sup> My soul still remembers and sinks within me. <sup>21</sup> This I recall to my mind, therefore I have hope. <sup>22</sup> Through the LORD’s mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. <sup>23</sup> They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. <sup>24</sup> ‘The LORD is my portion,’ says my soul, ‘Therefore I hope in Him!’ <sup>25</sup> The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, to the soul who seeks Him. <sup>26</sup> It is good that one should hope and wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.”

3x uses of the word "hope"!

- v. Label **sin** as sin! Avoid defeating terms and labels.
  - vi. Be **solution**-oriented.
  - vii. Minister the Word, don't just **dispense** it!
1. What's the difference? To minister the Word is to **unpack** the verse (explain its meaning) and apply it to their life situation.

- For Example: 2 Cor. 4:8-9

I draw a line down the middle of the board and start showing the differences between what God says is true about us vs. how we feel and what Satan tells us about our situation.

Hard Pressed	vs.	Crushed
Perplexed	vs.	in Despair
Persecuted	vs.	Abandoned
Struck Down	vs.	Destroyed

- For Example: 1 Cor. 10:13

**God's Promises**

Your trial is not unique.  
through  
"...common to man..."

**Satan's Lies**

vs. No one else has ever gone  
  
anything like this before!

Your God is faithful.

"...but God is faithful..."

vs. God's not there for you; He's left  
you on your own for this one.

**God's Promises**

It's not more than you can handle.  
vs.  
"...not leave you to be tempted  
beyond what you are able... that  
you may be able to endure"

**Satan's Lies**

This is too much; no one can  
endure this.

There is a way out of this.

"...but will with the temptation  
provide the way of escape..."

vs. There's no way out;  
you're stuck.

- **Matt. 7:24-27** - House built on the rock and house built on the sand
  - Both were building a house (building a home or living a life)
  - Both faced the same trials (rain, floods, winds)
  - Both heard the Word of God
  - One and only one characteristic that sets apart the house build on 'Rock' – they put it into practice!

2. Dispensing Scripture involves discussing it in a **superficial**, generic manner with little application. The use of too **many** verses in a session can contribute to this.
- 
- viii. Tell approximately how **long** you expect to counsel.

### **Recommended Resources**

*Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*, Paul Tripp

*The Christian Counselor's Manual*, Jay Adams

*Embodied Hope*, Kelly Kapic

## **Face to Face with the Savior of Hope**

### ***Gospel Scripture Reading Homework Assignments***

1. **RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST / PRAYER / HOLY SPIRIT** – Read John 14-17
2. **PROBLEM OF THE HEART** – Mark 7-9 (take up cross, prayer and fasting)
3. **OBEY / BELIEVE / RESPOND TO THE WORD** – Mark 4-6 (parable sower, healing demoniac, healing woman with issue blood, feeding 5,000)
4. **OBEY / BELIEVE** – Matt. 8-9 (Centurion's faith, healing of paralytic, woman with issue of blood)
5. **RESPONDING TO WORD** – Luke 24 (Emmaus Road)
6. **POWER OF CHRIST & HIS WORD** – Luke 5, 7, 10 (Martha and Mary)
7. **POWER OF CHRIST & HIS WORD** – John 11 (Lazarus)
8. **FORGIVENESS** – Luke 7 (woman forgiven much), Luke 15 (prodigal), Matt. 18 (unforgiving servant), 2 Cor. 2 (forgive lest Satan take advantage)
9. **JESUS' DEATH / RESURRECTION FOR YOU** – Mark 14-16 or John 18-20
10. **TEMPTATION** – James 1, Matt. 3-4 (Jesus in wilderness) or Luke 4
11. **HEALING / SICKNESS** – Luke 13-14 (woman bent over 18 years)
12. **COMPASSION OF CHRIST** – John 4-5; 8 (Samaritan woman, pool of Bethesda, woman caught in adultery)
13. **PERSISTENT PRAYER** – Luke 18 (persistent widow), Mark 9 (prayer and fasting)
14. **ENCOURAGEMENT / HOPE** – Read John 10-11 three times and record principles you can apply to your own life right now
15. **JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH** – Isa. 53, Luke 18 (Pharisee vs. tax collector), John 1 & 3 (Lamb of God who takes away sin of world)

# Gathering Data

## Key Element of Biblical Counseling

Pastor Peter LaRuffa / Grace Fellowship Church

### I. Introduction

- A. The importance of gathering data can't be overstated.
- B. The effectiveness of your biblical counseling will always correlate with your effectiveness in gathering data.
- C. You cannot help people solve problems if you don't understand the problem or how it manifests itself in their lives.
- D. Listening well is a necessary skill for all counselors.

- a. Listening is loving to counselees.

**1 Cor. 13:4-7** - "Love is patient, love is kind. Love does not envy, is not boastful, is not arrogant, <sup>5</sup>is not rude, is not self-seeking, is not irritable, and does not keep a record of wrongs. <sup>6</sup>Love finds no joy in unrighteousness but rejoices in the truth. <sup>7</sup>It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. "

- E. *"People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care."*  
Many times counselees have shameful issues to talk about, but they want to know you care first. Listening demonstrates your love for them and desire to better understand them.
- F. Note how many times Jesus asked questions: 307.

## II. Important Principles re: Gathering Data

### A. You are relying upon the Holy Spirit.

**1 Cor. 2:10-12** – “Now God has revealed these things to us by the Spirit, since the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. <sup>11</sup>For who knows a person’s thoughts except his spirit within him? In the same way, no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. <sup>12</sup>Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who comes from God, so that we may understand what has been freely given to us by God.”

**John 14:26** – “But the counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have told you.”

### B. To varying degrees, all biblical counseling is a spiritual battle.

**2 Cor. 10:3-5** – “For although we live in the flesh, we do not wage war according to the flesh, <sup>4</sup>since the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but are powerful through God for the demolition of strongholds. We demolish arguments <sup>5</sup>and every proud thing that is raised up against the knowledge of God, **and we take every thought captive to obey Christ.**”

Spiritual warfare is real. Satan’s end goal is to drive souls and society into ruin. **His primary method is lies** (John 8).

### C. You must pray and study the Word (Heb. 4:16; Col. 3:16).

- D. Pray the Lord will help you know if this counselee is a believer (1 John 2:3-4, 4:12; John 3:16).
  - a. Only believers have the Spirit to work in them to repent and grow (John 16:13).

### III. Hearing vs. Listening

**Prov. 20:5** – “Counsel in a person’s heart is deep water; but a person of understanding draws it out.”

A. Hearing and listening are not synonymous.

- a. Hearing refers to the physiological process of perceiving sound through your ears. It is passive, involuntary, and occurs without conscious effort, including both intentional and unintentional exposure to sound.
- b. Listening refers to understanding what is being communicated. It is an active, intentional process requiring focused skill and effort on the part of the hearer.
  - i. Consider James 1:22.

### IV. Listening Well

A. LISTEN.

**Prov. 18:13** – “The one who gives an answer before he listens — this is foolishness and disgrace for him.”



B. Listen ACTIVELY.

**Prov. 18:15** – “The mind of the discerning acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks it.”

C. Listen actively for FACTS.

**Prov. 18:17** – “The first to state his case seems right until another comes and cross-examines him.”

- a. Data gathering should involve mostly clarifying questions looking for facts (who, what, where, when, how often, etc).
  - i. Facts will help you better evaluate what is truly happening.
- b. “Why” questions are usually better asked after having spent some time together in God’s Word.

D. Memorize L.I.S.T.E.N.

- a. **L**ean in and look into their eyes.
- b. **I**nquire by saying, “Help me understand...” and, “Tell me more...”
- c. **S**top suggesting solutions.
- d. **T**ell them what you think they’re saying, and ask, “Did I get that right, or did I misunderstand?”
- e. **E**xpress sympathy by saying, “Wow, that must be very hard.”
- f. **N**ever interrupt (good note-taking skills will help you ask a clarifying question later instead of interrupting now).

## V. Using Questions to Gather Data

A. Ask open-ended questions (Gen. 3:8ff).

*Pro-tip: If your question can be answered by "yes" or "no," rephrase it so it can't.*

*That's a great way to get an open-ended question!*

B. Ask questions that grow out of questions.

C. Ask intensive questions (focusing on one area, digging deep, looking to gain understanding).

a. "What did you argue about?"

b. "How long did it continue?"

c. "Who was involved?"

d. "To what degree did either of you 'get physical?'"

e. "How was the issue resolved?"

f. "How often do things like this occur?"

D. Ask extensive questions (looking broadly at the timeline of their life, searching for "hot spots").

a. "How would you describe your relationship with God right now?"

b. "What is happening in your relationship with your wife? Children? Parents? Friends at church?"

c. "How would you rate your communication between you and your spouse? You and your kids?"

d. "How are things going with your finances?"

e. "How has intimacy been between you and your spouse?"

- E. Ask “Self-Talk” Questions.
  - a. “What do you tell yourself...?” (...when you look in the mirror? ...when you go to bed at night? ...when you leave from spending time with him/her?...etc.) These messages can be positive or negative.
  
- F. Ask questions in a broad range of areas (*Introduction to Biblical Counseling*, John F. MacArthur, Jr. and Wayne A. Mack, pp. 212–228).
  - a. The PREACHD acronym from Dr. Mack helps you to remember the areas to ask about:
    - i. **Physical Data**
    - ii. **Resources**
    - iii. **Emotions**
    - iv. **Actions**
    - v. **Concepts**
    - vi. **History**
    - vii. **Desires, affections of the heart**

## **VI. Using Homework Assignments to Gather Data**

- A. Use a Personal Data Inventory (PDI) – see <https://www.graceky.org/biblical-counseling/forms/> for examples.
  - a. Have counselees fill it out before your first session with them.
  - b. Work through it slowly over sessions 1–4 to better understand their answers.
  
- B. Use other tools to gather data like journals, lists, tests, counseling notes, etc. Assign homework and use it to gather information.

- a. Find our GFC Counselor’s Toolbox here:  
<https://www.graceky.org/biblical-counseling/counselor-toolbox/>
  - b. “Family of Origin” Questionnaire (digital – see  
<https://forms.gle/zURWY3YmLeiySAy77> for an example)
  - i. Wise biblical counselors will seek to understand a counselee’s past, particularly to look for times of suffering, unconfessed sin, and to better the epistemological foundation their lives have been lived upon thus far. The Family of Origin Questionnaire is extensive and very helpful, especially in understanding differences between spouses' pasts and upbringings. I never go through it in a session, but will sometimes refer to something if it comes up later, or something they say may alter the way I direct the counseling process (ex: indication of any type of abuse; exposure to another’s life-dominating sin like pornography, drunkenness, drug use, etc.)
- c. How’s It Going? (<https://forms.gle/McishmniW8NR7x8t9>)

At least 1X/day, rate the day:

4 = (glorious; joy-filled; happy; grateful; hopeful)

3 = (could be better, but generally good)

2 = (could be worse, but generally bad)

1 = (bad; discouraging; awful; hopeless)

For each entry, make a quick note as to what factored into the rating you submitted. This can be as little as just a few words, or paragraphs similar to a

journal entry (whatever you prefer). Review the cumulative results each week, then after a month.

d. Help Me Understand By Telling Me More (digital)

*"Use this form to better explain what you brought up in counseling that I wanted to hear more about, but didn't have time to go into. Doing this will help us hit the ground running and make the most of our time in our next meeting."*

e. Other digital forms I use:

- i. Reading Summary
- ii. Parents "Likes & Dislikes"
- iii. Journal of Upsets
- iv. "Catch Yourself"

## **VII. Listening Pitfalls to Avoid**

A. Don't assume your counselee is "just like you."

B. Don't assume you know what the counselee means.

a. Ask, "Help me understand..."

*"You said, 'I am bipolar.' Help me understand what you mean by that."*

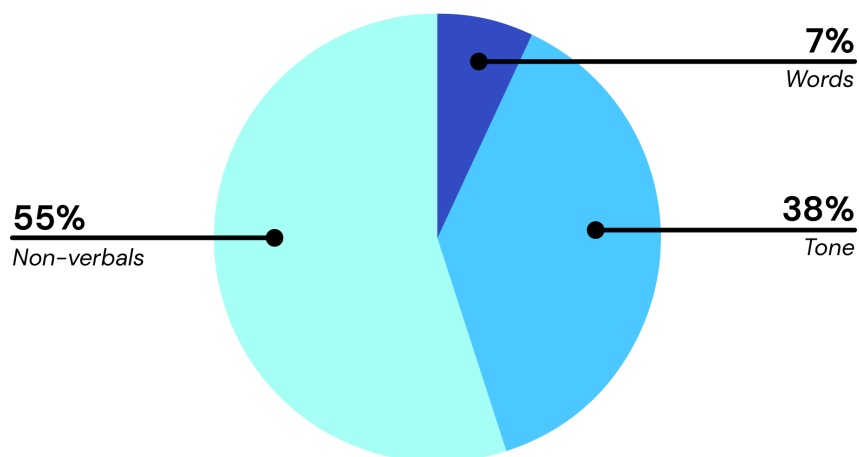
*"You said you hate your mother, but you also said you sent her a Christmas gift."*

*That seems kind, so help me understand why you do that, or what you meant when you said you hate your mother."*

C. Don't dismiss "halo data" (body language, tone of voice, facial expression, volume, inflections, bitterness, hopelessness, touchiness, gestures, etc.). Make note, and

immediately/eventually follow up on patterns you notice if something in particular occurs anytime the counselee discusses a topic, person, etc.

## Albert Mehrabian's 7-38-55 Rule of Personal Communication



- D. Don't allow your counselee to constantly avoid certain topics.
  - a. Make a note, and come back to it later.
  - b. If your counselee hesitates/refuses, ask him/her to help you understand why they are avoiding speaking about this particular topic.
- E. Don't jump to conclusions (Prov. 18:13).
  - a. Don't be like Job's counselors (Job 4-37)!
- F. Don't judge motives. (We're fruit inspectors, not root inspectors.)

**1 Cor. 4:1-5** – "A person should think of us in this way: as servants of Christ and managers of the mysteries of God. <sup>2</sup>In this regard, it is required that managers be found faithful. <sup>3</sup>It is of little importance to me that I should be judged by you

or by any human court. In fact, I don't even judge myself. <sup>4</sup> For I am not conscious of anything against myself, but I am not justified by this. It is the Lord who judges me. <sup>5</sup> **So don't judge anything prematurely**, before the Lord comes, who will both bring to light what is hidden in darkness and reveal the intentions of the hearts. And then praise will come to each one from God."

- G. Don't refuse to extend compassion to someone just because you don't have all the facts. Believe someone until you have a reason not to (1 Cor. 13:7), instead of reserving sympathy/empathy until you think you have an airtight "case" for it. Offer compassion and kindness based on what is said, and look to hear from all parties involved whenever possible (Prov. 18:17).

## VIII. Summary

- A. Although the first 1-4 sessions will likely focus primarily on gathering data, remember to gather data in every session from start to finish.
- B. Let love lead you and foster a genuine concern and interest for your counselee.
- C. Consider further studying the following passages: Gen. 4:1-8; Job 19:1-3; Ps. 1:1-3; 34:12-14; Prov. 18:15; Matt. 6:24; Mark 7:18-23; Luke 6:46-47; 11:28; Rom. 12:1-2; Gal. 5:16-21; Eph. 4:20-24; Col. 4:6; 1 Tim. 5:13; James 1:19-20, 25.

# Discerning Problems Biblically

## Key Element of Biblical Counseling

Pastor Peter LaRuffa / Grace Fellowship Church

(adapted from Dr. Mark E. Shaw)

### I. Introduction

#### A. Filters vs. Lenses

- a. A filter modifies the lighting in a picture to make it look differently, but it doesn't alter the image itself.
- b. A lens controls how much light is gathered in order to create clear and sharp images.

**Jer. 17:5** - "Thus says the Lord: 'Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the Lord...'"

**Prov. 3:5-7** - "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and **do not rely on your own understanding**; <sup>6</sup> in all your ways know Him, and He will make your paths straight. <sup>7</sup> **Don't be wise in your own eyes**; fear the Lord and turn away from evil."

- c. Is your counselee viewing life through the lens of God's Word, or simply allowing the Bible to color an image they've received through another lens?

### II. The Sufficiency of Scripture

- A. There is no better lens through which to view life than God's Word.
- B. The Bible is sufficient to serve as the framework for counseling.



- a. We believe this because of what the Scriptures say about themselves.

**2 Pet. 1:3-4** – “His divine power has given us everything required for life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness. <sup>4</sup>By these He has given us very great and precious promises, so that through them you may share in the divine nature, escaping the corruption that is in the world because of evil desire.”

**2 Tim. 3:16-17** – “All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup>so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”

**Col. 2:8** – “Be careful that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit based on human tradition, based on the elements of the world, rather than Christ.”

- b. We believe & confess this by faith. Faith picks up where facts leave off.

**Heb. 11:1** – “Now faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen.”

- c. Lots of well-intended Christian counselors will use the Bible as a filter, but look at life through another lens. This “integrationist” approach to counseling is different from biblical counseling.
- d. Biblical counselors view theories, methods, and problems in life through the lens of Scripture. Therefore, we don’t rely upon human wisdom or personal hunches, but seek to discern the problems based upon the Word of God.

### III. Counselor Cautions to Take

A. Be cautious when your counselees use labels (i.e., dysfunctional, damaged emotions, alcoholic, self-esteem, bipolar, etc.) since those words don't give biblical hope.

a. Ask counselees, "Help me understand what you mean by the term you just used."

B. As biblical counselors, we want to view both the circumstances of counselees and what the counselees say through Scriptural truth.

a. Kindly tell them what the biblical term is.

i. If they are resistant to use the biblical term, kindly ask permission to use biblical terms to replace/relabel their psychological terms in order to biblically diagnose heart issues.

a. *Pro-tip: "Since I'm not a psychologist/psychiatrist, I'm going to use terms we should both be familiar with from God's Word."*

**Gal. 5:19-21** - "Now the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, moral impurity, promiscuity, <sup>20</sup>idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambitions, dissensions, factions, <sup>21</sup>envy; drunkenness, carousing, and anything similar. I am warning you about these things — as I warned you before — that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."

#### IV. Build a Biblical Lens With Your Counselee

A. Think biblically as you listen and take notes.

**Prov. 18:2** – “A fool does not delight in understanding, but only wants to show off his opinions.”

**Prov. 18:13** – “The one who gives an answer before he listens — this is foolishness and disgrace for him.”

**Prov. 18:15** – “The mind of the discerning acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks it.”

B. Ask yourself: *What does the Bible call that?* Let your notes serve as a translation tool of sorts. When your counselee uses unbiblical terms, you write the biblical term and refer to it as such.

C. Recognize that the process of change starts with Christ and the truth. The chart below is how the Holy Spirit and God’s Word work together using 2 Tim. 3:16 & Eph. 4:20–24.

Teaching	Reproof	Correction	Training in Righteousness
God's Word	Your Old, Fleshly Thinking	New Biblical Thinking	New Biblical Actions
Standard Jesus Christ	Areas You Are Lacking	What To Do To "Fix" It	Put It Into Practice
<i>Truth</i> (Eph. 4:20-21)	<i>Put-off</i> (Eph. 4:22)	<i>Renew Mind</i> (Eph. 4:23)	<i>Put-on</i> (Eph. 4:24)

- a. Remember – behaviors/actions reflect what is going on in the heart (Matt. 12:34). Interpret your data carefully and biblically to discern the heart motives you will need to gently and lovingly confront in the future.

**Heb. 4:12** – “For the Word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. **It is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.**”

- b. Biblical examples of interpreting data and subsequent confrontation in grace and gentleness:

1. **Ruth 1:19-21** – “The two of them traveled until they came to Bethlehem. When they entered Bethlehem, the whole town was excited about their arrival and the local women exclaimed, ‘Can this be Naomi?’<sup>20</sup> ‘Don’t call me Naomi. Call

me Mara,' she answered, 'for the Almighty has made me very bitter. <sup>21</sup>I went away full, but the Lord has brought me back empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the Lord has opposed me, and the Almighty has afflicted me?'"

Naomi is thinking about the Lord incorrectly, forgetting His goodness and focusing upon her unfortunate circumstances. You could counsel her using God's Word:

**Ps. 34:18** - "The Lord is near the brokenhearted; He saves those crushed in spirit."

2. **Luke 10:38-42** - "While they were traveling, He entered a village, and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. <sup>39</sup>She had a sister named Mary, who also sat at the Lord's feet and was listening to what He said. <sup>40</sup>But Martha was distracted by her many tasks, and she came up and asked, 'Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to serve alone? So tell her to give me a hand.' <sup>41</sup>The Lord answered her, 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, <sup>42</sup>but one thing is necessary: Mary has made the right choice, and it will not be taken away from her.'"

Jesus re-interpreted Martha's wrong-thinking using what she said because it revealed her heart's desires.

3. **3 John 9-10** - "I wrote something to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have first place among them, does not receive our authority. <sup>10</sup>This is why, if I come, I will remind him of the works he is doing, slandering us with malicious words. And he is not satisfied with that! He not only refuses to welcome fellow

believers, but he even stops those who want to do so and expels them from the church.” John is interpreting the data that Diotrephes has provided in the past; putting himself first, failing to acknowledge apostolic authority, talking wicked nonsense, refusing to welcome the brothers, and putting willing persons out of the church. He is discerning the problem biblically and plans to confront this sinning brother.

4. **1 Thess. 5:14** – “And we exhort you, brothers and sisters: warn those who are idle, comfort the discouraged, help the weak, be patient with everyone.”

Good biblical counselors call their counselees to repent by meeting them where they are, and speaking with them appropriately.

D. Look for themes and patterns.

- a. Example in **James 3:16** – “For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there is disorder and every evil practice.”
- b. Example of Jesus in **John 4:18** – “For you’ve had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.”
- c. Example of what happens to someone who has not submitted all areas of his/her life to the Lordship of Christ in **James 1:8** – “being double-minded and unstable in all his ways.”
- d. Example of fear when one is acting wickedly in **Prov. 28:1** – “The wicked flee when no one is pursuing them, but the righteous are as bold as a lion.”
- e. Example of where conflict comes from in **James 4:1-2** – “What is the source of wars and fights among you? Don’t they come from your passions that wage war

within you? <sup>2</sup>You desire and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and wage war. You do not have because you do not ask.”

E. Learn to understand self-deception and outright deception.

**Jer. 17:9-10** – “The heart is more deceitful than anything else, and incurable — who can understand it? <sup>10</sup>I, the Lord, examine the mind, I test the heart; to give to each according to his way, according to what his actions deserve.”

a. Some are self-deceived.

**Prov. 14:12** – “There is a way that seems right to a person, but its end is the way to death.”

b. Some are intentionally deceitful.

**Prov. 6:12-15** – “A worthless person, a wicked man goes around speaking dishonestly, <sup>13</sup>winking his eyes, signaling with his feet, and gesturing with his fingers. <sup>14</sup>He always plots evil with perversity in his heart; he stirs up trouble. <sup>15</sup>Therefore calamity will strike him suddenly; he will be shattered instantly, beyond recovery.”

c. Some are a combination of the two, plus a mixture of contradictory emotions, making it difficult to trust them.

**Prov. 14:13** – “Even in laughter a heart may be sad, and joy may end in grief.”

- d. Some are opposed to biblical truth, but may try to hide it.

**2 Tim. 3:1-8** – “But know this: Hard times will come in the last days. <sup>2</sup>For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, proud, demeaning, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, <sup>3</sup> unloving, irreconcilable, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, without love for what is good, <sup>4</sup> traitors, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, <sup>5</sup> holding to the form of godliness but denying its power. Avoid these people. <sup>6</sup>For among them are those who worm their way into households and deceive gullible women overwhelmed by sins and led astray by a variety of passions, <sup>7</sup> always learning and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. <sup>8</sup> Just as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so these also resist the truth. They are men who are corrupt in mind and worthless in regard to the faith.”

F. Questions to prayerfully consider:

- a. What is the reason the counselee has come for help at this time? (threat of divorce, pastor/elder requiring it, etc.)
- b. Did they feel the heat or see the light?
- c. Did their circumstances nudge them to seek help? Or do they want to change?
- d. What does the counselee expect out of counseling? (help, sympathy, etc.)
- e. What is the counselee’s greatest need at this time? (encouragement, admonishment, help, support, shepherding care – 1 Thess. 5:14)
- f. What does the counselee understand about biblical change?



g. What is the best way to approach the counselee? (Jesus with Nicodemus in John 3? Jesus with the Samaritan woman in John 4?)

G. Follow "the iceberg principle." Attack visible, presenting problems first.

- a. It shows problems can be solved individually.
- b. It shows you can only counsel based upon what you know.
- c. It gives some hope today to the overwhelmed.
- d. It demonstrates counseling is a marathon, not a sprint.

## V. Demonstrate the Connection Between Behavior and the Heart

A. Remember the heart of the problem is the flesh's desires that reside in the heart.

**Prov. 27:19** – "As water reflects the face, so the heart reflects the person."

a. What are the driving motives, beliefs, and choices?

**Mark 7:21-23** – "For from within, out of people's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immoralities, thefts, murders, <sup>22</sup> adulteries, greed, evil actions, deceit, self-indulgence, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. <sup>23</sup> All these evil things come from within and defile a person."

b. Who or what does he/she worship?

**Luke 6:43-45** – "A good tree doesn't produce bad fruit; on the other hand, a bad tree doesn't produce good fruit. <sup>44</sup> For each tree is known by its own fruit. Figs aren't gathered from thornbushes, or grapes picked from a bramble bush. <sup>45</sup> A good person produces good out of the good stored up in his heart. An evil person produces evil out of the evil stored up in his heart, for his mouth speaks from the overflow of the heart."

c. What is the “tool” he/she is using to worship self? (Isa. 44:9-20)

**Isa. 44:12-13** – “The ironworker labors over the coals, shapes the idol with hammers, and works it with his strong arm. Also he grows hungry and his strength fails; he doesn’t drink water and is faint. <sup>13</sup>The woodworker stretches out a measuring line, he outlines it with a stylus; he shapes it with chisels and outlines it with a compass. He makes it according to a human form, like a beautiful person, to dwell in a temple.”

d. Is it lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, or pride of life ruling the heart?

**1 John 2:15-17** – “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. <sup>16</sup>For everything in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride in one’s possessions — is not from the Father, but is from the world. <sup>17</sup>And the world with its lust is passing away, but the one who does the will of God remains forever.”

e. Is your counselee deceptive by presenting information with an intent to lead you in a different direction?

## VI. Discern the Role the Physical Body Is Playing

A. What organic issues are involved that might be confusing or complicating factors?

a. You are not a medical doctor, so do not encourage or discourage medication consumption. *Pro-tip: “I’m not a doctor. I have just as much of a right to tell you to stop taking medication as I do to write a prescription.”*

- b. Learn about the medical issue as best you can so you can better understand the plight of your counselee.<sup>1</sup>
- c. What tests were run to prove the particular issue exists? Was the cause of the issue identified?  
Is the current medication effective?
- d. Are there somato-psychic issues to consider (i.e., a physical disease that might be contributing to depression, sadness, etc.)?
- e. Are there psycho-somatic issues to consider (i.e., an excessive and sinful worrier might find ulcers in the mouth when anxious about work circumstances, or in the stomach over a longer period of time)?

## VII. Summary

- A. Interpreting the data by discerning it biblically is vital for counselors who want to help their counselees do the following:

**Prov. 4:23** – “Guard your heart above all else, for it is the source of life.”

**Ps. 51:17** – “The sacrifice pleasing to God is a broken spirit. You will not despise a broken and humbled heart, God.”

**Ps. 119:11** – “I have treasured Your Word in my heart so that I may not sin against You.”

**1 Cor. 10:31** – “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God.”

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<sup>1</sup> See *Hope and Help for Chronic Illness* by Dr. Mark E. Shaw

**2 Cor. 5:9-10** – “Therefore, whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to be pleasing to Him. <sup>10</sup> For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may be repaid for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.”

### **Other Passages to Further Study for Discerning the Problem Biblically**

Gen. 18:1-15; Prov. 14:19; Ezek. 14:3-7; Dan. 4:28-37;  
1 Cor. 10:6-7, 13, 31; 2 Cor. 12:9-11; Phil. 4:13; John 9:13-23; Gal. 4:30

### **Recommended Resources**

*Curing the Heart*, Howard Eyrich and William Hines

*Committed to Craftsmanship*, Jay Adams

*How to Counsel Biblically*, John MacArthur

*Seeing with New Eyes*, David Powlison

*Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*, Paul David Tripp

*Christ-Centered Biblical Counseling*, Robert Kellemen, Steve Viars, and others

*Gospel Centered Counseling*, Robert Kellemen

*Strength in Numbers*, Mark E. Shaw

*Understanding Temptation*, Mark E. Shaw

# Providing Instruction

## Key Element of Biblical Counseling

*Pastor Peter LaRuffa / Grace Fellowship Church*

### I. Introduction

#### A. Keep Your Counseling Out Of The Ditches

- a. Ditch #1 – All listening and reflecting.
  - i. Biblical counselors need to listen effectively, carefully, and unhurriedly (Prov. 18:15) ...but to what end?
  - ii. We need to point to hope and truth outside of the counselee – to God’s Holy Word!
  
- b. Ditch #2 – All teaching and talking.
  - i. Biblical counselors need to speak truth (Eph. 4:15), but not without first prayerfully considering as much as we can about our counselee (Prov. 18:13; James 1:19–20).
  
- c. Although the Key Elements to Counseling are sequential, they aren’t a checklist to check off and then you’re done.

- d. Recap:
  - Gathering Data
  - Discerning Problems Biblically
  - Establishing Involvement with the Counselee
  - Giving Hope
  - Providing Instruction***

## II. Preparing to Instruct

### A. Qualities of Biblical Instruction for Counselees

#### a. Clearly biblical

- i. Explicitly based in God's Word (specific chapter & verse)
- ii. Implicitly based in God's Word (based on clear, biblical principle)
  - 1. A great opportunity to reinforce the sufficiency of the Scriptures!

#### b. Christ-centered

##### i. Reminds counselees of our common ultimate goals:

##### 1. Imitating Jesus

**1 John 2:6** – "The one who says he remains in Him should walk just as He walked."

##### 2. Pleasing Jesus

**2 Cor. 5:9-10** – "Therefore, whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to be pleasing to Him. <sup>10</sup> For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may be repaid for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil."

c. Gospel-driven

- i. There is nothing more important than the gospel.

**1 Cor. 15:3** - "For I passed on to you as most important what I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scripture..."

- ii. The gospel is the only lasting, effective motivator behind Christian living.

1. Gospel Indicatives - what Christ has done for us.

2. Gospel Imperatives - what we do in light of what He has done for us (a.k.a. "Gospel Therefore's")

**Rom. 12:1** - "Therefore, brothers and sisters, **in view of the mercies of God**, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your true worship."

**1 Cor. 6:18-20** - "Flee sexual immorality! Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the person who is sexually immoral sins against his own body. <sup>19</sup> Don't you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, <sup>20</sup> **for you were bought at a price**. So glorify God with your body."

**1 Pet. 2:24** - "He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree; so that, having died to sins, we might live for righteousness. **By His wounds you have been healed.**"

**Eph. 2:8-10** - "For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift — <sup>9</sup> not from works, so that no one can boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do."

d. Truth in love

**Eph. 4:15** - "But speaking the truth in love, let us grow in every way into Him who is the head — Christ."

**1 Cor. 13:1-3** - "If I speak human or angelic tongues but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup> If I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so that I can move mountains but do not have love, I am nothing. <sup>3</sup> And if I give away all my possessions, and if I give over my body in order to boast but do not have love, I gain nothing."

### III. Practical Tips for Providing Instruction

A. Imitate Jesus

1. Jesus asked good questions.
2. Jesus utilized parables and stories.

B. Give personal examples from your life and walk with Jesus

1. How has God used His Word to change your life?
2. Show that we're still growing and changing to be more like Jesus.



C. Be creative

1. Illustrations.
2. Diagrams and pictures.
3. Refer to the sermon, current events in culture, or a personal experience.
4. Use everyday activities and tie to eternal truths.

D. Connect instruction to homework

E. Instruction is not just about information, but transformation

F. Instruction encourages us to OBEY (James 1:22)

**Passages to Consider:**

Ps. 19:9; 119:9-11, 89, 105, 128, 160

Isa. 40:14; 46:9-10

Matt. 5:1-2; 7:6; 16:13-20; 21:19-21; 28:20

Luke 1:3-4; John 17:17

Acts 20:31

Rom. 1:18-32; 12:2

2 Cor. 10:5

Eph. 4

Col. 1:9-10

1 Tim. 1:5

2 Tim. 2:15; 3:10-17

Titus 3:9-10

Heb. 5:12-14; 12:1

2 Pet. 1:3

# **Giving Homework**

## **Key Element of Biblical Counseling**

*Pastor Peter LaRuffa / Grace Fellowship Church*

### **I. Introduction**

- A. We assign homework because we're severely limited as counselors.
  - a. We're not omnipresent, but Jesus is.
  - b. We're not omniscient, but Jesus is.
  - c. We don't have all the answers, but Jesus does.
- B. We assign homework to extend biblical counseling beyond the session itself.
  - a. Brings the Word of God to bear on the counselee's everyday life (not just the session).
  - b. Reinforces what was covered in the session itself.
  - c. Places the counselee in the best position to see God work through His Word as the real Counselor.
- C. We assign homework to give the counselee opportunities to put truth into action.

- a. Shows them if they truly understood the Word that was counseled to them.
- b. Shows them they really can live according to God's Word on their own.
- c. Shows them they're not just a hearer of the Word in the session, but a doer of the Word in their everyday lives.

**James 1:22-25** - "But be doers of the Word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. <sup>23</sup> Because if anyone is a hearer of the Word and not a doer, he is like someone looking at his own face in a mirror. <sup>24</sup> For he looks at himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of person he was. <sup>25</sup> But the one who looks intently into the perfect law of freedom and perseveres in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer who works — this person will be blessed in what he does."

Homework modeled after **John 14:6** - "Jesus told him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.'"

## II. The Way: Living By The Power of Christ

- A. Good homework reminds counselees of the power of God's Word for lasting change.

**Heb. 4:12-13** - "For the Word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. <sup>13</sup> No creature is hidden from Him, but all things are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom

we must give an account.”

**Ps. 19:7-8** – “The instruction of the Lord is perfect, renewing one’s life; the testimony of the Lord is trustworthy, making the inexperienced wise. <sup>8</sup> The precepts of the Lord are right, making the heart glad; the command of the Lord is radiant, making the eyes light up.”

### III. The Truth: Living In The Light of God’s Word

A. Good homework gives counselees the opportunity to be honest with God on their own, asking Him for the hope and help only He can give.

**1 John 1:7-10** – “If we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. <sup>8</sup> If we say, ‘We have no sin,’ we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. <sup>10</sup> If we say, ‘We have not sinned,’ we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.”

**Prov. 28:13** – “The one who conceals his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them will find mercy.”

**Prov. 29:25** – “The fear of mankind is a snare, but the one who trusts in the Lord is protected.”

**Phil. 2:12** – “Therefore, my dear friends, just as you have always obeyed, so now, not

only in my presence but even more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”

**Ps. 139:23-24** - “Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my concerns. <sup>24</sup>See if there is any offensive way in me; lead me in the everlasting way.”

#### **IV. The Life: Drawing Near To Christ**

A. Good homework shows counselees their need to draw near to Christ on their own for life-giving help.

a. Jesus is their Savior.

**Matt. 7:7-8** - “Ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you. <sup>8</sup>For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.”

b. Jesus is the only source of life & power to bring forth lasting fruit.

**John 15:1-5** - “I am the true vine, and My Father is the gardener. <sup>2</sup>Every branch in Me that does not produce fruit He removes, and He prunes every branch that produces fruit so that it will produce more fruit. <sup>3</sup>You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup>Remain in Me, and I in you. Just as a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it remains on the vine, neither can you unless you remain in Me. <sup>5</sup>I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in Me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing

without Me.”

- c. Jesus is their perfect High Priest.

**Heb. 4:14-16** – “Therefore, since we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens — Jesus the Son of God — let us hold fast to our confession. <sup>15</sup> For we do not have a High Priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin. <sup>16</sup> Therefore, let us approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in time of need.”

- d. God the Holy Spirit is always with them.

**John 14:16-17** – “And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor to be with you forever. <sup>17</sup> He is the Spirit of truth. The world is unable to receive Him because it doesn’t see Him or know Him. But you do know Him, because He remains with you and will be in you.”

- e. God alone will judge them.

**2 Cor. 5:10** – “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may be repaid for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.”

## V. Growth in Christ

- A. Good homework grows counselees in developing a life of increased joy from

obedience to Christ.

**Josh. 1:8** – “This book of instruction must not depart from your mouth; you are to meditate on it day and night so that you may carefully observe everything written in it. For then you will prosper and succeed in whatever you do.”

## VI. Proof of Progress

A. Good homework provides an objective way to gauge growth and progress.

**1 John 3:18–24** – “Little children, let us not love in word or speech, but in action and in truth. <sup>19</sup> This is how we will know that we belong to the truth and will reassure our hearts before Him <sup>20</sup> whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and He knows all things. <sup>21</sup> Dear friends, if our hearts don’t condemn us, we have confidence before God <sup>22</sup> and receive whatever we ask from Him because we keep His commands and do what is pleasing in His sight. <sup>23</sup> Now this is His command: that we believe in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another as He commanded us. <sup>24</sup> The one who keeps His commands remains in Him, and He in him. And the way we know that He remains in us is from the Spirit He has given us.”

B. Good homework provides opportunities for growth in the spiritual disciplines.

**2 Pet. 1:5–8** – “For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with goodness, goodness with knowledge, <sup>6</sup> knowledge with self-control, self-control with endurance, endurance with godliness, <sup>7</sup> godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. <sup>8</sup> For if you possess these qualities in increasing

measure, they will keep you from being useless or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

## VII. Things to Consider When Assigning Counseling Homework

### A. Assign Homework in session 1.

a. Establishes an expectation and a precedent from the start that homework completion is part of the counseling process.

i. My favorite session 1 homework assignment:

1. Read *Hope & Help Through Biblical Counseling* by Mark Shaw, pages 1-14 (roughly half the booklet)
  - a. Underline at least 5 sentences that seemed important to you.
2. Memorize **2 Cor. 5:9** in the Bible translation you're most familiar with. Write 1-3 sentences explaining what the verse means and how you can apply it to your life.
3. Complete Family of Origin Questionnaire (digital).
4. Read 2 Cor. 5:1-15 at least 2X. Record the day & time you read. Record principles you can apply to your life right now.
5. (optional) Begin rating each day via the "How's It Going?" resource (<https://forms.gle/McishmnojW8NR7x8t9>). Use it at least 1X/day.

ii. My usual session 2 homework assignment:



1. Finish *Hope & Help Through Biblical Counseling*  
Underline at least 5 sentences that seemed important to you.
2. Memorize **2 Cor. 5:9-10** in the Bible translation you're most familiar with.  
Write 1-3 sentences explaining what the verse means and how you can apply it to your life.
3. Read 2 Cor. 5:1-20 at least 4X. Record the day & time you read. Record principles you can apply to your life right now (digital).
4. (optional) Continue rating each day via the "How's It Going?" resource (digital). Use it at least 1X/day. Assume this is an ongoing assignment.
5. Attend church and record principles you can apply to your life right now based on the sermon that was preached (digital). Bring the sermon outline with you to the next session.

B. Ask the counselee if the homework assignment seems doable in the days ahead.  
Invite them to tell you if they don't think it is.

a. Let's set realistic expectations now so we both know what to expect next week.

C. Homework assignments need to be specific. (S.M.A.R.T.E.R.)

- a. Read your Bible and tell me about what you read. (not good)
- b. Read your Bible at least 3X this week, and record principles you can apply to your life right now. (better)
- c. Read Rom. 5 at least 3X this week, and record principles you can apply to your life right now. (BEST)
- d. Read Rom. 5 at least 3X this week, and record principles you can apply to your life

right now. Memorize a verse from the reading that stood out to you, and explain to me why you chose that verse to memorize. (BEST as counseling progresses)

D. Homework assignments should be written or typed.

- a. Carbon-copy HW sheet
- b. Make a copy/take a picture of the homework you assigned.
- c. E-mail ideally on the same day as the session.
  - i. Fresh on your mind.
  - ii. Fresh on the counselee's mind.
  - iii. Gives time to answer clarifying questions about the assignment, if necessary.

E. Homework should be checked (to some degree).

- a. "Inspect what you expect."
- b. Touch on everything, and don't be afraid to prioritize to save time.
  - i. Go over in detail what you really want/need to see the counselee having done.
    - 1. "I asked you to underline 10 sentences that stood out to you from the reading. What did you underline?" (Counselee gives specific sentences w/ page #, reading from their copy of the material).
    - 2. "I asked you to memorize 2 Cor. 5:9. Let's hear it!"

ii. Go over in general

1. "Did you pray for our time together this week?" (Y/N)
2. "Did you go to church on Sunday?" (Y/N)

iii. Be graciously persistent and insistent.

1. 1st occurrence of incomplete homework:

- a. Sigh-it happens.

2. 2nd consecutive occurrence of incomplete homework:

- a. Help me understand what's hindering you from completing these.

- i. Are they trying and failing, or failing to try?
- ii. Is the assignment too weighty?
- iii. Is the counselee unnecessarily intimidated by it? (Look for analysis paralysis, esp. w/ "Make the grade"-type people.)
- iv. Are their circumstances providentially hindering them such that counseling and/or homework should be adjusted?

3. 3rd consecutive occurrence of incomplete homework:

- a. Have the "A-game" conversation.

*"There's so much hope and help available for you in God's Word, but it's*

*not going to happen without significant effort on your part. I understand that you have a variety of things vying for your time and attention, but I really need you to bring your 'A-game' to counseling each week in order for this to work. Let's work hard at this together and see what God does as a result. I'm confident it'll be well worth the effort."*

4. 4th consecutive occurrence of incomplete homework:

- a. Probably terminate the case.

*"This doesn't seem like the best time/season for you to be involved in counseling. Let's not meet for the time being. If your circumstances change, I'd be excited to work with you. Please understand, this is not because I don't have a vision for your particular situation and where we can go from here. This really can work for you, but if you're unable to really work at it, you should forego counseling until you're able to put in the work that's necessary for counseling to be fruitful."*

F. Homework Resources

- a. Grace Fellowship Church Counselor's Toolbox:  
<https://www.graceky.org/biblical-counseling/counselor-toolbox/>
- b. One Eighty Ministries <http://oneeightyministries.org/resources/>
- c. Center for Biblical Counseling & Discipleships <https://thecbcd.org/all-resources>
- d. Christian Counseling & Educational Foundation <https://www.ccef.org/resources/>
- e. YouVersion Bible App
- f. <http://BibleProject.com>

- g. The Institute for Biblical Counseling & Discipleship <https://ibcd.org/category/blog/>
- h. Family of Origin Questionnaire - see <https://forms.gle/zURWY3YmLeiySAy77> for an example
- i. "How's it Going?" - see <https://forms.gle/McishmniW8NR7x8t9>

# **Case Study/Observation**

*Doug Markesbery / Grace Fellowship Church*

# Progressive Sanctification

*Doug Markesbery / Grace Fellowship Church*

## 1. Personal introduction and testimony

## 2. When we talk about progressive sanctification we are talking about the concept of growth in our relationship with God.

The principle of **Physical Growth**

Gardens, grandchildren, and the Son of God (Luke 2:52)

The principle of **Spiritual Growth**

2 Pet. 1:5-11; Col. 1:9-12; Eph. 4:11-16

## 3. What is your own story?

## 4. What is sanctification?

1 Thess. 4:3 – It is God's will

- i. The **position** of being made **holy**; set apart for God; the **progressive transformation** to make one **more like Christ**.
- ii. 1 Pet. 1:2, 15-16
- iii. 1 Thess. 4:3-4, 7; 2 Thess. 2:13
- iv. Rom. 6:19,22; 1 Tim. 2:15; Heb. 12:14; 2 Cor. 5:21

v. ***Sanctification is both the work of God by which we are instantly purified and set apart for Him, and the work of God by which we are progressively developed into the image of Christ.***

vi. **Saint / holy / one who is set apart for God.**

Acts 9:32; 1 Cor. 1:2; Eph. 2:19

**Saints are simply those people who have been and are being sanctified.**

## **5. Sanctification is not the same as justification.**

**However, there can be no sanctification apart from justification.**

**What is justification?**

**Justification is to be forgiven of sin and pronounced as righteous; free from the deserved judgment of condemnation; acquittal.**

*Justification is the legal, judicial work of God by which He declares a repentant sinner innocent from sin. Our sin was put on (imputed to) Christ, and His righteousness was put on (imputed to) us.*

1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:2; Phil. 3:9; Rom. 3:21–24; 4:3; 5:1, 17–19; 8:1



## 6. The difference between justification and sanctification\*<sup>2</sup>

<b>Justification</b>	<b>Sanctification</b>
Addresses our legal standing with God. A one-time judicial act of God which is once for all time	Addresses our internal condition and continues throughout our lifetime
God's work alone	We cooperate with God according to the work He is doing in us
It is complete in this life	It is not complete in this life. It will be completed when we leave this life.
It is the same in all Christians	This work is greater in some than in others

A *simplified* timeline of our growing relationship with God might look like this:



## 7. Aspects of Sanctification

### a. Positional Sanctification

At the moment of salvation we are:

1. Made one with Christ and the Father (John 17:20-21)
2. Made "holy" and "set apart" to God (1 Cor. 6:11)

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<sup>2</sup> \*See Systematic Theology, Grudem p.746

3. Christ puts His Spirit within us (Eph. 1:13-14)

b. **Progressive Sanctification**

We continue to be transformed to the image of Christ.

**Rom. 8:29** "For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers."

- 1 Pet. 1:13-16; 2 Pet. 1:5-1; 3:18
- Rom. 6:19; 2 Cor. 3:18; Phil. 3:13-14; Heb. 12:1, 14

c. **Prospective Sanctification**

We have so much to look forward to.

**1 John 3:2** "Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when He appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is."

- 1 Thess. 5:23-24; 1 Cor. 15:23, 49

Justification  
**Positional Sanctification**  
**Progressive Sanctification**  
**Prospective Sanctification**  
Glorification

## **8. We were created by God, in the image of God, for relationship with God**

- a. We were created in flesh in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-28)
- b. Jesus came from God in the flesh to show us the glory of God (John 1:14; 2 Cor. 4:4)
- c. Through progressive sanctification, God is transforming us from the flesh into the image of Christ (2 Cor. 3:18; Col. 3:9-10; Eph. 5:1-2)

## **9. Sanctification as transformation**

Characteristics of the biblical sanctification process:

- a. The Trinity is working toward the goal of our transformation (Rom. 8:29)
  - 1. The Father works to discipline us and sanctify us (Heb. 12:10-11; 1 Thess. 5:23-24)
  - 2. The Son intercedes for us and provides grace in times of need (Heb. 7:25; 12:6)
  - 3. The Spirit intercedes for us; teaches us the truth; matures us as we obey the Word (Rom. 8:27; John 14:27; 2 Cor. 3:16-18)

4. *Systems that neglect the Trinity can only produce “self-righteous” Christians if any change occurs.*

b. We must also be working

1. We are commanded to live the sanctified life (1 Pet. 1:13–16, 22)

2. We exercise ourselves for godliness (1 Tim. 4:7)

3. We are actively walking (Eph. 4:1, 17; Gal. 5:16)

4. We must flee sinful practices and pursue righteousness (1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 2:22)

5. We must put effort into it

i. Race (1 Cor. 9:24–27)

ii. Conflict (Eph. 6:10–12)

iii. Fight (2 Tim. 4:6–7)

iv. Purify ourselves (1 John 3:3)

6. We do good works of service (Titus 2:11–14; Eph. 2:10; Heb 10:24)

7. *Systems that deny our responsibility in sanctification lead to pride and defeat.*

c. The Word of God is the source of truth for our sanctification (John 17:17)

1. By the Word of God we must give an account to God (Heb. 4:12–13)

2. The Word of God is active on our mind (Rom. 6:11; 12:1-2; Eph. 4:23; 1 Tim. 4:7)
3. The Word of God is active on our body and behavior (Rom. 6:12-14; Eph. 4:22-24)
4. *Systems that seek change apart from the Word of God result in idolatry.*

d. The Church is active through:

1. Fellowship (Heb. 10:23-25)
2. Equip, encourage and exhort (Eph. 4:11-16; Col. 1:28-29; Heb. 3:12-13). This includes Biblical Counseling.
3. *Systems that neglect the practices of biblical fellowship and discipleship only lead to hypocrisy.*

e. The process is gradual and ongoing

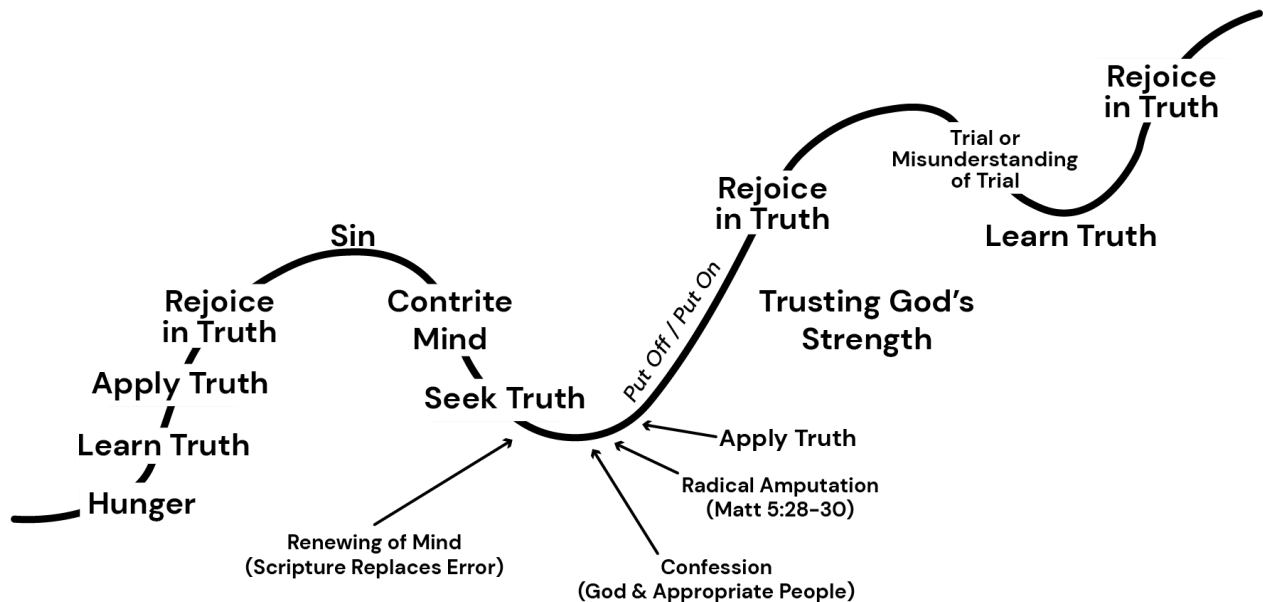
1. "Enjoy the journey" (Heb. 10:23-25)
2. We have not yet arrived (Phil. 3:12-14)
3. *Systems that ignore this truth result in a frustrated religion.*

f. The saints are sanctified to be sent

1. Jesus implies that sanctification is not an end in itself, but also a means of preparation for taking the Gospel to the world (1 Pet. 2:9)
2. *Systems that ignore sanctification do not prepare people for ministering in Jesus' name.*

**10. A diagram of growing in godliness (progressive sanctification)**

## Progressive Sanctification



**11. The Blessings of Sanctification (in addition to “Progressive Sanctification”)**

- a. A good confession and confidence (Heb. 4:14-16)
- b. A sure hope (Heb. 6:18-20)

## Personal questions:

1. When you think about your own *relationship with God* do your thoughts include ideas about growth and development?
2. Are you aware that your *relationship with God* includes a purpose and a plan for growth? If so, how would you describe that to another person?
3. On a scale of 1-10, at what level would you describe your *relationship with God*, with 1 being very distant and 10 being very intimate.

## Conclusion:

- “O When the Saints go Marching In”
- 1 Thess. 5:23-24

## Recommended Resources

*Systematic Theology*, Wayne Grudem, Chapter 38-*Sanctification*

*How Does Sanctification Work?*, David Powlison

*How People Change*, Paul Tripp and Timothy Lane

*The Gospel Primer*, Milton Vincent

*Gospel Treason*, Brad Bigney

# Helping Counselors Understand How to Change

*Brad Brandt / Wheelersburg Baptist Church*

## I. The Need to Change

### A. God is Creator and wrote the Owner's Manual.

**Col. 1:16** "For by Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created *by Him and for Him.*"

**Josh. 1:8** "Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful."

- By God's design, we are to love God first.
- By God's design, we are to love others as ourselves.

### B. We are sinners and have missed the mark.

**Rom. 3:23** "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

### C. Jesus Christ is the one Who makes change possible.



**1 Pet. 2:24** "He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by His wounds you have been healed."

- At the cross, He took our sin.
- At the cross, He gave us His righteousness.

#### **D. Jesus Christ is the model for change.**

**1 Pet. 2:21** "To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, *leaving you an example*, that you should follow in His steps."

## **II. Some Faulty Views about How We Change**

### **A. The "Holy Zap" view**

Walk an aisle, pray a prayer, get the Spirit... and you'll change.

### **B. The "Let go and let God" view**

This view says it's all up to God.

### **C. The "Pull up your bootstraps" view**

This view says it's all up to me.

### III. The Process of Change (Eph. 4:17–5:21)

#### Step #1: You must know Christ (v. 4:20).

**Eph. 4:20** “You, however, did not come to know Christ that way.”

**Eph. 1:1** “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus.”

*Question:* Can a person who doesn't know Christ change?

*Answer:* The answer is yes (small 'y') and NO (capital 'N').

Apart from knowing Christ a person cannot change in a way that pleases God.

#### Step #2: You must be growing in your knowledge of the truth (v. 4:21).

**Eph. 4:21** “Surely you heard of Him and were taught in Him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus.”

#### Step #3: You must “put off” the thinking and lifestyle of the old man (v. 4:22).

**Eph. 4:22** “You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires.”

#### Step #4: You must “put on” the thinking and lifestyle of the new man (v. 4:24).

**Eph. 4:24** "...and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness."

**Step #5: You must be renewing your mind (v. 4:23, also vv. 17-19).**

**Eph. 4:23** "...to be made new in the attitude of your minds..."

**Eph. 4:17-19** "So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. <sup>18</sup> They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. <sup>19</sup> Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more."

**Step #6: You must take specific steps to replace the old with the new (4:25-5:7)**

	<b>Put Off</b>	<b>Put On</b>
V. 25	Falsehood	Speak the truth
Vv. 26-27	Lingering anger	Resolve problems God's way today
V. 28	Being a taker	Work, save and give
V. 29	Words that tear down	Words that build up
Vv. 30-32	Things that grieve the Spirit	Christlike kindness, compassion and forgiveness
Vv. 5:1-6	Every hint of sexual sin	Thanksgiving

**Step #7: You must realize the battle doesn't end until we see the Lord (5:8-21).**

v. 8 "Live as children of light."

v. 10 "Find out what pleases the Lord."

v. 15 "Be very careful how you live."

v. 18 "Do not get drunk on wine... but be filled with the Spirit."

#### **IV. The Environment for Lasting Change: The Local Church**

##### **A. The local church provides biblical encouragement.**

**1 Thess. 5:11** "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."

**1 Thess. 5:14** "And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone."

##### **B. The local church provides accountability for change.**

**Gal. 6:1** "Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted."

**Titus 2:15** "These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you."

##### **C. The local church provides the environment necessary for continued growth.**

**Heb. 10:24-25** "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. <sup>25</sup> Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of

doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

## V. The Purpose of Changing

### A. It's not really about me.

**Rom. 11:36** “For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever! Amen.”

**1 Cor. 10:31** “So, whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”

1. *Everything we do matters to God.*

2. *Everything we do is either for the glory of God or for some other reason.*

### B. It's about God and His Son.

1. *God created us for Himself.*

**Eph. 1:11–12** “In Him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of Him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will,<sup>12</sup> in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of His glory.”

I do not create my own meaning in life. I already have one.

2. *God's agenda is to form a people that resemble and praise His Son.*

**Eph. 4:24** "And to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness."

3. *God orchestrates everything to accomplish His agenda for us.*

**Rom. 8:28** "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose."

**Rom. 8:29** "For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers."

4. *God has given us everything we need to experience His agenda for us.*

**2 Pet. 1:3-4** "His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness. <sup>4</sup> Through these He has given us His very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires."

The Bottom Line: God is interested in giving us the *full treatment* in order to accomplish His good agenda for us, to *change us* into the likeness of His precious Son.

# Friday Schedule

Oct 18, 2024

WKND 2

<i>5:00-6:05PM</i> <b>Brad Bigney</b>		Getting to Heart Issues
<i>6:05PM-6:20PM</i>		BREAK
<i>6:20PM-7:20PM</i> <b>Brad Bigney</b>		Trials & Suffering
<i>7:20PM-7:35PM</i>		BREAK
<i>7:35PM-8:35PM</i> <b>Peter LaRuffa</b>		Anger
<i>8:35PM-8:45PM</i>		BREAK
<i>8:45PM-9:45PM</i> <b>Peter LaRuffa</b>		Depression

# Saturday Schedule

Oct 19, 2024

WKND 2

<i>8:00AM-9:05AM</i> <b>Brad Bigney</b>	God's Purpose for Marriage
<i>9:05AM-9:25AM</i>	BREAK
<i>9:25AM-10:25AM</i> <b>Brad Bigney</b>	The Role of the Husband
<i>10:25AM-10:45AM</i>	BREAK
<i>10:45AM-11:45AM</i> <b>Brad Bigney</b>	The Role of the Wife
<i>11:45AM-1:00PM</i>	LUNCH BREAK
<i>1:00PM-2:00PM</i> <b>Peter LaRuffa</b>	Goal Oriented Parenting
<i>2:00PM-2:20PM</i>	BREAK
<i>2:20PM-3:20PM</i> <b>Peter LaRuffa</b>	Parenting: Instruction
<i>3:20PM-3:35PM</i>	BREAK
<i>3:35PM-4:35PM</i> <b>Peter LaRuffa</b>	Parenting: Discipline



# Getting to Heart Issues

Pastor Brad Bigney / Grace Fellowship Church

People by nature are **worshippers**. People are worshiping all around us every day.

The question is, "**What or whom** are you worshiping?"

## I. Why Is This a 'Big Deal?'

"Idolatry is by far the most frequently discussed problem in the Scriptures... the relevance of massive chunks of Scripture hangs on our understanding of idolatry."

~ David Powlison

Definition: An idol is **anything** or **anyone** that begins to **capture** our **hearts** and **minds** and **affections** more than God.

Who or what you worship is "what's on your mind."

- What you long for / wish for.
- What you have your heart set on.
- What's really important to you – that's what you worship!

**1 John 5:21** "Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen."

Question: "Has som**ething** or some**one** besides Jesus Christ taken hold of the title of your heart? Is there something or someone else that holds your heart's trust, preoccupation, loyalty, service, fear, and delight?"

#### A. Any Idol Will Become a **Snare** in Your Life

**Ps. 106:34-36** "They did not destroy the peoples, concerning whom the Lord had commanded them, <sup>35</sup> but they mingled with the Gentiles and ***learned their works;*** <sup>36</sup> they served their idols, which ***became a snare*** to them."

#### B. Any Idol Will Ultimately **Hinder** Your Walk with the Lord

**Ezek. 14:5** "...they are all estranged from Me by their idols."

#### C. Any Idol Will Block the **Grace** of God in Your Life

**Jonah 2:8** "Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs."

- To receive God's grace your hands need to be **empty**. Whatever you choose to put ahead of God and in first place in your life is an idol and will cause you to forfeit / give up the grace that could be yours.
- God is in fact committed to **frustrating** you to the point that you will be forced to **drop** those idols and turn to Him with open hands and an open heart.

**Jer. 2:13** "My people have committed two sins: they have forsaken Me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water."

## II. So Where Do Idols Come From? How Do We Get into Trouble in This Area? Why Does It Happen?

**Ezek. 14:3-4, 7** "Son of man, these men have set up their idols *in their hearts*, and put wicked stumbling blocks before their faces...<sup>4</sup>...everyone of the house of Israel... **sets up his idols in his heart**... I the Lord will answer him...<sup>7</sup>...according to the **multitude of his idols**..."

**James 1:14** "But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed."

Pressure causes temptation to flee to idolatry as a refuge. So "idols" become a snare.

**1 Cor. 10:13-14** "There is no temptation that is overtaken you but such as is common to man, and God is faithful who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but will with the temptation provide the way of escape, that you may be able to bear up under it...<sup>14</sup> Therefore my beloved, flee from idolatry."

John Calvin said, "**The heart is a factory of idols.**" Our heart cranks out idols as fast as the flesh can set its sights on some new pleasure.

## III. How Do You Spot an "Idol" in Your Own Life?

### A. Follow the Trail of Your Time, Money, and Affections

When there is an "idol," you will:

a. **Sacrifice** for it

b. **Spend time** on it

c. **Spend money** on it

**Matt. 6:21** "Where your treasure is there will your heart be also."

d. **Talk** about it

**Matt. 12:34** "...out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks..."

e. **Serve** it

**Matt. 6:24** "No one can serve two masters..."

f. **Protect** it / defend it

g. **Think** about it

**Prov. 23:7** "... as a man thinks in his heart, so is he..."

h. **Worry** about it

i. Build your **schedule** around it

j. **Perfect** it

k. Get angry if someone / something **blocks** you from it

l. Experience intense fear / anxiety if it is **threatened** in any way

m. Spiral into despair / depression (even suicidal) if you fail to **achieve** it

“Idols” that we worship take the throne of our heart from time to time. As you become a good listener to people, you’ll hear their “idols.”

Idolatry is not so much wanting the wrong thing, but wanting even good things too much. You’ve lost sense of a biblical priority.

The Puritans referred to it as having an inordinate desire.

**Rom. 1:21–23, 25** “Because although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. <sup>22</sup> Professing to be wise they became fools, <sup>23</sup> and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man... <sup>25</sup> They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator...”

"At the most basic level, idols are what we make out of the evidence for God within ourselves and in the world – if we do not want to face the face of God Himself in His majesty and holiness. Rather than look to the Creator and have to deal with His lordship, we orient our lives toward the creation, where we can be more free to control and shape our lives in our desired directions... However, since we were made to relate to God, but do not want to face Him, we forever inflate things in this world to religious proportions to fill the vacuum left by God's exclusion."

~ Richard Keyes in *No God But God*, Os Guinness, p. 32

Paul Tripp said, "Children are a gift but they make terrible trophies."

"Joanna thought she had grown in her faith. The problem was that she had forgotten who she was, and it was not long before her identity in Christ was replaced by another identity. Joanna's children became her new identity. They gave her meaning and purpose, and they really did give her hope and joy. The problem was that they were not sent by God to do any of that. Joanna lived vicariously through them, and the more she did, the more she became obsessed with their success. Although Joanna was just as faithful in her personal devotions and public worship, God was no longer at the center of who she was. All it took was Jimmy to mess it all up. With all his inner turmoil, Jimmy didn't make a very good trophy. Being with him often meant unexpected confrontations and public embarrassment. The girls were forced to live in the wings of Jimmy's drama and they didn't turn out to be trophy children either. Now that they were adults, Joanna was lost... In their tumultuous launch into adulthood, the kids not only broke Joanna's heart, but they also robbed her of her

identity. She felt like it had all been for naught. When she looked in the mirror, she felt like she didn't know the person she saw there."

~ Paul David Tripp, *Lost in the Middle*, pp. 275-276

## B. Ask Heart Questions

### Three Heart Diagnostic Questions:

1. Am I willing to sin to get it?
2. Am I willing to sin if I think I'm going to lose it?
3. Do I run to it for "refuge" instead of turning to God?
  - Shopping
  - Eating
  - Working on my car
  - Staying late at work
  - Watching movies or playing computer games

"A woman commits adultery, and repents. She and her husband rebuild the marriage, painstakingly, patiently. Eight months later the man finds himself plagued with subtle suspiciousness. The wife senses it, and feels a bit like she lives under FBI surveillance. The husband is grieved by his suspiciousness, because he has no objective reasons for suspicion. 'I've forgiven her; we've rebuilt our marriage; we've never communicated better; why do I hold onto this mistrust?' What finally emerges

is that he is willing to forgive the past, but he is attempting to control the future. His craving could be stated this way:

'I want to guarantee that betrayal never, ever happens again.' The very intensity of his craving starts to poison the relationship; it places him in the stance of continually evaluating and judging his wife, rather than loving her. What he wants cannot be guaranteed this side of Heaven. He sees the point, sees his inordinate desire to ensure the future. But he bursts out, 'What's wrong with wanting my wife to love me? What's wrong with wanting her to remain faithful to our marriage?' Here is where this truth is so sweet. **There is nothing wrong with the object of desire; there is everything wrong when it rules his life.** The process of restoring that marriage took a long step forward as he grasped a lesson his Shepherd had for him."

~ David Powlison, "The Sufficiency of Scripture to Diagnose and Cure Souls"

### C. Look for chaos!

We do not all respond to people and situations the same way because we do not all bring the same heart to them (i.e., the talkative person that annoys you might be interesting to the person sitting next to you – the heart makes all the difference).

James makes a huge connection between our desires, or what we want, and what makes us angry.

All of us are filled with competing desires – James calls it the "desires that battle within you," and they battle for control.



**James 3:16** "For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing will be there."

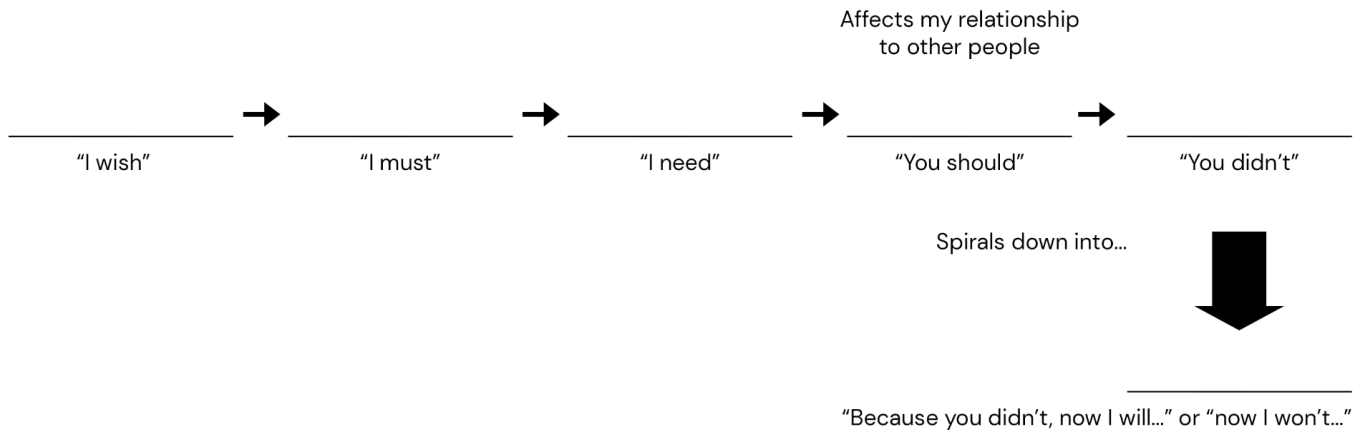
"It's a serious mistake to engage in introspective 'idol hunts,' attempting to dig out and weigh every kink in the human soul. The Bible calls for a more straightforward form of self-examination: an outburst of anger invites reflection on what craving ruled the heart so that our repentance can be intelligent."

~ David Powlison

## Cravings underline conflicts!

### Let's examine The Stages of the War for the Heart

Taken from Paul Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*



**Desire:** often something legitimate. A desire is not necessarily sinful.

- to have a godly marriage
- to get married
- to have children
- to have godly children
- to be a hard worker or to do something meaningful with our lives
- to enjoy some relaxation
- to save money for retirement

**Demand:** the closing of my fists around a desire. I can no longer imagine a good life without this thing. So now I enter the room with a silent demand – “You must help me get what I want.” If you are an obstacle I will be angry and impatient with you. **But here’s the real source of confusion:** you don’t know the rules of the game. I haven’t announced my demand to you because I myself am unaware that my heart is being controlled by it.

**Need:** I now view this thing I want as essential to life. This is one more step towards slavery to desire. So, envy, discouragement, bitterness, and doubting God start to grow as we become convinced that we are being denied things we need to live life as it was meant to be lived. In our culture the word “need” is used fast and loose for everything.

**Expectation:** If I’m convinced I need it and you say you love me, then it seems right for me to expect you to help me get it. This need-driven expectation is the source of 90 percent of the conflict in relationships today. You start to see this thing as a right.

**Disappointment:** Sinful and demanding expectations set us up for disappointment. So much of our disappointment in relationships is not because people have actually wronged us, but because we think they have failed to meet our expectations.

**Punishment:** We are hurt and disappointed in this person who says they love us, so we strike back in a variety of ways to punish them. Basically, we are angry because we've decided they have broken the laws of **MY kingdom**. At this point I am no longer loving God and other people; instead, I love things and use people to try and get them.

"If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world."

~ C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

If my heart is ruled by a certain desire, there are only **TWO WAYS I can respond to you:**

1. If you are helping me get what I want, I will be happy with you.
2. But if you stand in my way, I will be angry, frustrated, and discouraged when I am with you. There will be times when I wish you weren't in my life. You stand in the way of what I crave so I lash out at you.

#### **D. Take Note of Your Heart during Suffering & Disappointment**

Don't just push through the pain. Ask God to show you your own heart and the idols that are being exposed.

Suffering exposes our idols. If you'll learn to look for it, God can help you see something besides the pain that you're in, so that you can actually learn a lot about your heart.

It takes heat to bring idols to the surface, so suffering is a great time to learn about your own heart.

#### **IV. How Do You Repent of Idols in Your Life?**

**Identifying Personal Idols** (worksheet – [www.bradbigney.com](http://www.bradbigney.com))

**Idolatry Repentance Plan** (worksheet – [www.bradbigney.com](http://www.bradbigney.com))

**Change Your Thinking** (example worksheet – [www.bradbigney.com](http://www.bradbigney.com))

**Change your actions**

Identifying your idols is a great start but that's not the end. If you don't make specific plans for overcoming those idols you'll just keep right on living with them rumbling around in your life. Most people fail to change because they don't make specific plans to change.

**Final Warning:** Make sure you point your counselees to the cross, Christ, and the gospel during this process. Yes, we want them to spend time examining their heart, but don't ever let them lose sight of the fact that they're spending time examining their heart in the presence of their Savior. They're not alone, not on their own, and not in isolation.

Otherwise, these times of heart examination will turn into obsessive condemnation. Don't let them do that!

**Col. 3:1–5** “Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. <sup>3</sup> For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup> When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. <sup>5</sup> Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.”

If you simply uproot some idols and fail to “plant” the love of Christ in their place, those idols will grow back, and bring some others with them because your heart is still not delighting in and satisfied with Christ.

“The path of change goes through the heart and continues on to the Gospel, where God chose to most fully reveal Himself in the death and resurrection of Christ.”

~ Ed Welch, “Motives: Why Do I Do the Things I Do?”

## **Fruit You Can Expect as You Repent of Your Own Idolatry:**

- A. You'll Start to Really Get Free** - You'll have so much more freedom to serve God & run unhindered towards godliness

**Heb. 12:1-2** "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup> looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith..."

Idols do two things that this verse talks about: weigh us down and keep us from seeing.

- B. You Might Start to See Yourself and Others Clearly for the Very First Time**

**Matt. 7: 3-5** "Why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? <sup>4</sup> Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck out of your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? <sup>5</sup> Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck out of your brother's eye."

- C. You'll Feel More Conviction of Sin** — You'll have a greater conviction of sin and the ability to forsake It

**Prov. 28:13-14** "He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy... <sup>14</sup> but he who hardens his heart will fall into calamity."

Idols, many times, are what keep us from the “and forsakes them” part! Idols whisper to us to just hang on a little bit longer. You’ll have the conviction of sin and the ability to forsake it rather than the paralyzing and often prideful self-condemnation that leaves you just wallowing and unable to get past it.

**D. Your Passion and Love for God and Your Savior Will Soar!**

Blaise Pascal got it right when he said, “Knowing God without knowing our own wretchedness makes for pride. Knowing our own wretchedness without knowing God makes for despair. Knowing Jesus Christ strikes the balance because He shows us both God and our own wretchedness.”

**Luke 7:47** “Therefore I say to you, her sins which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little.”

**Recommended Resources**

*Gospel Treason*, Brad Bigney

*Counterfeit Gods*, Tim Keller

*Idol Lies*, Dee Brestin

*Lost in the Middle*, Paul Tripp

# **Trials and Suffering**

*Pastor Brad Bigney / Grace Fellowship Church*

## **Introduction:**

- It has been well said that if you're a Christian: you've just come out of a trial, are presently in a trial, or are being prepared to go through a trial.
- God often uses these trials and sufferings in our lives as a divine squeeze to let others and us see what's in our hearts. J.C. Ryle said, "What you are in the day of trial, that you are and nothing more."
- God also uses these trials to remove the dross from our lives – so like Job we can say, "When He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold." (Job 23:10)
- As we are going through trials and sufferings we can easily develop wrong perspectives about the nature of these trials.

## **I. Unbiblical perspectives concerning the origin of trials and suffering**

- A. It's always **MY** fault
- B. It's always **OTHER** people's fault ("victim")
- C. It's **NO ONE'S** fault (fatalism)



“God wants the righteous to live peaceful, happy lives, but sometimes even He can’t bring that about. It is too difficult even for God to keep cruelty and chaos from claiming their innocent victims... Can you accept the idea that some things happen for no reason, that there is randomness in the universe?”

~ Harold Kushner, *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*

D. God is **NOT** in it at all (deistic view of God)

## II. Biblical perspectives of the origin of trials and suffering

A. Ultimately a result of Adam’s **FALL** (Gen. 3)

B. God is **ALWAYS** the remote (distant) cause of trials and suffering

Calvin suggested that God is the “remote” cause of all that happens, while men are the “proximate” causes. God thus is presented as the One who moves on the inclinations of men so that they, the “proximate” causes, do as God has willed from eternity. According to this theory, God wills from His holy nature so that He never wills men’s actions from sinful motives. He said, “For God wills for good what men will for evil.” Men are still responsible for their own sin. God’s “permission” of sin is an active “permission” for His own holy purposes.

1. But He is never the author of **SIN** (James 1:12-18)

2. God is **SOVEREIGN** so everything is planned by Him and goes according to how He decrees it to go (Isa. 46:9–11; Eph. 1:11; Dan. 4:43–35; Job 42:22; Ps. 115:3)
3. This includes **BOTH** calamity and blessing (Eccles. 7:14; Lam. 3:37–38; Isa. 45:7; Amos 3:6)

### III. **Biblical purposes in trials and suffering**

A. Always for God's **GLORY** (Job 1–2; John 9:1–3; 1 Cor. 1:26–31)

B. Always for our eternal **GOOD** (Rom. 8:28–29)

1. God may choose to set aside our temporary happiness to work a more grand work for our eternal good and His glory.

God <b>LIMITS, ORDERS,</b> and <b>CONTROLS</b> all things for His glory and our good.
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2. Example: Paul in 2 Cor. 12:7–10

3. Example: Joseph in Gen. 50:20

See God in the trouble (use Jay Adams' book ***How to Handle Trouble***)

- a. Recognize God is in the problem.
- b. Remember God is up to something.

- c. Believe that He is up to something good.
- d. Discover where and how God is at work.
- e. Get involved in what He is doing.
- f. Expect good effects.

Use *Beside Still Waters* by Charles Spurgeon

#### IV. Biblical responses of God's children in trials and suffering

- A. You must be responsible no matter how you **FEEL** – to always please Christ since we will also give an account (2 Cor. 5:9-10)

“For many years in my own pilgrimage of seeking to come to a place of trusting God at all times — I am still far from the end of the journey — I was a prisoner to my feelings. I mistakenly thought I could not trust God unless I felt like trusting Him (which I almost never did in times of adversity). Now I am learning that trusting God is first of all a matter of the will, and is not dependent on my feelings. I choose to trust God and my feelings eventually follow.”

~ Jerry Bridges, *Trusting God*, pp. 194-195

**Ps. 56:3-4** “Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You. <sup>4</sup> In God (I will praise His Word), in God I have put my trust; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me?”

**Ps. 71:1-2** "In You, O Lord, I put my trust; let me never be put to shame. <sup>2</sup> Deliver me in Your righteousness, and cause me to escape..."

- B. Don't pray to just "hang in there" or "just get me through" the trial and suffering – but ask God to help you **GROW** in the midst of the difficulty to be more like Jesus (Rom. 8:28-29; James 1:2-4)

An African Christian said this about American Christians: "You Americans always pray for God to remove the trial; we pray for God to strengthen our backs to bear it for His glory."

Elisabeth Elliot: "There is a philosophy of secular education which holds that the student ought to be allowed to assemble his own curriculum according to his preferences. Few students have a strong basis for making these choices, not knowing how little they know. Ideas of what they need to learn are not only greatly limited but greatly distorted. What they need is help from those who know more than they do.

Mercifully, God does not leave us to choose our own curriculum. His wisdom is perfect, His knowledge embraces not only all worlds but the individual hearts and minds of each of His loved children. With intimate understanding of our deepest needs and individual capacities, He chooses our curriculum... God's curriculum for all who sincerely want to know Him and do His will always include lessons we wish we could skip."

~ Elisabeth Elliot, *Keep a Quiet Heart*, pp. 81-82

C. Possible **REASONS** why God allows trials and sufferings:

1. **UNCONFESSED** sins (1 Cor. 11:30; 2 Kings 5:15–27)

*Use caution here – Job’s counselors thought this was the only reason*

2. To **CHASTISE** His children (Ps. 119:67; Heb. 12:5–11)

3. God wants to increase our **USEFULNESS** (pruning process – John 15:2; 2 Cor. 1:3–9; 2 Pet. 1:5–8)

4. To help us realize this isn’t Heaven and we live in a **FALLEN** world (2 Cor. 4:16–18; Rom. 8:22–24)

“Pain is unmasked, unmistakable evil, every man knows that something is wrong when he is being hurt... And pain is not only immediately recognizable evil, but evil impossible to ignore. We can rest contentedly in our sins and in our stupidities... But pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world... I am progressing along the path of life in my ordinary contentedly fallen and godless condition, absorbed in a merry meeting with my friends for the morrow or a bit of work that tickles my vanity today, a [vacation], or a new book, when suddenly a stab of abdominal pain that threatens serious disease, or a headline in the newspapers that threatens us all with destruction, sends this whole pack of cards tumbling down. At first I am overwhelmed, and all my little happinesses look like broken toys. Then, slowly and reluctantly, bit by bit, I try to bring myself into the frame of mind

that I should be in at all times. I remind myself that all these toys were never intended to possess my heart, that my true good is in another world, and my only real treasure is Christ. And perhaps, by God's grace, I succeed, and for a day or two become a creature consciously dependent on God and drawing its strength from the right sources. But the moment the threat is withdrawn, my whole nature leaps back to the toys... Thus the terrible necessity of tribulation is only too clear."

~ C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*

5. To allow us to **REAP** what we sow (a natural consequence to our own choices – Gal. 6:7-8; Prov. 5:22)
6. To teach us about our own weakness and cause us to **DEPEND** on God (2 Cor. 1:8-9; 12:7-10)
7. To have us realize that we have placed our **HOPE** somewhere else or have spread it out between God and self / circumstances / other people / possessions. Our hope is to be squarely fixed upon God alone and His promises (1 Pet. 1:13; Heb. 6:19). At times we don't even know we have "little hopes" elsewhere until God allows a trial to come and reveal them to us.

"If God told me some time ago that He was about to make me as happy as I could be in this world, and then had told me that He should begin by crippling me in all my limbs, and removing me from all my usual sources of enjoyment, I should have thought it a very strange mode of accomplishing His purpose. And yet, how is His wisdom manifest even in this! For if you should see a man

shut up in a closed room, idolizing a set of lamps and rejoicing in their light, and you wished to make him truly happy, you would begin by blowing out all his lamps; and then throw open the shutters to let in the light of Heaven.”

~ Samuel Rutherford

“O how I pray that when God, in His mercy, begins to blow out my lamps, I will not curse the wind.”

~ John Piper, *A Godward Life*, pp. 288–289

8. To enlarge our appreciation of His **SUFFICIENCY** (2 Cor 4:7; 12:7–10)
9. To test and strengthen our **FAITH** (1 Pet. 1:6–7; 4:12)
10. To develop Christ-like **CHARACTER** (James 1:2–5)
11. To drives us to God’s Word (Ps. 119:67, 71, 75)

“It is not that we will learn from adversity something different than what we can learn from the Scriptures. Rather, adversity enhances the teaching of God’s Word and makes it more profitable to us. In some instances, it clarifies our understanding or causes us to see truths we had passed over before.”

~ Jerry Bridges, *Trusting God*, p. 178

Martin Luther had discovered the same “method” of seeing God in His Word. He said there are three rules for understanding Scripture: praying, meditating and suffering trials. The “trials,” he said, are supremely valuable. They “teach you not only to know and understand but also to experience how right, how true, how sweet, how lovely, how mighty, how comforting God's Word is: it is wisdom supreme.” Therefore, the devil himself becomes the unwitting teacher of God's Word: “the devil will afflict you [and] will make a real doctor of you, and will teach you by his temptations to seek and to love God's Word.”

~ *What Luther Says*, Vol. 3, p. 1360

## V. Biblical resources available to the Christian through Christ

- A. The Father providentially is carrying out His decreed will for our lives: His will is **GOOD**, perfect, and acceptable (Rom. 12:2)
- B. Christ **PRAYS** on our behalf (John 17:20–21; Heb. 4:14–16)
- C. His Holy Spirit **INDWELLS** His children (1 Cor. 6:19–20)
- D. His **GRACE** is sufficient (2 Cor. 12) – He always promises **HELP**, not necessarily deliverance (1 Cor. 10:13)
- E. Heaven is our **HOME** and it is sure (John 14:1–3; Heb. 6:19)
- F. Christ is **SOON** to return (1 Pet. 1:13)



## **Recommended Resources**

*Beside Still Waters*, Charles Spurgeon  
*God's Grace in Your Suffering*, David Powlison  
*Embodied Hope*, Kelly Kapic  
*How to Handle Trouble*, Jay Adams  
*Trusting God*, Jerry Bridges  
*Walking with God Through Pain & Suffering*, Timothy Keller

# Anger

*Pastor Peter LaRuffa / Grace Fellowship Church*

One of the most important life skills one can develop is a healthy way to handle anger.

Anger can shatter communication and tear apart relationships, oftentimes ruins joy and even the health of many.

## I. Introduction: Some people believe that all anger is sinful.

A. "Blessed are the **peacemakers**, for they shall be called sons of God" (Matt. 5:9).

B. "If possible, so far as it depends on you, live **peaceably** with all" (Rom. 12:18).

C. We are to pray "for kings and all who are in high positions, **that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life**, godly and dignified in every way (1 Tim. 2:2).

1. By far & away, the vast majority of the imperatives in the NT show us that we're to be people of peace, of love, of self-control, and that we're not to be characterized by anger.

D. Jesus Christ was not characterized by anger.

E. God the Father is not characterized by anger.

1. "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, **slow to anger**, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness..." (Ex. 34:6)

F. The first appearance of anger in the Bible is after the Fall of Man (Gen. 4:5–8).

1. It's understandable why it may appear that anger is always sinful, but that's simply not the case.

## II. **Anger, in and of itself, is not a sin.**

A. If anger was a sin, we'd never be **commanded** to be angry.

1. **Eph. 4:26a** – **Be angry, and do not sin...**

B. If anger was sinful, **God** would never be angry.

1. **Ex. 22:24** – and My wrath will burn, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children fatherless.
2. **Ps. 7:11** – God is a righteous judge, and a God who feels **indignation** every day.
3. **2 Chron. 26:16–23** – God's anger at Uzziah
4. **Mark 3:5** – And [Jesus] looked around at them with **anger**, grieved at their hardness of heart...
5. **Matt. 21:12–13** – And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers

and the seats of those who sold pigeons. He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you make it a den of robbers."

### III. Even though anger is not a sin, our anger probably is.

A. Anger is also a **learned** response.

1. How and what to be angry at is **displayed** to us.

a. Parents, siblings, spouses, friends, etc.

b. While anger is **innate** within us, we learn what to get upset about and how to show our displeasure (Prov. 22:24-25).

c. Anger is **practiced** and can become a habit or "second nature."

B. Also, let's not forget the doctrine of **total depravity**. Every area of our life has been affected & infected by our sinful nature (Rom. 3:9-18).

1. No one is without sin (Rom. 3:10).

2. No one seeks after God (Rom. 3:11).

3. No one is good (Rom. 3:12).

4. Our speech is corrupted by sin (Rom. 3:13-14).

5. Our actions are corrupted by sin (Rom. 3:15).

6. We have no natural fear of God (Rom. 3:18).

C. When the Bible speaks of our anger, the vast majority of ink is dedicated to warnings and cautions of misuse.

1. **Prov. 12:16** – The vexation of a fool is known at once, but the prudent ignores an insult.
2. **Prov. 14:17** – A man of quick temper acts foolishly, and a man of evil devices is hated.
3. **Prov. 14:29** – Whoever is slow to anger has great understanding, but he who has a hasty temper exalts folly.
4. **Prov. 15:18** – A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger quiets contention.
5. **Prov. 16:32** – Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.
6. **Prov. 29:22** – A man of wrath stirs up strife, and one given to anger causes much transgression.

D. Finally, just consider your own experiences with anger. Are these your fondest memories, or are they usually associated with sadness & regret?

#### IV. **Biblical understanding of emotion vs. the emotion of anger... So, what is anger anyway?**

A. Concise definition: Anger is an emotional and physical **reaction** to another's irritating behavior.

B. Amplified definition: Anger is a strong **feeling** of displeasure or hostility caused

by a real or perceived offense, injury, or unmet desire to one's self or others, usually accompanied by a **desire** to retaliate or seek revenge.

C. Working definition: Anger is a God-given **alarm** to make us aware of a problem, and drive us to do something about it (2 Sam. 12:5; John 2:15ff).

## V. When is anger sinful?

A. ...when it is **selfishly** motivated.

B. ...when God's **goal** in the matter is distorted (1 Cor. 10:31; Rom. 8:28-29).

C. ...when it is allowed to **linger** (Eph. 4:26-27).

D. ...when it attacks a **person** instead of a problem (Eph. 4:29).

## VI. Contrasting righteous anger and unrighteous anger

Common Manifestations of **Unrighteous** anger

A. Two modes of **ventilation**

1. Blowing up at the **object** of anger

a. Reacting violently; an outburst

- b. "thumos;" "wrath" in NASB in Eph. 4:31; Col 3:8; Rev. 15:1; and 19:15; "rage" in Luke 4:28

Ex: employee tells off the pushy, demanding boss in an outburst of disrespect

## 2. Attacking a **substitute**

- a. Ventilation does not even occur on the **person** who caused the anger but on someone else or something else.
- b. This mode of anger is particularly **perverse**.

Ex: employee who is getting pushed around at work by the boss utters not a word at the office but comes home and kicks the dog or worse yet his kids or wife.

## B. Two modes of **internalization** (common among Christians who are under the misconception that all anger is wrong)

### 1. **Clamming-up**

- a. They believe that all anger is sinful so whatever is happening to them emotionally when they have been crossed gets stuffed
- b. Not keeping current; "the slow burn"

c. "Orgē"

1. "Anger" in NASB in Eph. 4:31; Col. 3:8; and James 1:19–20
2. "Wrath" in Eph. 5:6
3. "Quick tempered" in Titus 1:7;
4. "Angry tempers" in 2 Cor. 12:20

2. **Denying** the anger

- a. Denying to yourself and others that you are angry but knowing full well that there is within you an emotion that is creating a tremendous amount of energy.
- b. God wants us to deal with the anger and the accompanying energy immediately and in a way that is pleasing to God

**Righteous** anger

C. When the intense, immense emotional energy is directed toward a solution to a problem in a manner pleasing to God.

1. For example, a husband that has just learned his wife has been adulterous will be angry. How will he use the emotional energy created by the anger?
  - a. Sinful ex: He could use the energy from the anger to go shopping for a gun to kill his wife's lover.



- b. Righteous ex: husband could use the energy to make inquiries into finding a biblical counselor to help them.

**VII. In light of God's many warnings and cautions concerning anger, we are wise to PAUSE in our anger in order to glorify God.**

**James 1:19-21** "Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. "

A. **Put off** knee-jerk reactions, knowing our propensity to sin with anger (Eph. 4:26-27, 29-31; Ps. 37:8).

B. **Acknowledge** that our anger can be a God-given alert, but will not be the means by which a problem is solved (James 1:20).

***Anger is an alarm, not an answer.*** It makes us aware of a problem, but was never intended to be a solution to a problem. *If you see your anger as the answer, you're using it in a way God never intended.*

C. **Understand** before seeking to be understood (James 1:19; Prov. 18:13, 15, 17).

D. **S**earch the Scriptures for guidance (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

E. **E**vangelize yourself before admonishing another (Eph. 4:32; 1 Tim. 1:12-17).

### **Recommended Resources**

*The Christian Counselor's Manual, Jay Adams*

*"What Do You Do When Anger Gets The Upper Hand?," Jay Adams*

*"Angry Children: Understanding and Helping Your Child Regain Control," Michael Emlet*

*"Peacemaking Principles: Responding to Conflict Biblically," Peacemaker Ministries*

*"Anger: Escaping the Maze," David Powlison*

*The Heart of Anger, Lou Priolo*

*Peacemaking for Families, Ken Sande*

*Living with an Angry Spouse: Help for Victims of Abuse, Edward Welch*

# Depression

*Pastor Peter LaRuffa / Grace Fellowship Church*

## **I. Introduction**

A. My testimony

B. Ps. 88

C. How about you?

## **II. Definitions**

A. The DSM-5 outlines the following criterion to make a diagnosis of depression. The individual must be experiencing five or more symptoms during the same 2-week period and at least one of the symptoms should be either (1) depressed mood or (2) loss of interest or pleasure.

a. Depressed mood most of the day, nearly every day.

b. Markedly diminished interest or pleasure in all, or almost all, activities most of the day, nearly every day.

c. Significant weight loss when not dieting or weight gain, or decrease or increase in appetite nearly every day.

- d. A slowing down of thought and a reduction of physical movement (observable by others, not merely subjective feelings of restlessness or being slowed down).
- e. Fatigue or loss of energy nearly every day.
- f. Feelings of worthlessness or excessive or inappropriate guilt nearly every day.
- g. Diminished ability to think or concentrate, or indecisiveness, nearly every day.
- h. Recurrent thoughts of death, recurrent suicidal ideation without a specific plan, or a suicide attempt or a specific plan for committing suicide.

## B. Personal Descriptions

- a. *"Depression... involves a complete absence: absence of affect, absence of feeling, absence of response, absence of interest. The pain you feel in the course of a major clinical depression is an attempt on nature's part... to fill up the empty space. But for all intents and purposes, the deeply depressed are just the walking dead."* (Elizabeth Wurtzel, *Prozac Nation*)
- b. Some are tortured by the fact that they just don't die. "Exhaustion combined with sleeplessness is a rare torture." "The pain seeps into everything." The thought that they might remain in this horrible state is too much to consider. "No one knows how badly I want to die."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ed Welch, *Counseling Those Who Are Depressed*, JBC Vol. 18, Issue 2, p. 6.

- c. Abraham Lincoln: *"I am now the most miserable man living. If what I feel were equally distributed to the whole human family, there would not be one cheerful face on earth. Whether I shall ever be better, I cannot tell; I awfully forebode I shall not. To remain as I am is impossible. I must die or be better, it appears to me."*<sup>4</sup>
  
- d. Even the great preacher Charles Spurgeon spoke about his many episodes of depression: *"I could weep by the hour like a child, and yet I knew not what I wept for..." "The iron bolt... mysteriously fastens the door of hope and holds our spirits in gloomy prison."*<sup>5</sup>

#### C. God's Redemptive Purposes

### III. Suggested Reasons

- A. The World, Culture, and our Flesh have plenty of reasons.
  - a. My Biology – Chemical Imbalance Theory
  - b. My Circumstances
  - c. My Personality

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<sup>4</sup> John H. Greist and James W. Jefferson, *Depression and Its Treatment* (New York: Warner, 1992), p. 8.

<sup>5</sup> Charles Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1972), p. 24.

B. A Wholistic Biblical Perspective

- a. Physical Contributions
- b. Personality Tendencies
- c. Circumstantial Factors
- d. The Truth gives us Hope!

**Ps. 34:17-18** - *"The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears, and rescues them from all their troubles. <sup>18</sup> The Lord is near the brokenhearted; He saves those crushed in spirit. "*

**2 Cor. 7:6** - *"But God, who comforts the downcast comforted us by the coming of Titus."*

**Ps. 143:7** - *"Answer me quickly, O Lord! My spirit fails! Hide not Your face from me, lest I be like those who go down to the pit."*

**Ps. 42:11** - *"Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise Him, my salvation and my God."*

**Ps. 40:2** - *"He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure."*

**Prov. 15:13** - *"A glad heart makes a cheerful face, but by sorrow of heart the spirit is crushed."*

**Ps. 147:3** - *"He heals the brokenhearted and bandages their wounds."*

## Biblical Examples – Narrative Homework assignments

- a. Moses (Num. 11:10–16)
- b. David (Ps. 51; Ps. 32:1–5)
- c. Elijah (1 Kings 19:1–18)
- d. Job
- e. Jonah (Jonah 4:1–11)
- f. Psalmist (Ps. 73)

## IV. How You Can Help

- A. Counselors need to have an understanding of the difference between godly sorrow and worldly sorrow (2 Cor. 7:10–11).

**2 Cor. 7:10–11** – “For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, but worldly grief produces death. <sup>11</sup>For consider how much diligence this very thing — this grieving as God wills — has produced in you: what a desire to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what deep longing, what zeal, what justice! In every way you showed yourselves to be pure in this matter.”

- a. Consider all that Peter & Judas had in common.
  - i. Both gave their lives to follow Jesus (John 6:66–68).
  - ii. Both had been chosen by Jesus to follow Him (John 15:16).
  - iii. Both were first-hand witnesses of Jesus’ miraculous works.
  - iv. Both were first-hand listeners of Jesus’ teachings.
  - v. Both witnessed people’s lives changed by the power of the Gospel.

*And finally...*

- vi. ...both of their last days with Jesus was marked by the sin of betrayal (Luke 22:21ff).
- vii. Both had their sins predicted by Jesus only hours before they occurred (Luke 22:21-23, 31-34).
- viii. Both did exactly as Jesus foretold (Luke 22:47-62).
- ix. Both realized their sin and were filled with sorrow (Matt. 27:3; Luke 22:62).

b. Consider how Peter & Judas differed.

- i. While both Peter and Judas were sorrowful, their sorrows were very different. Both knew they sinned and felt VERY badly about it, but only Peter was wrong in a right & God-honoring way.

- 1. Don't rule out the possibility that your counselee might need to move from worldly sorrow to godly sorrow.

B. Ask, listen, and understand with great compassion, just like your heavenly Father would.

**Ps. 34:18** - "The Lord is near the brokenhearted; He saves those crushed in spirit."

a. **ASK** - "*Help me understand...*"

- i. Help me understand when this started?
- ii. Help me understand when this is hardest for you?



- iii. Help me understand what has been lost? How did that make you feel? How did you respond?
- iv. Help me understand if you can see God in this? Why or why not?

b. **LISTEN and UNDERSTAND with compassion...**

- i. **L**ook into their eyes.
- ii. **I**nquire by saying "Help me understand..." and "Tell me more..."
- iii. **S**top suggesting solutions.
- iv. **T**ell them what you think they're saying, and ask, "Did I get that right, or did I misunderstand?"
- v. **E**xpress sympathy by saying, "Wow, that must be very hard."
- vi. **N**ever interrupt.

C. Help them to Define and Discern Biblically

**2 Cor. 10:3-5** - "For although we live in the flesh, we do not wage war according to the flesh, <sup>4</sup> since the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but are powerful through God for the demolition of strongholds. We demolish arguments <sup>5</sup> and every proud thing that is raised up against the knowledge of God, **and we take every thought captive to obey Christ.**"

- a. Guilt
- b. Shame

- c. Their sin
- d. Other's sin
- e. Disappointment
- f. Anger
- g. Loss
- h. What does God say about the matter?

D. Call to Believe Truth!

**John 6:28-29** - "What can we do to perform the works of God?' they asked. <sup>29</sup> Jesus replied, 'This is the work of God — that you believe in the one He has sent.'"

**John 8:44** - "You are of your father the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. **When he tells a lie, he speaks from his own nature, because he is a liar and the father of lies.**"

Spiritual warfare is real. Satan's end goal is to drive souls and society into ruin. **His primary method is lies.**

**\*Helpful Homework Assignment: How's It Going? (Google Form)**

At least 1X/day, rate the day:

4 = (glorious; joy-filled; happy; grateful; hopeful)

3 = (could be better, but generally good)

2 = (could be worse, but generally bad)

1 = (bad; discouraging; awful; hopeless)

For each entry, make a quick note as to what factored into the rating you submitted. This can be as little as just a few words, or paragraphs similar to a journal entry (whatever you prefer). Review the cumulative results each week, then after a month.

## E. Give them Hope

### a. The Gospel

**Rom. 5:1-5** - "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>2</sup> We have also obtained access through him by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we boast in the hope of the glory of God. <sup>3</sup> And not only that, but we also boast in our afflictions, because we know that affliction produces endurance, <sup>4</sup> endurance produces proven character, and proven character produces hope. <sup>5</sup> This hope will not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us."

### b. Repentance

**Rom. 2:4** - "Or do you despise the riches of his kindness, restraint, and patience, not recognizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?"

**Job 42:1-6** - "Then Job replied to the Lord: <sup>2</sup> I know that you can do anything and no plan of Yours can be thwarted. <sup>3</sup> You asked, 'Who is this who conceals My counsel with ignorance?' Surely I spoke about things I did not understand, things

too wondrous for me to know. <sup>4</sup> You said, 'Listen now, and I will speak. When I question you, you will inform Me.' <sup>5</sup> I had heard reports about You, but now my eyes have seen You. <sup>6</sup> Therefore, I reject my words and am sorry for them; I am dust and ashes."

**2 Cor. 7:10** - "For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, but worldly grief produces death."

c. Memorize and Meditate Truth.

**Isa. 26:3** - "You will keep the mind that is dependent on You in perfect peace..."

**Prov. 4:23** - "Guard your heart above all else, for it is the source of life."

d. Give them Purpose

i. You were **created to glorify God**.

**2 Cor. 5:9** - "Therefore, whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to be pleasing to Him."

**Phil. 4:12-14** - "I know how to make do with little, and I know how to make do with a lot. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being content — whether well fed or hungry, whether in abundance or in need. <sup>13</sup> I am able to do all things through Him who strengthens me. <sup>14</sup> Still, you did well by partnering with me in my hardship."

**Lam. 3:31-33** - "For the Lord will not reject us forever. <sup>32</sup> Even if He causes suffering, He will show compassion according to the abundance of His faithful love. <sup>33</sup> For He does not enjoy bringing affliction or suffering on mankind."

- ii. You were **created to be grateful**.

**Phil. 4:6-7** - "Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."

- iii. You were **created to serve**.

**Eph. 4:11-16** - "And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup> to equip the saints for the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup> until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son, growing into maturity with a stature measured by Christ's fullness. <sup>14</sup> Then we will no longer be little children, tossed by the waves and blown around by every wind of teaching, by human cunning with cleverness in the techniques of deceit. <sup>15</sup> But speaking the truth in love, let us grow in every way into Him who is the head — Christ. <sup>16</sup> From Him the whole body, fitted and knit together by every supporting ligament, promotes the growth of the body for building itself up in love by the proper working of each individual part."

## **Recommended Resources**

Spiral Diagram Homework

*Depression*, Edward T. Welch

*Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy*, Mark Vroegop

*Descriptions and Prescriptions*, Michael R. Emlet

*Spiritual Depression*, Martin Lloyd-Jones

## **Passages to Consider**

Eph. 1:3–2:10; 5:18–6:9;

1 Cor. 10:31; 2 Cor. 5:9;

Rom. 8:28–29; 1 Pet. 1:3, 13;

Ps. 42–43; 131; 2 Pet. 1:1–11

# God's Purpose for Marriage

*Pastor Brad Bigney / Grace Fellowship Church*

## I. God Designed Marriage (Gen. 2:18)

- a. Marriage was established in the creation account.
- b. Marriage appears before the fall of man in Gen. 3.
- c. God said it was "very good."
- d. Nowhere in the Bible is marriage ever depicted as being between two members of the same sex.

## II. Marriage Was Designed to Be a Picture of the Relationship Between Christ and His Bride – the Church (Eph. 5:22-33)

**Five times in eight verses** he uses the word "as" or "just as."

**v. 22** – Wives should submit to their husbands "as to the Lord"

**v. 23** – For the husband is head of the wife "as also Christ is head of the church"

**v. 24** – Therefore "just as" the church is subject to Christ, so let wives be to their own husbands

**v. 25** – Husbands love your wives "just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it"

**v. 29** – Husbands should nourish and cherish wives, "just as Christ does the church"

God never designed for marriage to work well without Jesus Christ at the center of it. That's why this marriage passage is surrounded by some other critical information.

**5:18** – Be filled with the Spirit. "...be filled with the Spirit..."

**5:20** – Be thankful. "...giving thanks..."

**5:21** – Be ready to lay down your "rights." "...submitting to one another..."

**6:12** – Be alert to who the real enemy is that wants to destroy your marriage – Satan. "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood but against principalities..."

**6:13** – Be armed for spiritual battle. "Therefore take up the whole armor of God..."

**6:16** – Be full of faith. "Above all, taking the shield of faith..."

**6:18** – Be praying constantly. "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit..."

### **III. Marriage is a Great Blessing that was Designed for Our Good**

a. Marriage provides **companionship** (Gen. 2:18).

i. It solves the "aloneness" problem.

ii. It provides a "helper fit" for man.

b. Marriage **facilitates sexual expression, purity and duty** (1 Cor. 7:1-5).

c. Marriage **facilitates the gift of procreating children** (Gen. 1:28; Ps. 127:3).



#### **IV. Marriage was Ultimately Designed for God's Glory** (1 Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:17-23; Eph. 5:32)

**Eph. 5:32** "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church."

Paul says there's something at the very heart of marriage that preaches a sermon about Christ and the glory of God! That means a strong Christian marriage is a billboard for Jesus Christ and the gospel!

It also means that an ugly Christian marriage is like graffiti, because it defaces and devalues something precious. It misrepresents the glory of God and our Savior because it represents selfishness, chaos, and twisting, while a strong marriage can adorn the gospel.

**Titus 2:10** "...that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things."

#### **V. Marriage was Designed to Expose Us and Help Us Grow Spiritually to Become More Like Christ** (Eph. 5:1; Prov. 27:17; Rom. 8; 1 Pet. 3)

Marriage is not a stopping point. It's a starting point. The wedding ceremony is not the closing chapter; it's the beginning of the real work of becoming more like Christ.

a. Marriage is designed to grow each person in **holiness**.

"To spiritually benefit from marriage, we have to be honest. We have to look at our disappointments, own up to our ugly attitudes, and confront our selfishness. We also have to rid ourselves of the notion that the difficulties of marriage can be overcome if we simply pray harder or learn a few simple principles... Why is this? Because there's a deeper question that needs to be addressed beyond, 'How can we 'improve' our marriage?' What if God didn't design marriage to be 'easier'? What if God had an end in mind that went beyond our happiness, our comfort... What if God designed marriage to make us holy more than to make us happy?"

~ Gary Thomas, *Sacred Marriage*, p. 13

- b. Although marriage is designed to be the **norm** for life on earth, it is not required to glorify God, grow spiritually, or impact others (1 Cor. 7:7-8, 1 Cor. 7:32-34).

**1 Cor. 7:32-34** "I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. <sup>33</sup>But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife, <sup>34</sup>and his interests are divided."

“Christianity was the first religion that held up single adulthood as a viable way of life. He writes, ‘Christianity’s founder, Jesus Christ, and its leading theologian, St. Paul, were both single their entire lives. Single adults cannot be seen as somehow less fully formed or realized human beings... Paul’s assessment in 1 Corinthians 7 is that singleness is a good condition blessed by God, and in many circumstances, it is actually better than marriage. As a result of this revolutionary attitude, the early church did not pressure people to marry (as we see in Paul’s letter).”

~ Tim Keller, *The Meaning of Marriage*, p. 194

I don’t think Paul intended to communicate that the life of a single person cannot be a billboard that puts on display the glory of Christ and His love for the church; he simply wanted married couples to *not* get so caught up in their own marriage, and each other, that they forget that marriage was always designed to be about something bigger than the two of them.

2 Cor. 11:2–3 is a passage that speaks to every believer – whether single or married.

**2 Cor. 11:2–3** “...I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ. <sup>3</sup> But I am afraid that... your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.”

## VI. God Never Designed Marriage to Fully Satisfy Us

- a. There’s a measure of **futility** that’s still present in the best Christian marriage.

**Rom. 8:20** "For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope..."

- b. And so we **groan** and long for something better that will fully satisfy.

**Rom. 8:23, 26** "Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. <sup>26</sup> ...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."

"If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world."

~ C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

You will love your spouse best when you love God most. You don't want your spouse to make you the #1 thing in their life. Love for God always has to be ultimate, and your marriage secondary.

The power and motivation to keep loving and sacrificing, year after year, for a sinful, imperfect husband or imperfect wife *has* to come from being so satisfied in something *outside* of that marriage!

## VII. God Designed Marriage to Be a Covenant Relationship

- a. Marriage is a **covenant** relationship for life between one man and one woman (Mal. 2:10–17; Matt. 19:1–6; Eph. 5:32).

**Matt. 19:6** “So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”

“Staying married is not mainly about staying in love, but about keeping covenant... By this unwavering covenant-keeping, the possibility of being profoundly in love in forty years is much greater than if you think the task of marriage is first staying in love... Staying in love isn’t the first task of marriage. It is a happy overflow of covenant-keeping for Christ’s sake.”

~ John Piper, *This Momentary Marriage*, p. 74

- b. Marriage involves one man and one woman “**leaving**” father and mother.

**Matt. 19:5** “...Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.”

1. “Leaving” is more than **geographical** in nature.
2. “Leaving” means both individuals understand the “**S.P.S.**” Principle
  - a. The parent–child relationship is **secondary** to the parents’ marriage [temporary].

- b. When a child grows and marries, the husband–wife relationship becomes their **primary** earthly relationship [permanent].
  - c. The [now] parents’ relationship to their married child is a **secondary** relationship [temporary].
3. “Leaving” means a commitment to **prioritizing** their spouse’s concerns above those of their parents.
- c. Marriage involves “**cleaving**” (“being joined”).

**Matt. 19:5** “...Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother **and hold fast to his wife**, and the two shall become one flesh.”

- d. Marriage involves “**weaving**” (“become one flesh”).

**Matt. 19:5** “...Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, **and the two shall become one flesh.**”

- i. **Positional** oneness comes as a result of two people getting married.
- ii. **Physical** oneness comes as a result of a husband and wife engaging in sexual intercourse.
- iii. **Functional** oneness happens over the course of a lifetime as the two continue to become one.

## **Recommended Resources**

*When Sinners Say 'I Do,'* Dave Harvey

*This Momentary Marriage,* John Piper

*The Meaning of Marriage,* Timothy Keller

*Sacred Marriage,* Gary Thomas

# The Role of the Husband

*Pastor Brad Bigney / Grace Fellowship Church*

## I. LEADER: The Husband Is to Lead His Wife (Gen. 1:26, 2:18–25; Eph. 5:23; Matt. 20:25–28)

### A. The biblical foundation for the husband's leadership

#### 1. The order of creation establishes his leadership – Gen. 1–2

**1 Tim. 2:13** “For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve.”

#### 2. God declared the husband to be the leader

**Eph. 5:23** “For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body.”

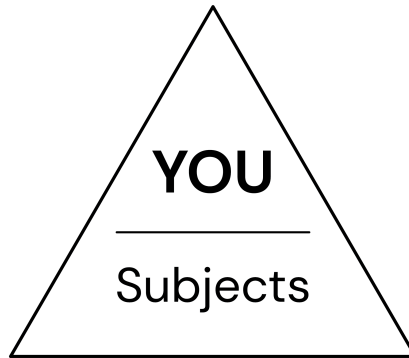
### B. The biblical view of the husband's leadership

**Matt. 20:25–28** “But Jesus called them to Himself, and said, ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them.’<sup>26</sup> It is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant,<sup>27</sup> and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave;<sup>28</sup> just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.”



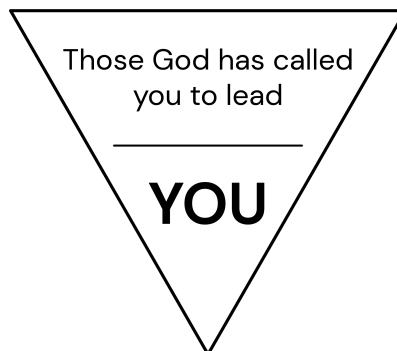
**1. What leadership is NOT: “lord it over them” (Gentile view) = a dictator!**

Example: The focus is more on position and authority and demanding submission!



**2. What leadership IS: leadership = servitude (Matt. 20:26-27)**

Example: The focus is on helping those God has placed around you to grow.



That's why 1 Pet. 3:7 says, "Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman...."

“Likewise” refers back to the submission of Jesus in 1 Pet. 2:21–23. In other words, husbands are to submit to the loving duty of being sensitive to her needs, feelings, and fear. He should subordinate his own needs and preferences to hers.

The real test of whether or not someone’s a servant is how you **respond** when you are treated like one.

*What is the difference between a dictator and a godly leader?*

<b>Dictator</b>	<b>Godly Leader</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Proud</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Humble</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● No accountability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Welcomes accountability</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Makes all the decisions without counsel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Seeks counsel before making decisions</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Expects others to serve him</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Serves others</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sinful communication (lies, anger, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Biblical communication</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Selfish focus: what’s best for me?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Focus on others: what’s best for her?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Wrong motive: pleasing self</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Right motive: pleasing God</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Expects others to change first</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Willing to change first (good example)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● No spiritual leadership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provides spiritual leadership</li> </ul>

**The greatest example of a leader is Jesus!**

**John 13:3–5** “Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, <sup>4</sup> rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. <sup>5</sup> After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.”

**II. LOVER: The Husband Is to Love His Wife (Eph. 5:25–33)**

**Eph. 5:25, 28, 33** “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her... <sup>28</sup> So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies... <sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself.”

**Two important observations:**

**1. This is a command – it’s not an option or something you can take or leave.**

**2. Paul repeats the command three times for a husband to love his wife!**

**John 13:1** “...having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.”

"Divorce represents our inability to hold to Jesus' command. It's giving up on what Jesus calls us to do. If I can't love my wife, how can I love the homeless man in the library? How can I love the drug addict or the alcoholic? Yes, this spouse might be difficult to love at times, but that's what marriage is for - to teach us how to love. Allow your marriage relationship to stretch your love and to enlarge your capacity for love - to teach you to be a Christian. Use marriage as a practice court, where you learn to accept another person and serve him or her."

~ Gary Thomas, *Sacred Marriage*, p. 42

"Jesus even washed the feet of Judas, who was just hours away from betraying him. God doesn't tell us to love only those who deserve it or to serve only those who serve us back. If you are in a one-sided marriage where you feel like you're giving and giving and never receiving, my heart goes out to you. You can partially redeem such a situation by becoming more God-oriented. Remind yourself that you are also in a situation where you can grow spiritually by leaps and bounds. If the heart of Christianity is service, any situation that shapes the spirit of a servant in you is worthwhile - even a lopsided marriage."

~ Gary Thomas, *Sacred Marriage*, p. 189

#### A. What are some wrong views of love?

1. Love is a feeling.
2. Love is sex.
3. Love is weak.

## B. What is the biblical definition of love?

Love is **GIVING** for the **NEEDS** of another without the ulterior motive of **EXPECTING** anything in return.

**Gal. 2:20** "...the life I now live... I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and *gave Himself* for me."

**John 3:16** "For God so loved the world that He *gave* His only begotten Son..."

**Eph. 5:25** "...Christ also loved the church and *gave Himself* for it."

**Real men think and act like Jesus Christ!**

## C. What degrees of love are we to show?

### 1. **First** (1 John 4:19)

**1 John 4:19** "We love, because He first loved us."

### 2. **Most** (John 15:13)

**John 15:13** "Greater love has no man than this..."

### 3. **Sacrificially** (Eph. 5:25)

- a. Give up your personal desires for her needs and desires.
- b. When was the last time you sacrificed something for your wife?
- c. What priority does she and her desires have in your life?

4. **Unmistakably** (1 John 3:18)

“Love must be demonstrated in ways that can be interpreted.”

5. **In spite of faults** (Rom. 5:8)

III. **LEARNER: The Husband Is to Learn His Wife** (1 Pet. 3:7)

**1 Pet. 3:7** “You husbands likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.”

A. **Learning is a command!**

**L** - look her in the eye when she’s talking  
**I** - inquire by asking, “Tell me more”  
**S** - stop interrupting with your solutions  
**T** - tell her what you think you heard and see if you’re right  
**E** - express sympathy: “I’m sorry. That must be hard.”  
**N** - never look at your watch

1. **A command that requires time.**

2. **A command that requires study.**

3. **A command that includes being mindful of her weakness.**

**1 Pet. 3:7** “You husbands likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman...”

*Weaker* = lit. without strength

Also – fine china, fragile, valuable

**a. What this does not mean:**

**i. Weaker positionally**

**Gal. 3:28** “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

**ii. Weaker intellectually**

**iii. Weaker in endurance**

**B. Honoring is a command!**

**1 Pet. 3:7** “You husbands likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way... and grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.”

**1. Honoring her is more than just “respect” (NIV “treat her with respect”).**

You can actually treat someone with “detached, formal respect and yet give no special honor to the person at all” – Hiebert, *1 Peter*, quoting Grudem

The same word translated "honor" in 1 Pet. 3:7 is translated "precious" in 1 Pet. 2:7

**2. This is because she shares the same inheritance as the husband.**

**C. Both these commands impact the husband's prayer life!**

"Prayers" = not just one's prayer life, but also implies one's relationship to God – the idea of communicating with God Himself!

"Hinder" = to impede or thwart; it's placing something in the path of your prayer.



# The Role of the Wife

*Pastor Brad Bigney / Grace Fellowship Church*

## I. The Wife's Purpose: to be a "helper suitable" for her husband (Gen. 1:26-31; 2:18-25)

### A. What does this term mean?

*Helper Suitable* (NASB) = Lit. "one who helps" – but the term also communicates the idea of completing, complementing, corresponding to, fitted perfectly to, custom-made to meet needs.

This term is used several times to describe God being my "help" or "helper."

**Ps. 22:19** "But You, O LORD, be not far off; O You my help, hasten to my assistance."

**Ps. 54:4** "Behold, God is my helper; The Lord is the sustainer of my soul."

**Ps. 94:17** "If the LORD had not been my help, my soul would soon have dwelt in the abode of silence."

Point: The term is a positive term, not a negative one – no one should view the purpose of a wife as being demeaning or making the wife inferior to her husband!

### B. God designed the wife's role for a unique purpose.

**1. She has a unique role of companionship** (Gen. 1:26–28; 2:18, 20, 24)

**Gen. 2:18** “Then the LORD God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.’”

**Gen. 2:20** “... but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him.”

**2. She has a unique role in the sexual relationship** (Gen. 1:28; 2:25)

**Gen. 1:28** “God blessed them; and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth...’”

**Gen. 2:25** “And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.”

**3. She has a unique role in responsibilities** (Gen. 1:28)

God told Adam to *subdue* the earth – this was one of the first responsibilities God assigned to Adam, and it was Eve’s role to help him in this process!

**C. Practical ways to be your husband’s helper:**

**1. Pray faithfully**

When I pray for my husband, the Holy Spirit softens my heart and his, and I learn to trust God with my marriage.

## **2. Grow personally**

Time with Jesus and the Bible, studying and repenting are essential to honoring our husbands.

## **3. Encourage regularly**

## **4. Pursue intimately or at least respond enthusiastically**

## **5. Play frequently**

When a marriage is all work and no play, it feels like a business partnership instead of a loving partnership, so plan fun.

## **6. Laugh loudly**

## **7. Listen attentively**

Women love to talk, but it is important to learn to listen in order to get to know your husband better.

## **8. Speak respectfully**

Make sure your tone isn't out of bitterness or unrighteous anger. His ability to lead will suffer if you are disrespectful.

Michael Pearl: "No man has ever crawled out from under his wife's criticism to be a better man - no matter how justified her condemnation."

~ Debi Pearl, *Created to Be His Helpmeet*, p. 30

## 9. Correct privately

When you see sin or error, do not try to belittle him publicly, but instead prayerfully approach him with your concerns in private.

## II. The Wife's Position: to be "submissive" to her husband (Eph. 5:22-24)

Many people (both men and women) don't like the term *submission* due to a misunderstanding of the term! So, we need to...

**A. Develop a biblical view of submission** – start with the truth, the real thing, an accurate picture!

### 1. Submission is present in the Godhead (Gen. 1, cf. John 1:1-3)

The Father is the functional authority and the Son and the Spirit are submissive to the will of the Father – Example: Jesus said, "*I came to do the will of Him Who sent Me.*" (John 6:38)

Point: The Trinity models submission! Therefore...

**2. Submission is good because its foundation is in the nature and character of God**

Submission existed before the curse of sin.

**3. Submission is God's divine plan for function and order**

We see it in His DESIGN for...

- The CHURCH – elders / deacons (1 Tim. 3)
- The COMMUNITY – civil authorities (Rom. 13)

So, it shouldn't surprise us that we see it in His design for...

- The HOME – husbands (Eph. 5 and 1 Pet. 3)

**4. Submission is a way of life for every believer, not just the wife**

**Eph. 5:21** "...submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ."

Women are not the only ones that struggle with submission. ALL of us struggle with it and all of us have areas in life where we're called to submit.

**B. Recognize that submission is often misunderstood and therefore misrepresented.**

Submission Wrongly Described	Submission Biblically Clarified
The wife is <u>inferior</u> to her husband	The wife is a <i>fellow heir of the grace of life</i> (1 Pet. 3:7) Marriage is a " <i>one flesh</i> " relationship (Gen. 2:24)
The husband is <u>never wrong</u> ( <u>perfect</u> )	God is the only <i>perfect</i> authority (1 Pet. 2:13-23)
The wife cannot <u>think</u> and should never speak	She is commanded to " <i>speak the truth</i> " (Eph. 4:15) Part of her role as a fitting helper (Gen. 2:18) applies to biblical <i>communication</i>

**C. Submission is never synonymous with abuse.**

Contact the civil authorities immediately whenever abuse is involved.

Remove yourself (and children) from the home and get to a safe place. Reach out to your church leaders for a safety plan as well as help in holding your husband accountable for real change.

**D. Focus on the perfect picture of submission: the Life of Christ (1 Pet. 2:21-3:2).**

The context of vv. 13-20 is being *submissive*, even to imperfect authority.

So, each wife has an opportunity to be like Christ who modeled submission and obeyed His Father.

**1 Pet. 2:21–3:2** “For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: <sup>22</sup> ‘Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth’; <sup>23</sup> who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; <sup>24</sup> who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness — by whose stripes you were healed. <sup>25</sup> For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls. <sup>3:1</sup> Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the Word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, <sup>2</sup> when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear.”

### III. **The Wife’s Perspective: to show “respect” for her husband** (Eph. 5:33)

**Eph. 5:33** “...and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.”

#### A. **What are some practical ways to show respect?**

##### 1. **Develop a godly attitude toward your husband** (Prov. 23:7)

The way you think about him will affect your behavior toward him.

**Prov. 23:7** “For as he thinks within himself, so he is...” [respect begins in the heart (inner man)]

**Luke 6:45** "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks."

## 2. Practice godly communication (Col. 4:6)

**Col. 4:6** "Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person."

a. **Use words and tones that edify him** (build him up when he fails and commend him when he succeeds).

**Eph. 4:29** "Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers."

**Prov. 12:18** "Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing."

"Do you *criticize* or negatively compare him to other men? He might act like it doesn't bother him, but being respected is one of the things a man values most, especially from his wife. Criticism comes from the sin of pridefulness. You are the most important person in your husband's life, and when you speak disrespectfully to him, your words cut and worm their way into his heart. They bury themselves there, slowly eroding his ability to cherish you as you really want. Even when you're joking, it's risky business."

~ Karen Haight, *The God Empowered Wife*, p. 104



**b. Ask questions instead of making accusations or bottom-line statements.**

A question pricks the conscience; an accusation hardens the heart!

**c. Express gratitude frequently** (even in difficult circumstances). (1 Thess. 5:18)

**1 Thess. 5:18** "In everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

**d. Avoid gossiping or being critical of your husband in public or privately to others who are not part of the problem or the solution!**

**Prov. 20:19** "He who goes about as a slanderer reveals secrets, therefore do not associate with a gossip."

**3. Choose to believe the best about him** (1 Cor. 13:7 "*...believes all things*")

Learn to love your husband the way God loves you.

**4. Don't try to change him** - you don't have the ability or the authority (Matt. 7:1-5)

**IV. The Wife's Potential: to be a godly "influence" on her husband** (1 Pet. 3:1-6)

The wife cannot change her husband, but she can be a tool in God's hand to help model that change.

**A. Focus on being a good example!** (1 Pet. 3:1-6)

**1 Pet. 3:1-4** "Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the Word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, <sup>2</sup> when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. <sup>3</sup> Do not let your adornment be merely outward — arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel — <sup>4</sup> rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God."

Even if your husband is an unbeliever, or living in rebellion to God, he "may be won" (not absolutely guaranteed; but if it's going to happen, it's going to happen this way) by the example of the wife!

**B. Focus on being a Proverbs 31 kind of woman.** (They are hard to find!)

**Prov. 31:10** "An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels."

**Prov. 31:28-29** "Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: <sup>29</sup> 'Many daughters have done well, but you excel them all.'"

**C. Work hard to avoid some of the biggest pitfalls.**

**1. Don't settle into self-pity**

**Phil. 4:19** "But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

**Heb. 13:5** "...I will never leave you or forsake you."

## 2. Don't try to be your husband's Holy Spirit

**Prov. 31:26** "She opens her mouth with wisdom..."

**Prov. 29:20** "Do you see a man (woman) hasty in his (her) words, there is more hope for a fool than for him (her)."

Ladies can sometimes be guilty of telling their husbands so much that when God's Holy Spirit is truly trying to speak to him, he thinks it is just you, one more time, giving your hundredth opinion.

Don't tell him how to drive, where to park, how to bathe the kids, etc.

## 3. Don't settle into pride

In other words, be willing to admit when you're wrong – and move toward your husband versus pouting, being sullen, or pulling away. When you're wrong, just be wrong!

**James 4:6** "...God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble."

**Prov. 14:1** "A wise woman builds her house, but the foolish tears it down with her own hands."

#### 4. Don't make him wish he was single

How do you do that?

- By being quarrelsome, nagging, and controlling.
- **Prov. 19:13** "...A nagging wife is like a leaky faucet" *The Message*
- John MacArthur says, "An obstinate, argumentative woman is literally like a leak so unrelenting that one has to run from it or go mad."
- **Prov. 19:13b** "...a quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping..."
- **Prov. 21:9** "Better to live on a corner of the roof than share a house with a quarrelsome wife." (also **Prov. 25:24**)
- **Prov. 21:19** "Better to live in a desert than with a quarrelsome and ill-tempered wife."
- **Prov. 27:15-16** "A quarrelsome wife is like a constant dripping on a rainy day; <sup>16</sup> restraining her is like restraining the wind or grasping oil with the hand."

## 5. Don't take on the martyr complex

"No one around here sees all I have to do and no one ever helps me."

**Matt. 25:40** "...to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me."

### Recommended Resources

*Creative Counterpart*, Linda Dillow

*An Excellent Wife*, Martha Peace

*Helper By Design*, Elyse Fitzpatrick

*God-Empowered Wife*, Karen Kaught

# Goal Oriented Parenting

*Pastor Peter LaRuffa / Grace Fellowship Church*

## Introduction

1. Every child is a blessing of the Lord.

**Ps. 127:3** "Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward."

2. Every parent is a steward of their child(ren).

**Ps. 24:1** "The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein..."

- a. Each parent is under the headship of Christ as our Creator, Redeemer and King.
- b. Parents are not the ultimate authority of their children.

"If authority best describes the parent's relationship to the child, the best description of the activity of the parents is the child's guide. This shepherding process helps a child to understand himself and the world in which he lives. The parent shepherds a child to assess himself and his responses. He shepherds the child to understand not just the 'what' of the child's actions, but also the 'why.' As

the shepherd, you want to help your child understand himself as a creature made by and for God.”

~ Tedd Tripp, *Shepherding Your Child's Heart*, pp. xx-xxi

- c. A steward is one who has been given, for a time, the care of something that is owned by another.
- d. Stewardship can be defined as faithful and efficient management of something belonging to another in order to achieve the owner's objectives.
- e. Stewards always act in the best interest of the owner.

**Matt. 25:14-30** (Parable of the Talents)

- 3. Parenting is a great opportunity for evangelism and discipleship of wayward souls.  
(Deut. 6; Matt. 10:28)

“The first generation of children who grew up in Palestine did not know who God was and did not know about the amazing things He did to deliver and sustain His people... The fundamental failure was a failure of the family to do what God intended it to do.”

~ Paul Tripp, *The Age of Opportunity*, pp. 40-41

I. Parents face common struggles: having a “parent-centered” or a “child-centered” home.

a. Defining a “Parent-Centered” home:

“When they fail to live up to our expectations, we find ourselves not grieving for them and fighting for them, but angry at them, fighting against them, and, in fact, grieving for ourselves and our loss.”

~ Paul Tripp, *The Age of Opportunity*, p. 35

b. Elements of a “Parent-Centered” home (major areas):

- i. PRIDE — The parent is always right or is very slow to admit fault and seek forgiveness.

**Prov. 16:25** “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.”

“Pride blinds us not only to our own sins but also to the true struggles of others. And just as you wouldn’t entrust your eyes into the hands of a blind ophthalmologist (regardless of his experience), our kids won’t feel comfortable trusting our correction of them when we’re blind to our own sin, inconsistencies and failures.”

~ Jim Newheiser and Elyse Fitzpatrick, *You Never Stop Being a Parent*, p. 85



- ii. CONTROL — expecting children to obey them, but the parent disobeys authority (God's, etc.).
- iii. HYPOCRISY — expecting children to behave one way, but justifying one's own contrary behavior.
- iv. BUSY — neglecting to get time with each child.
- v. INCONSISTENCY — enforcing rules and corrections one day, but not the next.
- vi. SELF-CENTERED — all decisions and choices are totally based on the parent and his/her wishes.
- vii. IMPATIENT — the idea that I want my child to do \_\_\_\_\_ RIGHT NOW!

“Nagging will always damage a relationship because it is not the fruit of humble respect. It is the fruit of pride and impatience.”

~ Jim Newheiser and Elyse Fitzpatrick, *You Never Stop Being a Parent*, p. 88

- viii. EXPECTATIONS — the child has to be, do, and become everything the parents expect of them.
- ix. IDOLATRY — parents making the desires of their heart more important than pleasing God

**2 Cor. 5:9** "So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please Him."

**2 Cor. 4:16** "So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day."

**Q:** What are some possible "idols of the heart" for parents? (Paul Tripp, *The Age of Opportunity*, pp. 29–38)

- Comfort
- Respect
- Appreciation
- Success (spiritual, educational, occupational, etc.)
- Control

**Q:** How do you know when something is an idol in your heart?

1. How do you respond when you don't get what you want?
2. Are you willing to sin in order to get what you want?

**c. Defining a "Child-Centered" home:**

"A child-centered home is one in which a child believes and is allowed to behave as though the entire household, parents, siblings and even pets exist for one purpose — to please him."

~ Lou Priolo, *The Heart of Anger*, p. 24

**d. Elements of a “Child-Centered” home:**

- i. No consequences – a child clearly sins and the parents allow him to get away with it.
- ii. Manipulation – a child reacts in anger, clams up, or cries to get what he wants.
- iii. Selfishness – the child gets whatever he wants (it’s all about the child, not others).
- iv. Demanding – the child insists that things be done his/her way and when he/she wants it.
- v. Priorities – the child becomes more important than the spouse.
- vi. Responsibilities – a child has no responsibilities (parents do everything for the child).
- vii. Communication – the child tells the parent what to do as if the child is an equal or in charge.
- viii. Never offended – the parents do anything they can to not offend their child.

**e. Elements of more severe “Parent-Centered” and/or “Child-Centered” homes:**

- i. Abuse (physical, sexual, emotional, mental)
- ii. Substance abuse by the child
- iii. Suicidal children
- iv. Sexual sin

**II. Instructors of young hearts and minds: The characteristics of a “God-centered” home.**

**a. Definition of a “God-centered” home:**

“The concept of a God-centered home is derived from the biblical principle that the purpose of every Christian is to glorify God (1 Cor. 10:31; 1 Cor. 6:20). In contrast to a child-centered home, where pleasing and serving the child is the dominant theme, the God-centered home is one in which everyone is committed to pleasing and serving God. God’s desires are exalted over everyone else’s. Everyone in the family may be expected to sacrifice personal pleasure if God’s will requires it. This philosophy teaches children to serve rather than to be served, to honor rather than be honored, to give (be loving) rather than take (be selfish).”

~ Lou Priolo, *The Heart of Anger*, pp. 26-27

**b. Shepherding in Sanctification: Elements of a “God-centered” home.**

- i. TRUTH – the source of truth is the inspired & sufficient Word of God.

**Ps. 51:6, 10** “Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom... <sup>10</sup> Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.”

**2 Tim. 3:15-16** “...and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. <sup>16</sup> All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”

**Heb. 4:12** “For the Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

- ii. WORSHIP – loving God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength and loving others

**Matt. 22:37-39** “And He said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. <sup>38</sup> This is the great and first commandment. <sup>39</sup> And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

**1 John 2:15-17** “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. <sup>16</sup> For all that is in the world — the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life — is not from the Father but is from the world. <sup>17</sup> And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.”

iii. GLORIFYING GOD by thinking and acting like Christ

**1 Cor. 10:31** “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

**Phil. 2:5** “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus...”

**James 1:13-15** “Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am being tempted by God,’ for God cannot be tempted with evil, and He Himself tempts no one. <sup>14</sup> But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. <sup>15</sup> Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.”

iv. GOSPEL – who Christ is and who you are in Christ

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

“The cross was the centerpiece of Paul’s theology. It wasn’t merely one of Paul’s messages; it was the message. He taught about other things as well, but whatever

he taught was always derived from, and related to, the foundational reality that Jesus Christ died so the sinner would be reconciled to God and forgiven by God."

~ CJ Mahaney, *The Cross Centered Life*, p. 11

- v. HEART – dealing with issues of the heart, not simply outward behavior

**Matt. 12:34** "You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks."

**Matt. 15:19** "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone." (cf. Mark 7:14–23)

**Luke 6:43–45** "For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, <sup>44</sup> for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. <sup>45</sup> The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks."

**1 Sam. 16:7** "But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.'"

**James 4:1–3** "What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? <sup>2</sup> You desire and do not have, so you

murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask.<sup>3</sup> You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.”

**c. Goals of a God-centered home:**

- i. Right view of God.
- ii. Right view of self.
- iii. Right view of others.
  - 1. Love them.
  - 2. Serve them.

**Recommended Resources**

*Gospel Centered Parenting*, William Farley

*Parenting: 14 Gospel Principles That Can Radically Change Your Family*, Paul Tripp

*Age of Opportunity*, Paul Tripp

*Peacemaking for Families*, Ken Sande

*Seven Words to Change Your Family... While There's Still Time*, James MacDonald

*Your Family, God's Way*, Wayne Mack

*Raising a Christian Daughter in an MTV World*, Mary Ruth Murdoch



# Parenting: Instruction

Pastor Peter LaRuffa / Grace Fellowship Church

## Introduction

“But the truth is, the only real *values* that can save the family are rooted in Scripture—they are *biblical values*, not just *family values*. Therefore, the future of the family in our society hinges on the success of those who are committed to the truth of Scriptures.”

~ John MacArthur, *Successful Christian Parenting*, p. 9

1. There is HOPE for parents because God has revealed many truths about parenting.

**2 Tim. 3:16–17** *“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; <sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”*

2. Parents should seek to bring glory to God by fulfilling the MISSION to which God has called them.

**Deut. 6:6–8** *“These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. <sup>7</sup> You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. <sup>8</sup> You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead.” (cf. Ps. 78:1–8)*

**Eph. 6:4** *"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."*

"Your task is to help your children know God and the true nature of reality."

~ Tedd Tripp, *Shepherding a Child's Heart*, p. 148

- I. Parents face common struggles: Having a "Parent-Centered" or a "Child-Centered" home
- II. Parents have a common solution: The characteristics of a "God-Centered" home
- III. Parents have common STEPS to accomplish the goal – Eph. 6:4

**Eph. 6:4** *"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."*

#### **A. God has given the RESPONSIBILITY particularly to the "fathers"**

1. The discipline of a father should reflect the heart of our heavenly Father (Heb. 12:5-11).

"The purpose for your authority in the lives of your children is not to hold them under your power, but to empower them to be self-controlled people living freely under the authority of God."

~ Tedd Tripp, *Shepherding Your Child's Heart*, p. 13

2. A WIFE and MOTHER play an integral part in the process of parenting.

**Prov. 1:8** *"Hear, my son, your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching."*

**Prov. 6:20** *"My son, observe the commandment of your father and do not forsake the teaching of your mother."*

3. We should be particularly SENSITIVE to single moms or single dads who do this on their own.

- a. PRAYING for them and their children.

- b. MENTORING the children (individual men/women connected to each child).

- c. ENCOURAGING them and the children on a regular basis.

## **B. OBEY God's command of "...do not provoke your children to anger"**

1. This command DOES NOT mean a parent is to never oppose, deny, cross, or upset the child.

**1 Kings 1:6** *"His father had never crossed him at any time by asking, 'Why have you done so?...'"*

**1 Sam. 3:13** *"For I have told him that I am about to judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons brought a curse on themselves, and he did not rebuke them."*

2. This command DOES imply a child is not to be brought up to an angry, impulsive lifestyle.

**Prov. 25:28** *"Like a city that is broken into and without walls is a man who has no control over his spirit."*

"To provoke... to anger suggests a repeated, ongoing pattern of treatment that gradually builds up a deep-seated anger and resentment that boils over in outward hostility."

~ John MacArthur, *Ephesians*, p. 317

3. There are examples of how a child's sinful anger might be expressed.
  - a. Anger can take the form of open REBELLION against any authority.
  - b. Anger can take the form of STUBBORNNESS, passive RESENTMENT, apathy, indifference, half-hearted performance and/or silence.
4. There are several ways a parent can AVOID provoking their children to anger.

“In contrast to the norms of the day, Paul wants Christian fathers to be gentle, patient educators of their children, whose chief ‘weapon’ is Christian instruction focused on loyalty to Christ as Lord.”

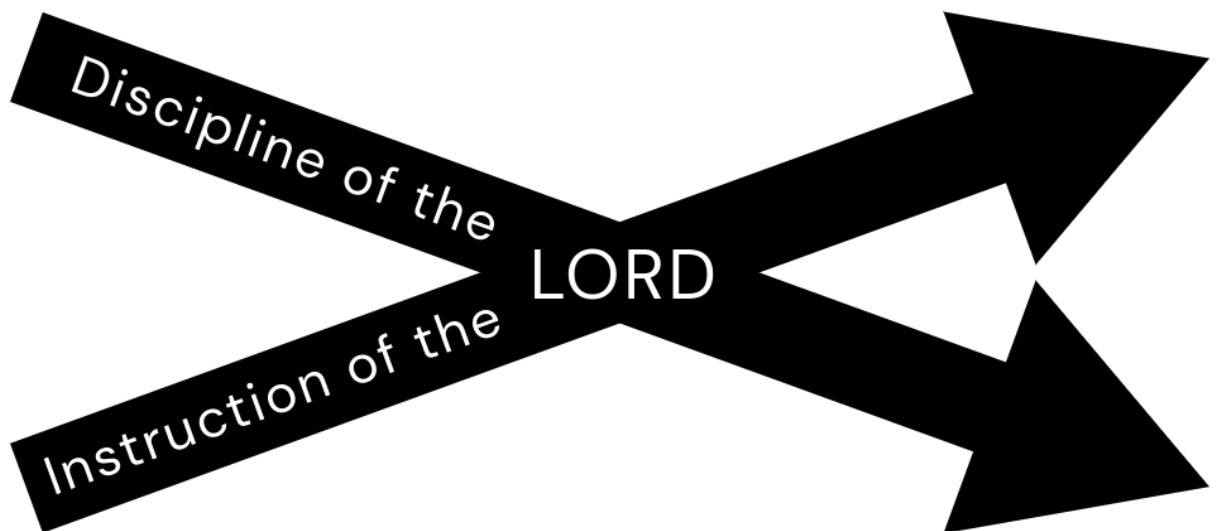
~ Peter T. O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, p. 447

- a. Make sure there is no ongoing TENSION between the parents (solve problems biblically).
- b. Control your ANGER and avoid abusive words, tones, and abusive correction.
- c. Build INVOLVEMENT with and give ATTENTION to the child (develop godly relationships).
- d. EDIFY (build up) the child (avoid being overly critical).
- e. Be a good LISTENER (don’t answer a matter before you hear it) and COMMUNICATOR.
- f. Understand that not every thought or action is sin, or a major issue in life.
- g. Help the child understand the DIFFERENCE between the Scripture and house rules.
- h. Avoid having TOO MANY rules and always CHANGING the rules.

**C. OBEY God's command to "...bring them up in the TEACHING of the Lord"**

"Ultimately, the concern of parents is not simply that their sons and daughters will be obedient to their authority, but that through this godly training and admonition their children will come to know and obey the Lord Himself."

~ Peter T. O'Brian, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, p. 447



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**"Bring Them Up"**

**18**

1. Parents need to realize that if they don't TEACH their children, then somebody will!

**Prov. 1:1-4** *"The proverbs of Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel: <sup>2</sup> to know wisdom and instruction, to discern the sayings of understanding, <sup>3</sup> to receive instruction in wise behavior, righteousness, justice and equity; <sup>4</sup> to give prudence to the naive, to the youth knowledge and discretion."*

2. Parents need to provide biblical, THEOCENTRIC INSTRUCTION to their children.

**Ps. 119:9-11** *"How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your Word. <sup>10</sup> With all my heart I have sought You; do not let me wander from Your commandments. <sup>11</sup> Your Word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against You."*

- a. To value TRUTH

**1 Tim. 2:4** *"Who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."*

1. COMMANDS

**1 John 2:15-17** *"Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. <sup>16</sup> For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. <sup>17</sup> The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever."*

“Clear-boundary issues are situations that involve the plain commands of Scripture. The call to speak the truth, to honor father and mother, to not steal or commit adultery or fornication, are all examples.”

~ Paul Tripp, *Age of Opportunity*, p. 131

## 2. WISDOM vs. FOOLISHNESS

**Prov. 2:6-13** *“For the LORD gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding. <sup>7</sup> He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk in integrity, <sup>8</sup> Guarding the paths of justice, and He preserves the way of His godly ones. <sup>9</sup> Then you will discern righteousness and justice and equity and every good course. <sup>10</sup> For wisdom will enter your heart and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul; <sup>11</sup> discretion will guard you, understanding will watch over you, <sup>12</sup> to deliver you from the way of evil, from the man who speaks perverse things; <sup>13</sup> from those who leave the paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness.”*

**Prov. 20:5** *“The purpose in a man’s heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out.”*

“As important as biblical conviction is, and as important as it is to pay attention to the boundary issues, a believer spends most of his time grappling with wisdom issues... He lives a basically obedient life, but a life in which there are myriad situations where he needs wisdom, that is, he needs to apply the



principles, perspectives, and themes of Scriptures so that his practical everyday decisions express God's will for his life. In these situations, he needs wisdom because there is no clear 'thus says the Lord.'"

~ Paul Tripp, *Age of Opportunity*, p. 133

### 3. BOUNDARIES

**Rom. 13:14** *"But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts."*

**1 Cor. 8:13** *"Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause my brother to stumble."*

### 4. Nature and Characteristics of Godly Counsel

**Ps. 1:1-3** "How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers! <sup>2</sup> But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. <sup>3</sup> He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers."

**Matt. 6:33** "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."

**Gal. 6:8** "For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life."

b. To LOVE the Lord

**Deut. 6:5** "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."

**John 14:15** "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."

c. To WORSHIP the Lord

"When your life is shaped by the worship of God, you live with his plans and purposes in view." ~ Paul Tripp, *What Did You Expect?*, p. 270

**Ps. 96:9** "Worship the LORD in holy attire; tremble before Him, all the earth."

"Part of the parent's task is to shepherd him as a creature who worships, pointing him to the One who alone is worthy of his worship. The question is not 'will he worship?' It is always 'whom will he worship?'"

~ Tedd Tripp, *Shepherding a Child's Heart*, p. 21

d. To GLORIFY God

**1 Cor. 10:31** "Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

e. To accept, appreciate, and proclaim the GOSPEL

**Judg. 2:10** "All that generation also were gathered to their fathers; and there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD, nor yet the work which He had done for Israel."

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

"The gospel is simple and should be presented simply. Parents have the best years of the child's life to explain, clarify, stress, and reemphasize gospel truths. The key is to be faithful and consistent in both teaching and exemplifying the gospel."

~ John MacArthur, *Successful Christian Parenting*, p. 47

f. To understand the HEART of man

**Ps. 139:23** "Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way."

**Jer. 17:9** "The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?"

**Matt. 15:19** "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders."

3. Parents need to take advantage of the many OCCASIONS for teaching a child.

"It is of paramount importance that we do not think for our children, but teach them how to think about life, employing the symphony of perspectives God has given us in His Word."

~ Paul Tripp, *Age of Opportunity*, p. 137

- a. SPECIAL circumstances, events, and times

**Josh. 4:5-7** "And Joshua said to them, "Cross again to the ark of the LORD your God into the middle of the Jordan, and each of you take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Israel. <sup>6</sup> Let this be a sign among you, so that when your children ask later, saying, 'What do these stones mean to you?' <sup>7</sup> Then you shall say to them, 'Because the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off.' So these stones shall become a memorial to the sons of Israel forever."

b. DAILY life situations:

1. Response to AUTHORITY
2. Being a SERVANT versus being selfish
3. Handling TEMPTATIONS
4. Developing a WORK ethic (avoid being lazy)
5. Controlling the TONGUE
6. Controlling one's THOUGHTS
7. Learning to LOVE others (developing godly relationships)
8. Committed to a LOCAL CHURCH
9. Using one's SPIRITUAL GIFTS
10. Living and proclaiming the GOSPEL

4. Types of Discipleship

- a. QUESTION and ANSWER

**Josh. 4:6-7** "Let this be a sign among you, so that when your children ask later, saying, 'What do these stones mean to you?' <sup>7</sup> Then you shall say to them, 'Because the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off.' So these stones shall become a memorial to the sons of Israel forever."

b. Formative teaching during your "Family Time"

c. Exemplary times

**Deut. 6:6-8** "These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. <sup>7</sup> You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. <sup>8</sup> You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead."

d. Corrective

5. Parents need to be an EXAMPLE of Christ to each child.

**Phil. 4:9** *"The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you."*

"As a parent, you cannot give what you don't have yourself. We can only teach our children to be practically obedient to the Word, exercising decisive biblical conviction, if we are doing the same. We can only teach our children to wisely apply

the principles of the Word to the issues of life if that is what we are seeking to do. Obedient students of the Word tend to produce the same kind of children.”

~ Paul Tripp, *Age of Opportunity*, p. 131

### **Passages to Consider**

Eph. 6:4

Heb. 12:5–11

Ps. 78:1–8

Prov. 1:8, 10, 15; 2:1; 3:1, 11, 21; 4:10; 19:18; Prov. 20:5

### **Recommended Resources**

*A Child's Book of Character Building 1 & 2*, Ron Coriell

*For Instruction in Righteousness*, Pam Forster

*Plants Grown Up*, Pam Forster

*Polished Cornerstones*, Pam Forster

*Teach Them Diligently*, Lou Priolo

*Withhold Not Correction*, Bruce Ray

*Age of Opportunity*, Paul Tripp

*Shepherding a Child's Heart*, Tedd Tripp

*The Power of Teachable Moments*, Jim Weidmann and Marianne Hering

# Parenting: Discipline

*Pastor Peter LaRuffa / Grace Fellowship Church*

## Introduction

- Are there really any failsafe methods of child-rearing?
- Discipline alone will not bring a child to maturity.

A. Obey God's command to "bring them up in the discipline of the Lord"

a. Develop a biblical mindset to discipline.

i. There is a biblical foundation for disciplining children.

## Biblical Foundation: Heart vs Behavioral Change

**The Bible explains that discipline is about heart change not only behavioral change by showing four purposes of discipline and how they address the understanding of the heart.**

1. It's **redemptive**

- **Deut. 8:5-6** "Thus you are to know in your heart that the LORD your God was disciplining you just as a man disciplines his son. <sup>6</sup> Therefore, you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him."



- **Prov. 4:23** "Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life."
- **Ps. 51:6** "Behold, You delight in truth in the inward being, and You teach me wisdom in the secret heart."

2. It's **loving** – Eli

- **1 Sam. 3:13** "For I have told him that I am about to judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons brought a curse on themselves and he did not rebuke them."
- **1 Sam. 4:17** "Then the one who brought the news replied, 'Israel has fled before the Philistines and there has also been a great slaughter among the people, and your two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God has been taken.'"
- **Eph. 6:4** "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."
- **2 Cor. 4:16** "So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day."

3. It's **helpful** – Proverbs

- **Prov. 22:15** "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of discipline will remove it far from him."

- **Prov. 23:13-14** “Do not hold back discipline from the child, although you strike him with the rod, he will not die. <sup>14</sup> You shall strike him with the rod and rescue his soul from Sheol.”
- **Matt. 10:28** “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”

4. It's **modeled** by the Lord as He corrects those He loves for their benefit - Heb. 12:5-15

- **Prov. 22:15** “Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of discipline will remove it far from him.”
- **Prov. 23:13-14** “Do not hold back discipline from the child, although you strike him with the rod, he will not die. <sup>14</sup> You shall strike him with the rod and rescue his soul from Sheol.”

B. Popular psychology and secular approaches to parenting present false notions on a child discipline that directly contradict what the Bible says.

- i. It doesn't work — it's only punitive
- ii. Children turn out badly — it's not productive
- iii. It promotes violence — it's unloving
- iv. It warps their personality — it hinders their potential

C. There are some reasons efforts for discipline are ineffective.

- i. The child was disciplined in uncontrolled anger.

- **James 1:20** "For the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God."

ii. The child was disciplined with wrong goals.

- **1 Cor. 10:31** "Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

- **2 Cor. 5:9** "Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him."

iii. The child was disciplined without love — 1 Cor. 13

iv. The child was disciplined without teaching.

- **Deut. 6:6** "These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up."

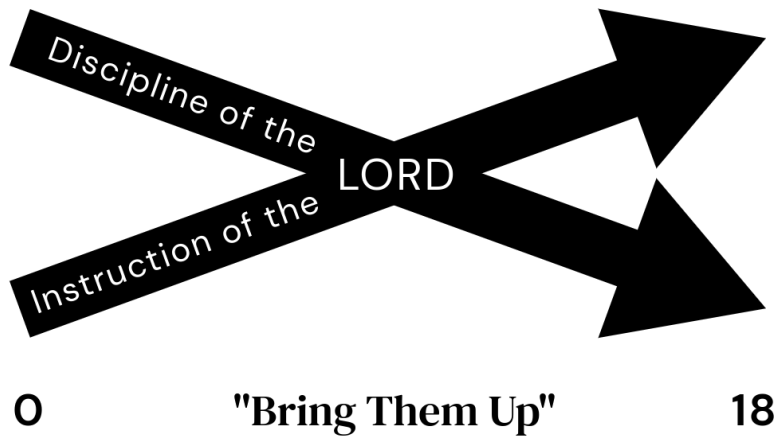
D. God intends for there to be a relationship between discipline and teaching because discipline is addressing the heart.

a. Levels of understanding the heart

- i. Desires
- ii. Thoughts

iii. Beliefs

b. Where there's a why there's a will and where there's a will there's a way.



E. Heart of the parent when disciplining your children

i. Accept the responsibility personally.

- It will take time.
- It will be challenging.
- It will require dependence on the Lord (the place of prayer for wisdom).

ii. Communicate your expectations clearly.

- Process Principle: Teach first, discipline second!

- iii. Make appropriate rules that are:
  - Reasonable
  - Definable
  - Enforceable
  - Biblical (guard against rules that cannot be validated by Scriptures)
  
- iv. Ensure the discipline fits the offense.
  
- v. Establish appropriate rewards and correction as part of the discipline process.
  - 1. More immediate for small child
  
  - 2. Focus on a daily habit that needs changing
  
  - 3. Recognize that each child will respond differently

F. Review the Behavior Contract.

G. Guidelines for spanking a child:

- i. **Privacy** is an important element.
  
- ii. **Pray** first.
  
- iii. Ask a series of questions:
  - a. What did you do?

- b. Was it right?
- c. What should you have done?
- d. What will you do next time?
- e. What does God expect me to do?

iv. **Communicate** the details of the discipline process.

v. Follow through in **love** with ALL discipline.

H. Expect **pressure** from the child.

# Friday Schedule

Nov 15, 2024

WKND 3

<i>5:00PM-6:05PM</i> <b>Brad Bigney</b>	Comparison of Counseling Philosophies
<i>6:05PM-6:20PM</i>	BREAK
<i>6:20PM-7:20PM</i> <b>Brad Bigney</b>	Biblical Sexuality
<i>7:20PM-7:35PM</i>	BREAK
<i>7:35PM-8:35PM</i> <b>Steve Ham</b>	Counseling Those in Sexual Sin
<i>8:35PM-8:45PM</i>	BREAK
<i>8:45PM-9:45PM</i> <b>Steve Ham</b>	Communication

# Saturday Schedule

Nov 16, 2024

WKND 3

8:00AM-9:05AM <b>Brad Bigney</b>	Guilt & Repentance
9:05AM-9:25AM	BREAK
9:25AM-10:25AM <b>Brad Bigney</b>	Worry & Fear
10:25AM-10:45AM	BREAK
10:45AM-11:45AM <b>Brad Bigney</b>	The Need for Biblical Counseling & the Definition of Biblical Counseling
11:45AM-1:00PM	LUNCH BREAK
1:00PM-2:00PM <b>Dr. Charles Hodges</b>	Counseling People With A Psychological Diagnosis
2:00PM-2:20PM	BREAK
2:20PM-3:20PM <b>Dr. Charles Hodges</b>	Counseling People with a Medical Illness
3:20PM-3:35PM	BREAK
3:35PM-4:35PM <b>Doug Markesbery</b>	Forgiveness



# Comparison of Counseling Philosophies

*Pastor Brad Bigney / Grace Fellowship Church*

## Guidelines for evaluating various theories

1. What is their epistemology?

**How** do they propose to know what they **know**?

a. Intuition

b. Reason

c. Empiricism

d. Revelation

2. Anthropology?

3. How is the problem **defined**?

4. How is the problem **solved**?

5. What is the **goal** of counseling?

6. What is the **role** of the counselor?

The purpose of this lecture is for you to know enough about other theorists to make informed decisions like:

- a. Is my counseling different from \_\_\_\_\_ down the street, and if so, how?
- b. Can I refer to other counselors, and if so, how?
- c. How careful should I be when I'm "cutting and pasting?"

## Survey of Counseling Methods (Part 1)

	<b>Depth Psychology</b>	<b>Behaviorism</b>	<b>Third Force</b>
<b>LEADER</b>	Freud	Skinner	Rogers
<b>MAN</b>	Instinctual (animal) Id Superego Ego	Conditioned (animal) Blank tablet	Basically good Potential within Mature like flower
<b>PROBLEM</b>	Conflict between Id & Superego	Environmental failure	Environment hinders
<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	Not man's	Not man's	Not man's
<b>GUILT</b>	False	Not important	Not important
<b>TREATMENT</b>	Free the Id Side with Id Weaken Superego	Restructure environment	Help realize potential Solution within Focus on feeling
<b>GUILT</b>	Find source Shift blame Label as false	Change standard	Comfortable with self
<b>COUNSELOR</b>	Expert	Technician	Mirror

## Survey of Counseling Methods (Part 2)

	<b>Biblical</b>
<b>LEADER</b>	God
<b>MAN</b>	Created by God Image of God To please God
<b>PROBLEM</b>	Fallen sinner by choice
<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	Man's
<b>GUILT</b>	Result of sin real
<b>TREATMENT</b>	Justification by faith Progressive sanctification Spirit and Word Focus on facts By grace
<b>GUILT</b>	Deal with sin Deal with response
<b>COUNSELOR</b>	Nouthetic

## **Implications of Biblical Counseling**

Based on and growing out of the biblical view of man

1. All counseling is God-oriented (Ps. 73:25; Rom. 11:36).
2. Guilt is taken seriously (Ps. 51:4, 32:1-2).
3. Responsibility of counselee is recognized (Ezek. 18:4; Rom. 14:10, 12; Jer. 31:29-30).
4. Behavioral change can occur now (Eph. 4:22-24; 2 Cor. 5:17).
5. Counselee is accepted as a person God created (Luke 6:27-28, 32-35).

## **Questions to Ask in an Interview**

- What is your model for counseling?
- What do you think makes your counseling distinctly Christian or biblical?
- What is your goal for the counselee in the counseling process?
- How do you think people change?
- As a counselor, what do you see as your role in the change / counseling process?
- What are your expectations for the counselee? What role do they play in the process?
- What role do the Bible, prayer, and the Holy Spirit play in your counseling?
- Describe your understanding of the relationship of the physical and spiritual nature of people. What is the basic nature of man?

- What are some of the resources / tools that you use in the counseling process?
- What do you see as the role of the church and pastors in the counseling process?
- What is your training / background in counseling?
- What is your training / background in biblical studies?
- How long does the counseling process typically take? How do you know when to stop?

### **Recommended Resources**

*The Biblical Counseling Movement after Jay Adams*, Heath Lambert

*Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*, Paul Tripp

*Competent to Counsel*, Jay Adams

# Biblical Sexuality

*Pastor Brad Bigney / Grace Fellowship Church*

## Why a session devoted to this subject?

1. Because so many Christians are **untaught** in this area.
2. Because so many Christians have unbiblical **thinking** and behavior in this area that is hurting their testimony, social relationships and/or marriage.
3. Because we need to teach our **children** and grandchildren not only what is wrong sexually, but also what is right.
4. So that we can **evaluate** other popular teaching in light of the Scriptures.

## What Are the Key Biblical Principles?

### I. Sex Was Created by God and Is Pure

(Gen. 1:27, 31; 2:18, 21-23; Heb. 13:4)

**1 Tim. 4:4** "For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving..."

Three things we learn about sex from 1 Tim. 4:4:

1. It's good

2. It should not be rejected
3. You can thank God for it!

- A. God **designed** both the male and female anatomy.
- B. God's first **command** to Adam and Eve was impossible to fulfill without sex! (Gen. 1:28)
- C. Sex in marriage is God's **idea** and is good!

**Gen. 2:22-23, 25** "Then God made a woman and brought her to man. <sup>23</sup> 'This is it!' Adam exclaimed. <sup>25</sup> The man and his wife were both naked but neither was embarrassed or ashamed."

1. God created sex before there was **sin**

**Gen. 1:31** "Then God saw everything that He had made [including our sexuality], and indeed it was very good..."

2. And even after sin and the fall of man in Gen. 3, God still calls sex **good** and honorable

**Heb. 13:4** "Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous."



## II. Marriage is Intended to Depict the Sexual Relationship as an Expression of Intense Companionship and Intimacy

A. Marriage is meant to "typify" the believer's relationship with Christ.

**Eph. 5:31-32** "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh."<sup>32</sup> This is a profound mystery — but I am talking about Christ and the church."

"This marriage between man and woman... is about something much bigger than the relationship itself. It points beyond them to somebody else - to God. The point of marriage isn't marriage. It's a picture. A display. A window that you look through to something else. A marriage has a mission. Too often the problem is that each person in that marriage has a mission... and it has nothing to do with God's mission. Our world isn't... one. It's broken, shattered, fractured, with pieces lying over the floor... A marriage is designed to counter all of this. Not to add to the brokenness of the world but to add to the 'oneness' of the world. This man and this woman who have given themselves to each other are supposed to give the world a glimpse of hope, a display of what God is like, a bit of [oneness] on earth."

~ Rob Bell, *Sex God*, pp. 152-153

B. The marriage bond and the believer's union with Christ interact in ways that influence or enrich our understanding of both.

My experience of marital oneness helps me understand a bit of the mystery of spiritual union (Gal. 2:20).

- C. Sexual expression is to be at the **end** of the intimacy chain, the product or manifestation of real marital oneness (1 Cor. 7:3-4).

Consider C.J. Mahaney's excellent little book, ***Sex, Romance, and the Glory of God*** – where he uses a phrase that men especially need to be reminded of... “before you touch her body, touch her heart.”

### III. Sex Without Marital Intimacy Can Take Many Forms

- A. Lust
  
- B. Masturbation
  
- C. Homosexuality
  
- D. Adultery
  
- E. Fornication

### IV. God Encourages the Pleasure of Sex in Marriage

**Prov. 5:18-19** “...rejoice in the wife of your youth.<sup>19</sup> As a loving hind and a graceful doe, let her breasts satisfy you at all times; be exhilarated always with her love.”

"I know some muddle-headed Christians have talked as if Christianity thought that sex, or the body, or pleasure, were bad in themselves. But they were wrong. Christianity is almost the only one of the great religions which thoroughly approves of the body – which believes that matter is good, that God Himself once took on a human body and that some kind of body is going to be given to us even in Heaven and is going to be an essential part of our happiness, our beauty and our energy. Christianity has glorified marriage more than any other religion and nearly all the greatest love poetry in the world has been produced by Christians. If anyone says that sex, in itself, is bad, Christianity contradicts him at once."

~ C.S. Lewis, *Readings for Meditation and Reflection*, pp. 84–85

A. **"Satisfy"** (v. 19) means to have desire met, thirst quenched, to have no further desire.

This Hebrew word pictures a thirsty, dry person being quenched with a cool drink of water.

B. **"Exhilarated"** (v. 19) means to be intoxicated, ravished, overwhelmed with pleasure.

The word "ravished" is one of the strongest words in the Hebrew language.

## V. Sex in Marriage is to be a Major Factor in Preventing Immorality

A. **1 Cor. 7:9** (Amplified Bible, Classic Edition) "But if they have not self-control, restraint of their passions, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to be aflame with passion and tortured continually with ungratified desire."

- B. The husband and wife are to so satisfy each other that there is no desire for anyone else. (1 Cor. 7:20)

## **VI. Each Husband and Wife Has a God-Given Duty to Satisfy His or Her Mate**

- A. The key phrase is translated “fulfill his duty” (NASB); “render due benevolence” (KJV); “fulfill his marital duty” (NIV); “must always give his wife what is due her” (Williams); “do for his wife what he owes her” (Beck); “should give to his wife her conjugal rights” (AMPC) (1 Cor. 7:3).
- B. God’s commands assume God’s enablement; therefore you can satisfy your spouse’s sexual desires! (Phil. 4:13)
- C. Common causes of failure in this area:
1. Selfishness
  2. Unresolved guilt
  3. Unresolved problems
  4. Ignorance or misinformation about mate’s anatomy
  5. Ignorance or misinformation regarding how their mate is sexually aroused

## **VII. Each Spouse is to View His Body as For His Mate’s Sexual Enjoyment**

**1 Cor. 7:3-4** “A man should fulfill his duty as a husband and a woman should fulfill her duty as a wife. And each should satisfy the other’s needs. <sup>4</sup> The wife’s body does not

belong to her alone, but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body doesn't belong to him alone, but also to his wife."

- A. The **goal** of sexual activity is not pleasure or climax for personal joy, but to use one's body to bring gratification and satisfaction to the spouse.

Lou Priolo's book, ***Complete Husband***, has a great chapter (ch. 10) on sex.

- B. The exact statement is made about both husband and wife, indicating that each has an equal **responsibility** to initiate physical pleasure toward their mate.
- C. What Paul is teaching specifically about the sexual relationship is simply an **application** of many general biblical principles (e.g., Phil. 2:3-4; Eph. 5:21; Matt. 22:36-40).

#### VIII. Sexual Relationships are to be **Regular** and **Reciprocal**

**1 Cor. 7:5** "Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again lest Satan tempt you because of your lack of self-control."

- A. **"Deprive"** (NASB, NIV) / **"Defraud"** (KJV): means to rob, to keep back from someone through deceitful methods what is rightfully theirs.
- B. This pattern is to be altered only when there is:

1. Mutual agreement
2. A specific time limitation
3. A spiritual purpose
4. A time of planned resumption

## Data-Gathering Questions for Sexual Problems

1. Do you recall any specific event that may have affected your sex life?
2. Word-association test: what do you think of when you hear the word "sex"?
3. What was your parents' attitude about sex? (mother, father)
4. What did you learn from your parents about sex? Did your parents enjoy sex?
5. Was affection shown freely by your parents to one another? To you and your brothers and sisters?
6. What was your first sexual experience? What was your reaction to it?
7. Were you ever sexually molested or violated? Briefly describe the circumstances.
8. What excited you sexually in the past? What excites you sexually now?
9. What stirs up sexual guilt or shame in you now?
10. What does the Bible say about sex? Describe as fully as you can. What are God's purposes for sex?
11. What is proper and improper in sexual relations? What would be wrong?

12. Did you participate in petting on dates? On most dates? With certain individuals? How far did you go? To the point of manipulating the genital area of your partner? Vice versa? Ever to intercourse? How did you react to these experiences? Guilt? Shame? Were you ever suspected or caught? Punished?
13. Were you ever engaged to be married or seriously involved in other courtships before meeting your present husband or wife? Why did that relationship end?
14. What attracted you most to your husband/wife?
15. Are these qualities (reasons/attractions) still present today?
16. What were your expectations regarding sex, love-making and intercourse before marriage? Were these expectations fulfilled at some point within the first year of marriage? If not, describe.
17. Describe your honeymoon. Sexual difficulties? If so, what?
18. How frequently did you have sex during the first month of marriage? Enjoy frequency?
19. Usual frequency now?
20. Who usually initiates relations? Who chooses the time?
21. Do you have a preference for a time of day and situation for lovemaking? Describe.



22. Do you tell your spouse what pleases you and displeases you about sexual intercourse?
23. Do you have fun together frequently? Doing what?
24. Do you confide in one another? On a scale of 0-10, where are you?
25. What trait, behavior pattern, or habit does your mate have that tends to diminish your sexual desires toward your mate?
26. Do you still find your mate attractive?
27. What do you want most in the way of attitude, behavior, etc., that your mate doesn't provide you now?
28. Do you think you are attractive? Were you a pretty child? Were you attractive during courtship? Would you like to change anything about yourself?
29. Are you attractive to your mate?
30. What are your greatest attributes as a person? To your mate?
31. How do your sexual problems affect your mate (generally and then sexually)?
32. What do you think causes you to malfunction sexually?
33. Have you ever functioned satisfactorily?

34. What is your concept of effective sexual functioning?
35. To what extent were you and your mate involved sexually before marriage? Did you have sexual intercourse? If so, have you ever repented of this as sin to one another and to God?
36. Have you or your mate had extra-marital sexual activity since marriage? Describe.
37. Do you enjoy touching and being touched? Do you and your mate use body contact frequently?
38. Would you like your mate to touch you more or less? Give reasons.
39. Do certain words or sounds bring special pleasure to you? Bring displeasure to you?
40. What could you do to more fully please your mate sexually?

### **Recommended Resources**

*Biblical Principles of Sex*, Dr. Robert Smith

*Intended for Pleasure*, Dr. Ed Wheat

*Intimate Issues*, Linda Dillow

*The Complete Husband*, Lou Priolo

*Sex, Romance, and the Glory of God*, C.J. Mahaney

# Counseling Those in Sexual Sin

## ***Sex as God's Design***

*Steve Ham / Grace & Truth Cincinnati*

### Introductory Notes

#### A Biblical Perspective of Sex as God's Design

- **Biblical Definition of Sex:** The Bible defines sex as the sexual union of a man and a woman. There are biblical purposes for sex including:
  - Union between a husband and wife (Gen. 2:24)
  - Pleasure within a marriage union (Prov. 5:15–23)
  - Procreation of divine image bearers (Gen. 1:28)
  - **Asceticism is the problem not the purpose** (1 Tim. 4:1–5)
  
- **God's Plan for Sex**
  - There is a glorious openness and freedom the Bible gives for sexual relations between a husband and wife but there are God honoring boundaries (Heb. 13:4).
  - God, in His wisdom, has given the most generous guidelines that exist surrounding sexual union: within marriage, monogamous, and heterosexual (Lev. 18:22–23; Song 7:1–12; 1 Cor. 6:13–16; 1 Thess. 4:1–8; Jude 7). Sex outside of these generous guidelines is sin.

- **God's Biological Order**

- Biblical definition of gender: The Bible defines human gender as binary between man and woman (Gen. 1:26-28). Rejecting the Bible's definition of human gender as "man/woman" is a rejection of the truth of God's revealed truth through the Bible.

- **God's Theological Order**

- Sex plays a role in God's theological ordering of the world and human flourishing. Men and women fulfill the mosaic of human flourishing in at least three differences: roles, responsibilities, and functions (Gen. 1-2).

### **How Sex Has Been Twisted by Sin (Outside of Marriage)**

- Human sexuality can be distorted by humans in at least two ways: distortion and confusion of sexual purpose and distortion and confusion of sexual nature (Rom. 1:26-27).

#### **I. Sexual sin has been the norm in our culture for quite some time.**

1. Fornication
2. Adultery
3. Homosexuality
4. Pornography
5. Lusting / Masturbation
6. Abuse

## 7. Transgenderism

Biblical counselors need to be prepared to do even more counseling in these areas.

## II. Sexual sin is a symptom of a deeper heart issue: misdirected worship (idolatry).

### 8 Steps Downward Into Sexual Degradation (Rom. 1:21-32)

1. Failure to glorify God (v. 21a)
2. The loss of a grateful spirit (v. 21b)
3. The darkened heart (v. 21c)
4. The suppression of truth (vv. 22, 25a)
5. The exchange of glory (v. 23)
6. Given to lust (vv. 24-25)
7. Given to dishonorable passions (vv. 26-27)
8. Given to an incurably sick mind (vv. 28-32)

- a. The heart of the matter is the matter of the heart.

## III. How does the sinner escape from the trap?

### 7 Steps in Helping Individuals Gain Moral Freedom

1. Recognize and acknowledge that sexual sin does not satisfy.

a. Study John 4:7-30

- How many relationships did Jesus say that the woman at the well had?
- To what did Jesus compare these multiple relationships?
- What did Jesus mean when He said, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again?"
- What did Jesus say was the difference between the water she had been drinking and the living water He offered her?
- What did Jesus say the effects of drinking this water would be?
- Related Scriptures: Prov. 27:20; Jer. 2:13; Eph. 4:19.

**2. Confess your sin to God and cry out for forgiveness.**

- a. For the unsaved, this would be judicial forgiveness (Rom. 10:9-10; Eph. 2:8-9).
- b. For Christians, this would be parental forgiveness (1 John 1:9; 2:1-2). Take hope from God's promise of mercy, forgiveness, and a cleansed heart (Col. 1:21-23; 1 Cor. 6:9-11).

**3. Confess sin to appropriate people and seek forgiveness.**

(See notes entitled "Guilt and Repentance" for a more complete discussion, including suggested wording on how to confess sin.)

- a. Help counselees discern to whom confession is due, for what sins, as well as the timing.

b. Such events provide opportunities to:

- Warn others not to sin (1 Tim. 5:20).
- Grant forgiveness and comfort the repentant sinner (2 Cor. 2:6-8).
- Godly Christians to be energized in their faith (2 Cor. 7:8-11).

#### 4. **Repent and keep repenting.**

- a. To repent means to have a change of thinking that leads to a change of behavior. This is an ongoing process throughout the Christian life (Eph. 4:22-24).
- b. It involves a turning from sin and sinning to God and godliness (1 Thess. 1:4-10; 1 Pet. 3:10-11).
- c. As God renews our minds, we continue to become aware of where our thinking and behavior need to change (Rom. 12:1-2; Heb. 12:1-4 a lifelong process).

#### 5. **Perform "radical amputation" by removing from your life what draws you into sin.**

(Matt. 5:29-30; Heb. 12:1)

- a. Jesus was not referring to a physical cutting off of our hands or an actual plucking out of the eyeball (See Gen. 19:10-11).
- b. He was calling us to deal radically with whatever causes us to sin: cut it out of our life and get as far away from it as possible.

- c. A willingness to do this is a fruit of genuine repentance (Matt. 3:8).
- d. Mike Cleveland in Pure Freedom suggests the following questions or statements to help a person think through this matter:
1. Please describe what things have hindered you from running this race to win.
  2. What are we commanded to do with these things that hinder us?
  3. What things will you throw off so you can run lighter? Please only list those things that you will get rid of RIGHT NOW.
  4. Please list any area where you currently still have provision for your flesh to be gratified.
  5. Are you willing to part with that which will make you fall? Will you get rid of it right now?
  6. Will you, right now, cut off and pluck out anything that is causing you to stumble?
- Remember — many people will not perform radical amputation because they want to be strong more than they want to be pure. They want to continue being around temptation and resist it
  - This approach to dealing with sexual sin is seldom successful.

**6. Establish an accountability relationship (Eccles. 4:9-10; Heb. 3:12-13).**

- a. Definition: An accountability relationship is one in which a Christian asks another believer to look into his/her life for purposes of questioning, challenging, admonishing, advising, encouraging, and otherwise providing input in a way that will help the individual live according to the Christian principles that both hold.



b. Structure: Have regularly scheduled check-ins (in-person is best). A small, single-sex group can work but should be kept to a maximum of four.

c. Selecting an Accountability Partner:

1. It should be a trusted, godly friend.
2. It should be someone you like and respect.
3. It should be someone other than your spouse.
4. If possible, avoid starting with “mutual/peer accountability.”
5. Seek to be accountable to someone who is not struggling with the particular failures with which you are struggling. Not a “support group” made up of people struggling with the same issues at the same time.
6. Invite the accountability partner to involve local church elders, if necessary. If the person persists in sin, church discipline may be the best next step.

d. Ground Rules

1. At the beginning, the counselee should offer the accountability partner a complete history of his/her sexual life, from childhood to the present. The objective is to humble oneself and to be honest about an area of life usually accompanied by deceit, and to give the accountability partner an accurate understanding of their struggles.
2. The accountability partner’s primary job is to receive the confession(s) of the counselee.
3. Ideally, the accountability check-in/meeting is to discuss that which has already been confessed.

4. Unless a sin has taken place very recently, this shouldn't be the place where sin is confessed/discovered for the very first time.
5. Agree to ask the counselee very direct, specific questions, such as:
  - "Have you been free from pornography since our last meeting?" is good. "When was the last time you looked at something for the purpose of sexual pleasure?" is better, because it's harder to work around since the person is likely tempted to stretch the truth.
  - When was the last time you masturbated?
  - How have you engaged in sexual immorality since our last meeting?
  - What have you done to encourage an illicit relationship?
  - What have you done to foster spiritual growth since we last met?
  - What do you feel guilty about?
  - Is there anything you're glad I didn't ask?
  - Have you been deceitful in your answers to my previous questions?
6. Agree on how much of your conversations will be shared with his/her spouse.
7. Agree always to pray together.

**7. Study the Scriptures to learn God's wisdom in the following battlefields in the war for moral purity:**

- The goal of life (1 Thess. 4:3,8; 2 Cor. 5:9; Gal. 1:10; 1 Cor. 10:31)
- Self-control (1 Thess. 4:4-5; 1 Tim. 4:7-8; Rom. 6:12)
- Interpersonal relationships (1 Thess. 4:6-7; Rom. 16:17-18; Phil. 2:3-4)
- Thought life (Prov. 4:23; 23:7; Rom. 12:1-2; Phil. 4:8)

- Eye control (Job 31:1; Ps. 101:3a; Prov. 4:23, 25; Matt. 6:22–23)
- Influence of friends (Prov. 13:20–21; 22:24–25; 27:17; 5:9–11; 1 Cor. 15:33)
- Circumstance control (Rom. 13:14; 1 Thess. 5:22; 2 Tim. 2:22)

**Active participation in the services and ministries of a Bible-believing, preaching, and practicing church is crucial to long-term spiritual growth and victory over sexual sin.**

(Heb. 3:12–13; 10:24–25)

**HOPE: Gal. 5:16–18 – Walk in the Spirit; 2 Thess. 3:3–5 – Confidence in the Lord.**

### **Recommended Resources**

*The War Within*, Bob Reehm

*Finally Free*, Heath Lambert

*At The Altar of Sexual Idolatry*, Steve Gallagher

*At The Altar of Sexual Idolatry Workbook*, Steve Gallagher

*Lord Change Me*, James MacDonald

*Setting Captives Free*, Mike Cleveland <http://settingcaptivesfree.com>

Pure Life Ministries provides residential care, phone counseling, and biblical teaching materials for men with sexual addictions. The ministry is located in Dry Ridge, KY.

<http://purelifeministries.org>

Covenant Eyes provides internet accountability, which monitors the websites visited, the search terms used, and videos watched, and lists them in an easy-to-read report that is designed to start a conversation about healthy online habits. <http://covenanteyes.com>

Accountable2You provides accountability through real-time accountability through detailed monitoring through comprehensive reports, instant alerts, daily/weekly accountability reports and more. <https://accountable2you.com/>

Biblical Counseling Coalition blog has many articles.

<http://biblicalcounselingcoalition.org/blogs/>

*Seven Effective Strategies for Dealing With Lust*, Douglas Wilson

<https://dougwils.com/s7-engaging-the-culture/seven-effective-strategies-for-dealing-with-lust.html>

*Dealing with Nuisance Lust*, Douglas Wilson

<https://dougwils.com/books/dealing-with-nuisance-lust.html>

# Communication

*Steve Ham / Grace & Truth Cincinnati*

## **Objectives that will be covered in this workshop:**

1. Build a theology of the tongue (i.e., power of words)
2. Characteristics of wise communication
3. Attacking problems and not people (i.e., avoiding conflict)
4. Developing godly communication habits

### **I. Theology of the Tongue: The Power of Words**

1. Our words can bring life and healing into our relationships or they can bring struggle and death in our relationships (Prov. 18:21).

**Prov. 18:21** "Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits."

2. Our words originate in our heart and are the natural outflow of what we want and desire (Matt. 12:34-37, James 4:1-5).
3. Our words reveal a disciplined or non-disciplined temperament (Ps. 4).

The **“Four Rules of Communication”** can be used in all our relationships. They apply all the time, but are particularly helpful in both preventing and solving communication problems.

## II. Characteristics of Wise Communication

### A. Be HONEST. (Eph. 4:25)

**Eph. 4:25** “Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members of one another.”

#### 1. We must put off FALSEHOOD.

Common examples of dishonesty:

- Outright deceit.
- Keeping a secret when it should be disclosed
- Exaggeration at inappropriate times
- Conflict between verbal and non-verbal communication.
- Distinguishing the real message; innuendo.

#### 2. We must SPEAK.

Strong, healthy marriages don't come as a result of silence:

- a. Nobody likes to play “Guess What S/He is Thinking”

b. People cannot read minds – 1 Cor. 2:11

**1 Cor. 2:11** “For who knows a person’s thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.”

**3. We must speak the TRUTH.**

Speaking the truth means giving the facts as they actually are without intending to withhold information. Telling the truth does not require that one must share every detail, but it does require one to give enough facts for the message to be accurately communicated.

**4. We must speak the truth in LOVE.**

**Eph. 4:15** “Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ...”

**5. We must speak the truth because we are MEMBERS of one another.**

**Eph. 5:31–32** “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’<sup>32</sup> This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.”

“We instinctively think about our own needs and wants. We are primarily committed to our own welfare. But as we humbly admit our selfishness, we can begin to appreciate and rely upon the enabling grace of Christ.”

– Paul Tripp, *War of Words*, pp. 209–10

**B. Keep CURRENT.**

**Eph. 4:26–27** – *“Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger,<sup>27</sup> and give no opportunity to the devil.”*

**1. Use anger to solve today’s problems TODAY.**

**2. Do not make EXCUSES for failing to communicate.**

a. Common communication cutoffs include:

- i. Crying
- ii. Threatening an explosion
- iii. Using a “bottom line” statement (“All I have to say is...”)
- iv. Leaving the room or the home

b. Deal with problems as soon as possible.

c. **Matt. 6:34** – *“Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.”*

**3. QUESTIONS to ask before bringing up a problem.**



- a. Do I have the **FACTS** right?

**Prov. 18:13** *"He who gives an answer before he hears, It is folly and shame to him."*

- b. Should **LOVE** hide it? Is it sinful? Is it hindering growth?

**1 Pet. 4:8** *"Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins."*

- c. Is my **TIMING** right?

**Prov. 15:23** *"To make an apt answer is a joy to a man, and a word in season, how good it is!"*

- d. Is my **MOTIVE** right? Am I trying to help the other person? Are my words **LOVING?**

**Eph. 4:15** *"Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ..."*

- e. Have I **PRAYED** for God's help?

**Prov. 3:5** *"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding."*

**C. ATTACK the problem, not the person (i.e., avoiding conflict).**

**Eph. 4:29–30** *“Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.*

*<sup>30</sup>And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”*

**1. Avoid “CORRUPTING TALK” that attack the person.**

- a. Words that attack a person's **character**.

**Matt. 5:21–22** *“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ <sup>22</sup>But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire.” (See also Matt. 7:1–3)*

- b. Words that tear down, rip apart or hinder **growth**.
- c. Words that **confuse** the discussion or by-pass the conflict.
- d. Words that **grieve** the Holy Spirit.

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

**2. Use EDIFYING words that encourage and build up.**

“Scripture [Eph. 4] indicates that when people have communicated effectively, they are mutually strengthened, encouraged, and enriched” (Mack, *Your Family God’s Way*, p. 56).

- a. Our words are supposed to encourage growth.
- b. Our words are supposed to fit the need.
- c. The result of this type of communication is a benefit (grace) to those who hear.

**3. When this rule is obeyed with respect to problem solving, words will be SOLUTION-ORIENTED and accompanied with the right tone and body language.**

**D. Act; don’t REACT.**

**Eph. 4:31–32** “Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. <sup>32</sup> Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”

**1. We must guard against sinful reactions in our hearts and our actions.**

- a. **bitterness**: a state of resentment: a desire to think about and treat someone according to evil
- b. **wrath**: anger normally resulting in passionate outbursts

- c. **anger**: settled indignation or hostility that frequently seeks revenge
- d. **clamor**: loud screaming and shouting normally associated with quarrels and brawls
- e. **slander**: profane or abusive speech
- f. **malice**: wickedness in the sense of a desire to harm the other person

**2. We must guard against our natural tendency to be DEFENSIVE about dealing with our own sins.**

- a. **1 Pet. 2:23** “When He was reviled, He did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but continued entrusting Himself to Him who judges justly.”

**3. SINFUL ARGUMENTS are possible only if each person reacts.**

- a. “With great boldness and clarity, [James in 4:1-3] explains that if your wishes lead to conflicts in the home, the real problem is your consuming desire for your own satisfaction.” (Wayne Mack, *Your Family God’s Way*, p. 189)

**4. Developing godly communication habits.**

- a. We must seek to apply godly **ACTIONS** and **ATTITUDES**.
  - i. **kind**: benevolent, helpful, courteous
  - ii. **tenderhearted**: compassionate, sympathetic, affectionate
  - iii. **forgiving**: a willingness to pardon the repentant guilty person from moral liability and to work toward reconciliation

5. We are motivated by the GOSPEL (Eph. 4:32).

# Guilt and Repentance

*Pastor Brad Bigney / Grace Fellowship Church*

When we talk about guilt and repentance we're getting to the very heart of what biblical counseling is all about because this is what's at the very heart of what it means to change. And it's at the very heart of the gospel!

## I. Foundational Concepts

### A. The Secular Counselor is Faced with a Dilemma

1. "Guilt / Shame" is associated with some aspect of not measuring up to a particular standard.
2. Who decides the particular standard and deviations from it?
3. The perceived guilt of an individual that's based upon a particular standard is dealt with by:
  - a. Confronting it — "Stop doing that"

***Gospel Treason:*** explains the importance of changing on a heart level.

- b. Minimizing it — "You're just human"

- c. Shifting responsibility for it – “Your upbringing made you this way”
  - d. Desensitizing you to it – “Just keep doing it until you feel no shame” (Freud’s approach)
  - e. Masking it – “Take these pills to help you feel better”
  - f. Excusing it – “You’re genetically prone to this”
  - g. Justifying it – “That’s not wrong. Who told you that was wrong?”
4. But there is an absolute standard that results in true guilt, so all of the world’s attempts to erase guilt and shame are vain like the daily sacrifices of the temple priests (Heb. 10:11).

## **B. The Theological Reality**

1. The presence of *guilt* separates humanity from being in the presence of the Holy God (Gen. 3:24, Ezra 9:15; Isa. 59:2).
2. Definition: Judicial **liability** or **culpability** for failure to meet the standards of God’s righteousness (Num. 5:6–7).

The verb (Hebrew - a-sham) fundamentally refers to the guilt, responsibility, or culpability that a person must bear for some offense.” (Willem VanGemeren, *Vol. 1: New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, 554)

- a. The offense is first and foremost against the Creator God.
  - b. Note that guilt is not primarily a bad **feeling**.
  - c. **Shame** may or may not follow.
3. Adam and Eve changed from their state of innocence to a state of guilt when they disobeyed and were expelled from the presence of God (Gen. 3:24).
- a. Adam and Eve experienced shame associated with their guilty state.
  - b. Adam and Eve tried to cover their guilty state in an attempt to deal with the shame (Gen. 3:7).
  - c. God held Adam and Eve accountable (Gen. 3:16–24).
4. As the offspring of Adam we're all guilty by nature and by our own actions for falling short of the glory of God (Jer. 3:25; Rom. 3:23; 5:12).
- a. People turn to a variety of inadequate coverings for shame and guilt (Isa. 59:6).
  - b. God still holds us accountable (Rom. 2:16; 3:19; 6:23).
5. God has instilled us with a sense of guilt (Rom. 2:15).



## II. The Place of the Conscience

God created us with a moral compass called the conscience.

A. The biblically functioning conscience (compass) works in tandem with God's Word (Bible) and God's Spirit.

B. Why do some not feel shame?

1. You can have an untrained conscience (Rom. 7:7-12; 1 Tim. 4:7-8; Heb. 5:14)
2. You may have a seared conscience (1 Tim. 4:2; Titus 1:15; Eph. 4:19)

C. Why do some feel shame even though they've not violated Scripture?

- The weak conscience (Rom. 14:1-5, 23; 1 Cor. 8)

Your conscience can be triggered or stimulated by something other than the Word of God.

## III. The Solution for Guilt

### A. God's Provision — the Gospel

1. God alone can justify us and remove the guilt and shame (Ps. 32:1-2; 85:2; Isa. 61:10; 2 Cor. 5:21).
2. God's justice requires the life blood of the guilty (Lev. 17:11; Heb. 9:22).

3. Christ is the superior guilt offering (Isa. 53; Heb. 9:11-14; 10:11-12).
4. The Holy Spirit is the agent for humanity's conviction (John 16:7-11).
5. The Word of God is the tool the Holy Spirit uses for humanity's conviction (Heb. 4:12).
6. Based on the believer's standing in the Gospel, the believer can rest confidently against Satan's accusations of condemnation (Rom. 8:1; Zech. 3:1-5).

## **B. Man's Appropriation of God's Provision — Repentance**

1. Be aware of counterfeits
  - a. The Salvation Army guy with the bell response

We make a few easy superficial changes in our life to get the bell to stop, but we don't repent. We drop a little something into the bucket of conviction just to get the bell to stop – just enough to ease your conscience.

- b. Aw, shucks response – the humor response

Not changing a thing, but just laughing about it.

- c. The Oprah Winfrey response

Confess everything... change nothing. Repentance is more than emotional vomiting, and it's more than an avalanche of words; it involves change.

**Jim Elliff – *The Unrepentant Repenter*** – gives 12 different counterfeits. (free from his website – [www.ccwtoday.org](http://www.ccwtoday.org))

2. Definition — Change of mind/heart based upon God's Word

- a. Old Testament concept (from the Hebrew word "shoov") "to turn," most often used in Jeremiah in exhortation to turn back to God after having turned away (Jer. 3:11-4:2)
- b. NT concept — "Metanoia" — "To change one's mind/be converted/repent" (Mark 1:15; Acts 26:20; 2 Cor. 12:21)

3. Application

- a. Regarding justification or salvation — personal turning towards God's provision in Christ, the gospel
- b. Regarding sanctification — the daily application of the gospel (Rom. 6-8)
  - 1) Daily changing of the mind/turning in regard to all the implications of the gospel on the believer's walk as a child of God.

***The Gospel Primer*** by Milton Vincent & ***Comforts from the Cross*** by Elyse Fitzpatrick

“As long as I am stricken with the guilt of my sins, I will be captive to them, and will often find myself re-committing the very sins about which I feel most guilty. The Devil is well aware of this fact; he knows that if he can keep me tormented by sin's guilt, he can dominate me with sin's power. The Gospel, however, stays sin at this root point and thereby nullifies sin's power over me. The forgiveness of God, made known to me through the gospel, liberates me from sins' power because it liberates me first from its guilt; and preaching such forgiveness to myself is a practical way of putting the gospel into operation as a nullifier of sin's power in my life.”

~ Milton Vincent, *The Gospel Primer*, p. 19

2) Repentance is fueled by the indwelling Spirit of God in the believer.

#### 4. Results of True Repentance

a. Look for **confession** – Greek, “homologeō” – to say the same thing, “To agree with God about my sin” (1 John 1:7–9; Prov. 28:13; Dan. 9:3–19)

1) The mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. True repentance will result in agreement with God.

2) Look for precise language that an individual agrees with God about his guilt.

Not: "I didn't mean to say or do that. I'm tired and not myself."

"Forgive me for reacting to your venom. I'm not usually like that."

"I was just reacting to bad circumstances."

Instead: "I was wrong and sinned against you when I \_\_\_\_\_. Will you please forgive me?"

3) Confession will first be to God (Ps. 51, 1 John 1:7-9) and then to any appropriate persons (Matt. 5:23-26; James 5:16) in which a relationship has been broken.

b. Look for **godly sorrow** as opposed to worldly sorrow (2 Cor. 7:8-10; James 4:9)

See worksheet on 2 Cor. 7:8-10 – posted on my website: [www.bradbigney.com](http://www.bradbigney.com)

c. Look for **growth** and change

1) Rejoicing in the freedom of forgiveness (Ps. 32:1-2).

2) Using freedom to pursue holiness (Rom. 6-8, Eph. 4:22-24).

d. Look for **restitution**

1) The prodigal son and Zacchaeus were both rightly willing to make restitution (Luke 15:11-32; 19:8).

- 2) Restitution is not simply a requirement of law but a manifestation of love (and thus repentance) toward a neighbor.
  
- 3) Sometimes it is impossible to make restitution (e.g., adultery).

### **Recommended Resources**

*Gospel Treason*, Brad Bigney

*Accepting God's Forgiveness*, John C. Miller

*Comforts from the Cross*, Elyse Fitzpatrick

*The Unrepenting Repenter* ([www.ccwtoday.org](http://www.ccwtoday.org)), Jim Elliff

*The Gospel Primer*, Milton Vincent

*Putting the Past in Its Place*, Stephen Viars

# Worry & Fear

*Pastor Brad Bigney / Grace Fellowship Church*

Some sins are so common among Christians that they appear to be acceptable behavior. Worry and fear would certainly be near the top of the list. We will consider them together in this study because of the similarities between both problems and their solutions.

## WORRY

### I. Worry Defined

- A. The Greek word for worry is *merimnao*, a combination of two words: *merizo* (to divide) and *nous* (mind).
- B. Worry actually means “a divided mind.”
- C. In the Bible, the word is usually translated “worry,” “anxious,” “anxiety,” or “care.”
- D. It is not to be confused with diligent care and concern toward your responsibilities (2 Cor. 11:28; Phil. 2:20; Gal. 4:19).
- E. Planning that acknowledges God’s sovereignty is not worry (James 4:13).
- F. Worry is an overanxious concern regarding the future and things that keeps a person from fulfilling current biblical responsibilities.

“Central to worry is the illusion that we can control things. ‘If only I could get my retirement right, I could control the future.’ ‘If I could get my diet and medicine right, I wouldn’t get cancer.’ ‘If I could figure out the right child-rearing technique, I could guarantee how my kids turn out.’ Worry assumes the possibility of control over the uncontrollable. The illusion of control lurks inside your anxiety. Anxiety and control are two sides of one coin. When we can’t control something we worry about it.”

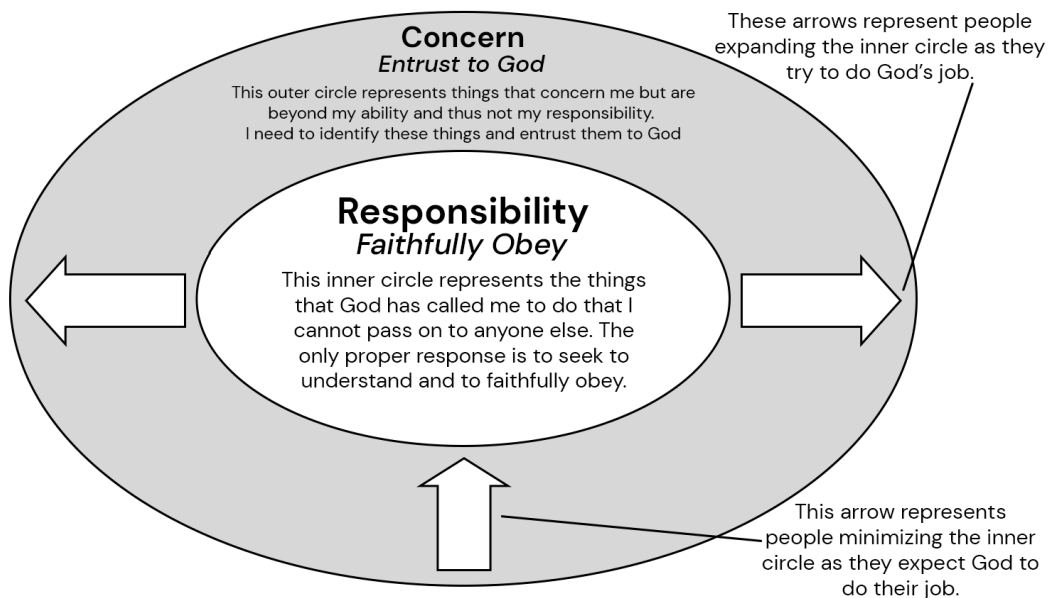
~ David Powlison, *Worry*, p. 12

Godly concern becomes sinful worry when:

1. Your thoughts are focused on changing the future
2. Your thoughts are unproductive (just caught in the “spin cycle” – going round)
3. It controls you instead of you controlling it
4. It causes you to neglect your God-given responsibilities and relationships

### Clarifying Responsibility

Taken from *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands* by Paul David Tripp ISBN 9789-0-87552-607-2  
 used with permission of P&R Publishing Co., P.O.Box 817, Phillipsburg, N.J. 08865  
 www.prpbooks.com





5. It starts to damage your body
6. You start losing hope instead of finding answers
7. You shut down and stop functioning

## II. Worry is Sinful

John Piper said, "Sin is what you do when you're not satisfied in God."

**Ex. 20:2-3** "I am the Lord Your God...<sup>3</sup> You shall have no other gods before Me."

"The humble are genuinely carefree. I've discovered how true that is about myself and my soul. Where there's worry, where there's anxiousness, pride is at the root of it. When I am experiencing anxiety, the root issue is that I'm trying to be self-sufficient. I'm acting independent of God. What's the solution? Humble yourself, God says. How? Acknowledge your need for Me! Cast your cares upon Me, and I will transform you... I have to remember that whenever I feel buried under care, the real issue is pride and my self-sufficiency. I must deliberately and specifically cast my cares upon Him and thereby humble myself. Don't be mistaken. God hasn't gone anywhere. He's just as sovereign, just as good, just as faithful when I'm buried under care as He was... The issue isn't God. It's my pride that resists trusting in Him through dependence upon Him."

~ C.J. Mahaney, *Humility*, pp. 75-76

A. In Matt. 6:19-34 Jesus Christ addresses worry and He forbids it three times (vv. 25, 31, 34).

- B. The Apostle Paul also commands believers, "Be anxious for nothing..." (Phil. 4:6).
- C. Christ's teaching in Matt. 6 exposes the two sinful roots of worry and the cure for each.

### III. **Worry is Idolatry, and the Solution is Repentance** (Matt. 6:19-25)

- A. Idolatry means to worship someone or something other than the true and living God.
  - Giving yourself to some person, goal, ideal, concern or object rather than Christ
  - Putting your desires above God's desires and commands for your life
  - It is allowing your concerns over the future and things to be more important than thinking and acting God's way

***"Worry thrives when worship dies."***

*"Worry is a trickle of fear running through the mind, ever cutting a deeper gorge into which all thoughts are drained."~ Unknown*

- B. Worry expresses idolatry in the heart. We tend to have an inordinate focus on:
  - Things (vv. 19-21)
  - Goals (vv. 22-23)
  - People (v. 24)

An idol = **Anything** or **Anyone** that begins to capture our **Hearts** and **Minds** and **Affections** more than God. It's living on substitutes. It's exchanging the one true living God for a counterfeit.

- C. The things you worry about reveal your idols — finding a mate, getting a promotion, health, money, success, children, peoples' opinions, etc.

### **Heart Diagnostic Questions**

1. Am I willing to sin to get it?
2. Am I willing to sin if I think I'm going to lose it?
3. Do I run to it as a refuge instead of God?

## **IV. Worry is Unbelief and the Solution is Faith (Matt. 6:25–34)**

**Heb. 3:12** "Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God."

- A. Jesus described worriers as people of "little faith" (v. 30).
- B. Worry is the fruit of remaining unbelief and doubt in a Christian. The presence of worry indicates that there is someone or something you are living for other than the Lord.

C. The fruit of repentance for a worrier will be manifesting faith in God by disciplining his mind to focus on:

- God's care for mankind; argument from the lesser to the greater (vv. 25–30)
- God's omniscience; He knows your needs (vv. 31–32)
- God's promises (v. 33)
- **Rom. 8:32** "If God did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us on the cross – how shall He not also freely give us all things?"
- Pleasing God by caring for today's responsibilities (v. 34)

D. The idolatry and unbelief of worry is to be replaced by a worship of and faith in God. This will manifest itself in a lifestyle marked by:

1. Right praying (Phil. 4:6–7)

Confess worry as sin; this gives hope.

Make general as well as specific requests

2. Right thinking (Phil. 4:8)

The mind will need to be disciplined to "dwell on these things."

***Think about what your phone is doing to you!***

- 75% of people today sleep next to their phones and 90% of us look at our phones as soon as we wake up, before we do anything else! I can't think of a worse way to start my day than a text from work, a glance at an email, a scroll through social media, or a news alert about the latest outrage.
- Don't let your phone set your emotional equilibrium and your news feed set your view of the world at the start of your day. What you find on your phone first thing in the morning is not an accurate picture of the world.  
Consider doing something radical! Let prayer set your emotional equilibrium and Scripture reframe or set your view of the world — by starting and ending your day with God.

### 3. Right acting / living (Phil. 4:9)

Focus attention and energy into fulfilling today's responsibilities.

\*Note the Progression: Right praying → Right thinking → Right acting

## FEAR

### Biblical 'Fear' Facts

- Fear, per se, is not wrong.
- In Scripture, Jesus is never said to be afraid.
- God warns us over 450 times in the Bible not to fear.
- Gen. 3:10 is the first occurrence of fear in the Bible.

- Fear is a feeling of anxiety and agitation caused by the presence or nearness of danger, evil, pain, etc.

## **I. Fears That Are Right**

- Fear of God (Eccles. 12:13-14; 2 Cor. 5:10; Prov. 1:7)
- Fear of danger (Job 41:33; Gen. 4:14-15; 1 Cor. 6:19-20)
- Fear due to guilt (Prov. 28:1; Matt. 14:1-2; Lev. 26:17-18, 36)

Summary: Fear is right and good when it moves us toward God and biblical behavior.

## **II. Fears That Are Wrong**

- Fear of man, not God. (John 12:42-43; Luke 12:4-5)
- Fear of things temporal, rather than eternal. (Luke 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 4:5)
- Fear of things we cannot change. (Prov. 3:25; Gen. 4:14)

Summary: Fear is wrong and sinful when it is allowed to motivate thinking and behavior that is unbiblical.

## **III. Keys to Overcoming Sinful Fear**

A. Develop a strong God focus. (Gal. 1:10; 2 Cor. 5:9-10; Isa. 26:3; Ps. 46:1-10)

B. Deal with guilt biblically. (Prov. 28:1; 1 John 1:9; Matt. 5:23-24)

- C. Develop love as the antidote to fear. (1 John 4:15–21, esp. 17–19; 2 Tim. 1:7; 1 Cor. 13)
  
- D. View fearful situations as opportunities to grow for God’s glory. (Rom. 8:28–29; Matt. 5:16; 1 Cor. 6:19–20)
  
- E. Meditate on and memorize key Scriptures. (2 Tim. 1:7; Ps. 118:6; 1 Pet. 5:7 and others mentioned above)

### **Recommended Resources**

*Overcoming Fear, Worry, and Anxiety*, Elyse Fitzpatrick

*Running Scared*, Edward T. Welch

*Worry*, David Powlison

*Trusting God*, Jerry Bridges

*When People are Big and God is Small*, Edward T. Welch

## Homework Suggestions for Fighting Fear and Worry

1. Make a written list of everything that you are worried about, then prayerfully seek to determine what things are your responsibility and what things are simply areas of concern. If you need help, ask another godly Christian to talk with you about your list.
2. Read one chapter per week of Elyse Fitzpatrick's book, *Overcoming Fear, Worry, and Anxiety*, and write out your answers to the questions at the end of the chapter. Approach another godly Christian and ask if they would meet with you for prayer and to discuss your answers each week. (Continue this week by week throughout the book.)
3. For every area that is one of your responsibilities make a list of what you can begin to do to solve that problem. Write steps to be taken. Ask someone to hold you accountable for following up on the actions that need to be taken rather than just stewing and worrying.
4. Do not pray as you are falling asleep because there is the danger that the praying can turn into worrying about the issue. Instead make a list of verses that you have memorized and choose one each night that you want to spend time meditating on. Select verses that speak of God's sovereign control, His abundant provision, His protection, etc.
5. During the day keep a 3x5 note card in your pocket and whenever your mind drifts to worry about something, write it down on the card. Sit down at the end of the day or with your Christian friend that week and try to determine whether or not it falls in your circle of responsibility or just an area of concern.



6. Fight each day to focus your thinking and spend the bulk of your energy on solving today's problems that are truly your responsibility, rather than worrying about endless possibilities of "what if?"
7. Read Jay Adam's pamphlet *What to Do When You Worry all the Time?* or David Powlison's booklet *Worry – Pursuing a Better Path to Peace* and discuss it with another Christian friend.
8. Memorize Matt. 6:33–34 and write it on a 3x5 card to keep posted somewhere that is visible throughout the day (on your bathroom mirror, computer, kitchen cabinet, etc.).
9. Memorize Phil. 4:6–9 and do a word study on each of the words listed as areas to 'think' on.
10. Read and work through Paul Tripp's article about the "Circle of Concern Versus Circle of Responsibility."

**Matt. 6:33–34** "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. <sup>34</sup>Therefore **do not worry** about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

# The Need for Biblical Counseling & the Definition of Biblical Counseling

Pastor Brad Bigney / Grace Fellowship Church

## I. The Need for Counseling Started When God Created People.

A. God created us perfect but not **complete**.

B. From the very beginning we needed God's **counsel** in order to know what to do and not to do. (Gen. 1:28-30; 2:16-17, 19)

C. We were made to be **dependent** on God's counsel. We weren't created to be **autonomous**. We shouldn't raise our children to be *independent* but *dependent* upon God! (Matt. 4:4, Deut. 32:46-47, Ps. 119:11)

1. Without God's Word life is **absurd**, as the world today has decided.

No **purpose**; no **future**.

The philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche said a universal madness would break out when the truth of what mankind had done in killing God dawned on us. Nietzsche himself spent the last thirteen years of his life in the darkness of insanity, while his godly mother watched over him by his bedside.

2. Without God's Word, life is **vanity**, as Solomon decided in Eccles.

## II. The Need for Counseling Was Intensified When We Made Wrong Choices in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3).

A. We were created in a **natural** and moral likeness to God.

In His image, "Let us make man in Our own image..." (Gen. 1:26)

For His glory (Isa. 43:7)

For His own pleasure (Rev. 4:11)

B. Adam and Eve already had what is **craved** today: health (2:7, 17), a perfect environment (1:25), material needs met (1:29-30), meaningful responsibility (2:15, 19-20) and companionship (2:18-25).

C. God **clearly** communicated the only limitations on man's behavior and the penalty for disobedience (2:16-17).

D. But Satan tried to **overthrow** and **undermine** God's counsel by:

1. Creating **doubt** in their minds about God's Word (3:1)

2. **Denying** God's Word (3:4)

3. **Denouncing / defaming** God's character (3:5)

- E. Eve listened to ungodly **counsel** and was deceived to sin (3:1; 2 Cor. 11:3).
- F. She yielded to temptation in the same **categories** as those mentioned in 1 John 2:16.
- G. Adam ate the forbidden fruit **knowingly** (3:6; 1 Tim. 2:14).
- H. Their sin was **more** than merely eating forbidden fruit. It was:
1. Disobeying the **revealed** Word of God
  2. **Believing** the lie of Satan
  3. Placing their **own desires** above God's command

Get this: most of our problems are desires gone bad – desires that morph into demands!

See book, ***Gospel Treason – Betraying the Gospel with Hidden Idols***, to understand better how our desires turn into demands that often drive why we do what we do. Effective biblical counseling works to get after the sin beneath the sin – on a heart level – and not just a superficial, and often temporary, changing of behavior.

The disobedience that Adam and Eve thought would **maximize** their pleasure instead **maximized** their pain, and ours.

In fact, Adam **magnified** his restrictions (he only had one!) and **minimized** his blessings and freedom. That's the essence of what many times leads us into sin.

"Meaninglessness does not come from being weary of pain, but meaninglessness comes from being weary of pleasure."

~ G.K. Chesterton

That's why John Piper says, "Sin is what we do when we're not **satisfied** in God."

- I. The same actions today are producing the need for biblical counseling!

**Rom. 1:28** "... they did not like to retain God in their knowledge..."

**Ps. 10:4** "The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek God. God is in none of his thoughts."

**Job 21:14-15** "Yet they say to God, 'Depart from us, for we do not desire the knowledge of Your ways. <sup>15</sup> Who is the Almighty, that we should serve Him?'..."

- J. Sin or rejecting God's counsel brings terrible consequences:

Sin brought **eternal** consequences:

- Physical death
- Eternal death

Sin brought **immediate** consequences:

1. We gained a **knowledge** of good and evil (3:7a, 10-11, 22), but lost the **power** to effect change
2. Guilt (3:7b-8, 10-11)
3. Broken fellowship with God (3:8-13a)
4. Pain in childbirth (3:16a)
5. Distorted marital relationships (3:12, 16b)
6. Exhausting labor in order to make a living (3:17-19)
7. Physical death (3:19, 22-24)
8. Spiritual death, eternal separation from God (Rom. 5:12; 6:23)

Sin created problems with **God**, problems with **self**, and problems with **others**.

**Problems with God:**

**Isa. 59:2** "But your iniquities have separated you from your God..."

**Problems with self:**

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

**Problems with others:**

**James 4:1** "Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?"

K. Summary: the need for biblical counseling is rooted in our sinful **choice** to think and act independently, in violation of God's revealed will.

L. Like Adam and Eve, sinners today still run, hide, try to cover themselves and **blame-shift**.

**III. You Can See This Same Pattern Illustrated Again and Again in the Bible:**

A. **Gen. 4** – Cain's sinful choices that led to murder

B. **1 Sam. 13-31** – Saul's sinful choices that led to losing the kingdom

C. **Rom. 1** – The condition of the human heart

#### IV. You Can See the Cumulative Result: (2 Tim. 3)

- A. Rampant **iniquity** and misdirected **love** (vv. 2-4) "...lovers of themselves, lovers of money... lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God."
- B. Rampant **hypocrisy** (vv. 5-7) "...having a form of godliness but denying its power... always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."
- C. Rampant **apostasy** (vv. 8-9) "...these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith... they will progress no further..."
- D. Rampant **persecution** (vv. 12-13) "...all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived."

#### V. What Can We Do?

We can throw up our hands and quit! Many have.

1. Some have quit but still play church.
2. Some quit by living pessimistic lives. "Woe-is-me" Christians. It's never been this bad before!
3. Some blame it all on Satan. They major on exorcisms and a demon behind every bush and every sin problem.



4. Some resort to “cure-all” blessings. Zap Theology. Just give me the “zap” – the latest Christian buzz that will put me in the “zone” and keep me in the “zone” so that I won’t have to struggle so much against sin.
5. Some say “It’s too late to make lasting change; I’ll just evangelize.”
6. Many have turned to God’s enemies (Freud, Skinner, Maslow) to find out how to bring about change in lives.  
**Jer. 7:24** “Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward and not forward.”

**VI. Paul Had the Answer for the Problems and Need for Real Change.** (2 Tim. 3:15–4:2)

- A. God gave us His inspired and inerrant Word.
- B. God’s Word is profitable because it answers **four key questions**:
  1. How should I think and act? *That’s doctrine.*
  2. How do I know when I am wrong? *That’s reproof.*
  3. How do I change? *That’s correction.*
  4. How do I keep from repeating the same mistakes over and over again? *That’s training in righteousness.*

- C. **Change** is God's and the church's business! His method of real and lasting change is called justification and progressive sanctification.
- D. God's Word adequately **equips** us to help people reaping the pain of sin!

### **The Goal of Biblical Counseling**

1. True biblical counseling always has the clearly defined and communicated goal of helping a counselee become God's kind of a person (Col. 1:28).
2. The circumstances of a person's life will be used as a springboard to teach them how to think and act in a way that would please the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5:9; Gal. 1:10).
3. Becoming God's kind of person is an ongoing process of putting off wrong thinking and behavior and replacing them with biblical thinking and acting. This will happen as the individual's mind is renewed by salvation and progressive sanctification (Eph., especially chapter 4; Col. 3).
4. Solving the problems that motivated people to see us will be secondary to the goal of helping them to please Christ, whether their circumstances change or not (Rom. 8:28-29).

## Qualifications of a Biblical Counselor (Gal. 6:1-5)

### A Biblical Counselor Should Be:

1. A **spiritual** person (v. 1a). Literally – “you who have the Spirit” – all saved people. See **Rom. 15:14** “You are competent to counsel,” not a higher level of special people.
  - a. **Indwelt** by the Holy Spirit / saved (Rom. 8:9).
  - b. **Controlled** by the Spirit (Eph. 5: 18; Gal. 5:22-23).
  - c. **Concerned** about sin’s impact on other people (Gal. 6:7-8).
  
2. A **gentle** person when seeking to restore someone to usefulness in the body of Christ. (v. 1b)

“Restore” is the Greek word “Katartizo” = to mend a net or broken bone, to hold it in place long enough to heal.
  
3. A person who takes sin **seriously**.

Don’t call it sickness. When you do, you rob people of hope. If it’s a disease or sickness, there’s nothing they can do. If it’s sin, there’s something they can do – repent!
  
4. A **humble** person, aware of his own struggles (v. 1c) “considering yourself lest you also be tempted.”

5. A **responsible** person, carrying his own backpack in life. (vv. 4-5)
6. A **caring** person, willing to help someone carry a load too heavy for him to carry alone.  
(v. 2)
7. A **confident** person, confident in God's Word and His Spirit to actually work in lives.
8. A **focused** person, focused on the right goal – "restore" – to mend a net or set a broken bone.

### **Recommended Resources**

*Equipping Counselors for Your Church*, Bob Kellemen  
*The Pastor and Counseling*, Jeremy Pierre and Deepak Reju  
*Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*, Paul Tripp

# Counseling People With A Psychological Diagnosis

*Dr. Charles Hodges / Faith Counseling Ministries*

## Introduction

1. This lecture should be taken in tandem with “Counseling People with a Medical Illness.”
  - a. Clarifying the terms. For purposes of discussion at Faith’s training programs, please assume the following definitions:
    - i. **People with Medical Illness** – someone who has been diagnosed with a proven/provable medical illness. The person’s pathology demonstrates the objective existence of specific disease in the body as a result of scientifically verifiable tests.
    - ii. **People with a Psychological Diagnosis** – someone who has been labeled with a condition from the current version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. Unlike the people with a medical disease described above, these individuals have been given a psychiatric label based on their thoughts, emotions, and behavior. Generally, such persons are also on one or more psychotropic drugs.
2. We are thankful for the privilege of ministering to persons in each category. However, to properly serve the people God brings to us, it is important to

distinguish conditions that truly differ.

3. We seek to approach this topic with compassion and humility. We desire to serve with compassion because we recognize that persons in both categories are fellow sufferers and should be treated with love, mercy, and grace. We desire to serve with humility because we recognize that there is much about the human body that we do not know.
4. We support and celebrate objective science and pray that mankind's understanding of how the body and soul interact will continue to develop and mature.
5. We understand that good people differ on this subject.

**I. Understand how a psychological diagnosis is made**

- A. Many counselees who come for biblical counseling have already been given one or more psychological labels from another doctor, counselor, or through self diagnosis (often through internet research).
- B. The current Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders may explain the criteria the physician or secular counselor used to make the diagnosis.
- C. Understand the difference between psychological diagnoses and medical diagnoses.

1. Medical diagnoses.

- a. There are definitely organic causes of a number of behavior problems.
- b. Whenever a truly organic cause is found, it is given a medical disease diagnosis.
- c. The diagnosis primarily describes the disease in the body rather than the symptoms.
- d. To qualify as an illness, the condition in question must show damage to the body's physical tissue.

2. Psychological diagnoses.

- a. Psychological diagnoses are made on the basis of the presenting psychological symptoms of the person, not the reason for the behavior. This point is conceded by the DSM itself – “a diagnosis does not carry any necessary implications regarding the causes of the individual’s mental disorder or its associated impairments” (xxiii).
- b. Various theories are proposed to account for the behavior.
- c. Contrast the differences between medical and psychological diagnoses this way:

Medicine: Disease  $\Rightarrow$  Symptoms (behavior)

Psychological: Theory  $\Leftarrow$  Symptoms (behavior)

3. What makes this difference significant?

- D. During the data gathering phase, ask your counselee if he knows and understands the process that was used to determine his particular diagnosis.
- E. When the time is right, ask the counselee if (because the diagnosis was made on the basis of thoughts, actions, and feelings) he would be open to you substituting biblical terminology for secular words and categories.

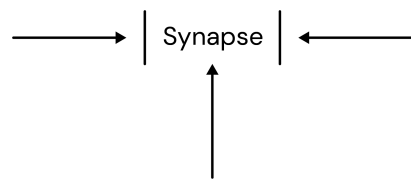
## II. Speak appropriately with a person about his medication

- A. A sizable percentage of our counselees are on psychotropic medication before they ever come to see us.
- B. As the data gathering process continues, ask the counselee about his medication history.
- C. Biblical counselors should never encourage a counselee to stop or reduce the frequency/amount of his drug therapy without the counselee first consulting the prescribing physician.
- D. Base your conversation on a factual understanding of chemical imbalance.
  - 1. We should always be sympathetic with people who are simply trying to follow the advice of other experts in their lives.



2. We should always be kind and respectful even when interacting with people and theories with which we disagree.
3. We should always be patient with counselees as they try to process what they are hearing from us, especially if it is different than what they heard from a previous counselor or doctor.
4. Put the term "chemical imbalance" under the microscope.

- a. Very likely told he has a chemical imbalance.



Catecholamines  
Norepinephrine  
Dopamine  
Serotonin

- b. A chemical imbalance is the term used for the theory that one of the chemicals is too high or too low in this synaptic junction.
- c. The imbalance is supposed to cause depression, anxiety, and other disorders.
- d. Chemical imbalance is only a theory since levels of neurotransmitters cannot be measured in neuronal synapses.

- i. The counselee does not need to discontinue the drugs for you to continue counseling.
  - e. There are chemical abnormalities in the body that affect behavior but when they are present, the condition is no longer labeled a chemical imbalance but is given medical disease labels.
  - f. Questions for the counselor to ask the counselee when a physical problem (like chemical imbalance) is supposed to be producing emotional or behavior problems:
    - i. What tests were run to prove a physical problem is present?
    - ii. How was it proven that the physical condition is the cause of the emotional or behavioral actions?
    - iii. How can it be proven that the recommended medication corrects the physical problem?
- E. Your primary goal in counseling is not to get the person off medication.
- F. Be prepared to carefully respond if/when your counselee raises the question about reducing or going off his medication.
1. Learn the person's reason for wanting to stop.

2. Explain to the counselee that there is much work to do before that question can be answered, and you will deal with it later.
3. Only discuss stopping medication when you are convinced the person has replaced the use of medication with biblical principles.
4. If you are convinced the counselee can come off the medication, send him to the doctor who started them.
5. If that doctor refuses, then the counselee needs to get a second opinion.
6. Continue counseling weekly for 3–4 weeks to check their progress after stopping the medication.

**III. Speak biblically about the heart and life issues that should always be a person's primary focus**

- A. Recast the behavioral characteristics that were used to make the psychological diagnosis in the first place into biblical categories.
- B. Lead your counselee in analyzing the issues of the heart that produced or contributed to the resultant struggles.
- C. Bring the gospel to bear on his desires, thoughts, actions, words, and emotions.
- D. The biblical goal is to become more like Christ through the problems.

1. To become more like Christ through daily problems means to handle or respond to those problems in a way that pleases Him.
2. The Bible has promised great victory in difficult situations where change in feelings is not possible.

### **Recommended Resources**

*The Christian's Guide to Psychological Terms*, Marshall Asher & Mary Asher

*Will Medicine Stop the Pain?*, Elyse Fitzpatrick & Laura Hendrickson

*Counseling and Christianity: Five Approaches*, Stephen Greggo & Timothy Sisemore

*Good Mood, Bad Mood: Help and Hope for Depression and Bipolar Disorder*, Charles  
Hodges

*Psychology and Christianity: Five Views*, Eric L. Johnson & Stanton L. Jones (Eds.)

*Addictions: A Banquet in the Grave*, Edward Welch

*Blame It on the Brain*, Edward Welch

# Counseling People with a Medical Illness

*Dr. Charles Hodges / Faith Counseling Ministries*

## Introduction

Physical illness and the pain and suffering that often come with it are problems that all of us will eventually face. In counseling, we will be called upon to help people in the middle of their struggle. Our Lord cared deeply about the pain and problems that people faced and we should reflect that care in counseling. Our goal should be to offer comfort, encouragement and a plan to help the counselee deal with their trial in a way that honors God.

### I. Preparing to help those with a medical illness

#### A. Those with physical illness and their loved ones struggle with many problems (John 11).

1. They may be facing physical pain, loss of function, ability, the loss of life (vv. 1-3)
2. They may lose income or jobs (v. 14).
3. Their illness may strain relationships with their spouse, children, loved ones, and friends (vv. 20, 32).

4. The illness may bring emotional distress (vv. 32-35).
5. The losses and the suffering are real and very important to them (vv. 38-40).
6. They will need someone who can show them the love of Christ in a patient, quiet way (vv. 22-26).
7. They need to know that God has a plan and that He is in control of it (vv. 4, 23, 39).

**B. Some fundamental concepts to keep in mind.**

1. While you do not need a physician's knowledge of the condition to help the counselee, you do need to be willing to listen long and carefully with a caring attitude. Always give them the first 30 minutes.
2. The best form of information about the problem is the counselee.
3. Your interest is more in knowing what the counselee thinks he or she has and how they believe the illness will change their life.

**C. The counselor's response to the illness.**

1. The counselor's strength is in dealing with the illness from a biblical perspective rather than the medical perspective.

- a. Accept the diagnosis and symptoms as a given.
  - b. Do not try to prove or disprove the diagnosis.
  - c. Do not recommend other possible diagnoses or methods of diagnosis.
2. If there is no cure or relief, do not attempt to find or recommend an alternative.
  3. Your goal is to turn the attention from the pain and discomfort of the illness to what God is doing through it.

## II. Principles to encourage and instruct those with a medical illness.

### A. Understand your counselee's...

1. Medical condition
  - a. Basic facts about the condition.
  - b. How it was diagnosed.
  - c. The natural history of the condition.
  - d. The effect of the condition on the counselee's lifestyle.
  - e. The counselee's thinking and attitude about the condition.
  - f. The response of relatives and friends of the counselee.
  - g. The effect of medication.
  - h. How is the illness being treated / managed?
    - i. Is the treatment effective?
    - ii. Potential complications from the use of the medications.

2. Spiritual condition.

- a. What is the counselee's personal relationship with the Lord?
- b. How does the person fit God into all of this?
- c. What is his understanding of the authority of the Word?

**B. Identify your counselee's problems.**

1. Presenting issues.
2. Identify underlying heart issues.

**C. Give much biblical hope.**

1. The hope is that there can be victory when pain and suffering cannot be relieved.
2. Teach the promises of God regarding His character and His good plans for His children.
3. Cast a vision of what God can do through His Word and His Spirit in His people's lives.
4. Illustrate how victory is possible in the midst of human frailty and difficult circumstances.



5. Don't be manipulated by counselee's behavior.
6. Use biblical terminology to describe problems.
7. Don't maximize or minimize the person's symptoms.

**D. Build involvement.**

1. Developing a meaningful relationship with another person in order to minister God's Word in his / her life.
2. Emphasize God's grace in your life and theirs.
3. Look for ways to identify with their story.
4. Encourage them when they take steps of growth.

**E. Processing the data and evaluating the problem biblically.**

1. Distinguish between occasions of suffering and occasions of sinning.
2. Encourage appropriate medical care and treatment.
3. As the counseling process progresses, help the counselee evaluate their struggle from the biblical reasons for sickness.

- a. God's glory (John 9:1-3)
  - b. Benefit to the counselee (2 Cor. 12:10)
  - c. Sin
4. Use the counselee's story as an opportunity to address issues of the outer and inner person.

**F. Apply appropriate biblical principles.**

1. Think biblically about all aspects of the illness (2 Cor. 10:5; Phil. 4:8).
  - a. God cares about the suffering of His children and has a plan for it (John 9).
  - b. Illness and suffering are to be expected in this life (2 Tim. 3:12; 1 Pet. 2:20, 4:13, 5:10).
  - c. The illness and symptoms are under the control of a sovereign God (Prov. 21:1; Job 2:21; 1 Chron. 29:12; 1 Cor. 10:13).
  - d. God will not exceed a believer's ability to handle the unpleasantness of the illness (1 Cor. 10:13; Phil. 4:13).
  - e. God intends for the believer to have victory in the midst of the agony of the illness (1 Cor. 15:57; Rom. 8:35-37).
2. Compassion for the reality of suffering.

3. Definition of victory.

- a. Victory is being controlled by biblical principles rather than the agony of the illness.
- b. Not controlled by the constant pursuit of relief from pain and suffering.
- c. Controlled by what God is doing as a result of the condition.
- d. Focuses on God's purposes for the discomfort more than the discomfort.
- e. Provides a response when relief does not come.

4. Sufficiency of God's grace (2 Cor. 12:9-10; 2 Cor. 9:8).

5. Instill an understanding of God's Word into the counselee's heart so as to stimulate faith and obedience during illness.

6. Use compelling personal testimonies to teach truth.

**G. Homework should focus on biblical principles the counselee needs to apply rather than health issues.**

- 1. We should encourage the counselee to follow basic principles of good health.
- 2. However, the main emphasis of your homework is application of biblical principles to the counselee's response to the illness and symptoms.

**III. Victory for the individuals suffering with a medical illness.**

**A. May actually be alleviation of the pain and suffering (Eph. 5:20).**

**B. Biblical truth exemplified.**

1. Endurance to finish strong (2 Cor. 12:8-10).
2. God's peace that controls the way you think and feel (Phil. 4:7).
3. God's glory expressed in your life (1 Cor. 10:31).
4. Faith that God is in control and what He allows is for your good (Deut. 8:16).

**C. A deepening of the counselee's relationship with God.**

1. We do not grieve as those who have no hope (1 Thess. 4:13).  
→ Heaven
2. In Phil. 1:23-25 Paul struggled with his desire to go to heaven or to stay here and minister.
3. One of the very important ministries to dying people is to keep them informed of what will happen as they die.
4. Other than sudden death or if the Lord delays His return, every person will die

as a result of some illness.

5. Keep in mind the ultimate end of this illness is to be the vehicle that God will use to bring a believer to Himself in Heaven.

### **Recommended Resources**

*Trusting God*, Jerry Bridges

*Chronic Pain: Living by Faith When Your Body Hurts*, Michael Emlet

*Being There*, Dave Furman

*Kiss the Wave*, Dave Furman

*Hearing Jesus Speak into Your Sorrow*, Nancy Guthrie

*Loving Your Friend through Cancer*, Marissa Henley

*Help! Someone I Love Has Cancer*, Deborah Howard

*Lessons from a Hospital Bed*, John Piper

*Facing Death with Hope: Living for What Lasts*, David Powlison

*When Cancer Interrupts*, David Powlison

*Hope & Help for Chronic Illness*, Mark Shaw

*Suffering: Eternity Makes a Difference*, Paul Tripp

# Forgiveness

*Doug Markesbery / Grace Fellowship Church*

## **1. Some biblical accounts of forgiveness**

- A. John the Baptist proclaimed throughout the region a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins (Luke 3:3).
- B. Jesus heals a paralytic and forgives him of his sins (Mark 2:5-10).
- C. Jesus teaches His disciples to pray for forgiveness and to forgive others (Matt. 6:12-15).
- D. Peter asks Jesus how many times he must forgive (Matt. 18:21).
- E. At the last supper with His disciples Jesus declares a new covenant: that His blood will be shed for the forgiveness of sins (Matt 26:28).
- F. At His ascension Jesus commissions His disciples to proclaim to the world repentance and the forgiveness of sins (Luke 24:46-47).
- G. Peter preaches repentance and forgiveness on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38).

## **2. The primary mission of Jesus' life was to provide a New Covenant of forgiveness through His death on the cross and His resurrection from the grave.**

*This truth is of primary importance to us because forgiveness is where life begins.*

- A. Our greatest **need** is forgiveness. Without forgiveness we are doomed to eternal punishment (Rom. 6:23; Rev. 20:11-15).
- B. Forgiveness is necessary for **salvation** (Col. 2:13).
- C. We are **commanded** to forgive others in the same way God has forgiven us (Col. 3:13; Eph. 4:32).
- D. Seeking and **receiving** forgiveness is a prerequisite to mutual love, the strongest argument for the Christian faith (John 13:35).
- E. **Unreconciled relationships** between Christians damage fellowship and rob churches of a positive community witness (Gal. 5:13-15).

“One of the most significant problems in our marriage relationships is that there is no economy of grace. With all our obvious difficulties, what is most shocking is the profound gracelessness of our marriages. There’s no willingness to look within and confess deep-seated sins, so we never find sweet forgiveness. There is no vertical hope to carry us in dark and discouraging times. There’s no rest that comes from entrusting each other to the God of grace. There’s no faith that God will give us all we need to respond to each other in godly ways. As a result, the relationship is reduced to human demands, human performance, human failure, human judgment, and human punishment. There is no hope or power for change. And because we are not daily soaking in the foundation of God’s grace, we do not extend it to one another.”

~ Paul Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands*, pp. 32-33

### 3. We must understand clearly what forgiveness is NOT.

A. Forgiveness is not a **feeling** (Luke 17:3-10).

i. Forgiveness is to be **granted** when a sinner repents.

\*Even if the person who sinned against us does not repent or ask for forgiveness, we must forgive as Jesus did while on the cross. Luke 23:34  
"And Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.'"

ii. Forgiveness is to be granted **repeatedly** on the same day if a sinner repeatedly professes repentance, something no one would feel like doing.

Jesus declared that the disciples had the faith necessary to forgive and they did not need to wait until they felt **stronger** spiritually (vv. 5-6).

iii. Forgiveness is a matter of **obedience**, not feelings (vv. 7-10).

B. Forgiveness is not **forgetting**.

i. There is no **command** in the Bible telling us to forget before we forgive.

ii. And while there is no guarantee you will ever completely forget what happened, forgetting is a frequent **by-product** of granting forgiveness biblically.



“Forgiveness is not you trying to **forget** what that other person did **to you**. Forgiveness is your choice to **remember** what Christ **already** did **for you** on the cross and to act on THAT by extending that same forgiveness out to others, regardless of how you feel!”

~ Pastor Brad Bigney

**Matt. 18:27, 32-22** - “Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt... You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?”

“If you don’t understand the depth of your **own** sin against God... and how **much** He’s forgiven you, then you’ll never have what it takes to forgive other people around you.”

~ Pastor Brad Bigney

- iii. References to God “forgetting” our sins (e.g., Isa. 43:25; Jer. 31:34) are really statements of God promising not to “remember” our sins against us. God can’t forget, but He can **choose** to not hold our sins against us.
- C. Forgiveness is not **excusing** sin. Excusing is a form of minimizing sin, of not taking sin **seriously**.
- D. Biblical forgiveness does not include forgiving **yourself**.

“For you, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive and abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You.” (Ps. 86:5)

- Sometimes the desire to forgive yourself may actually be the struggle to believe that God would actually forgive you for what you have done.
- Sometimes the desire to forgive yourself may be a refusal to humble yourself to God and confess your guilt wholeheartedly.

#### 4. We must understand clearly what forgiveness IS.

- A. Forgiveness is the **choice** to no longer focus on the hurt from another person’s sin against you (Matt. 18:21–22).
- B. Forgiveness is a **promise** that begins the **process** of relating to that other person differently.
  - i. You promise to:
    1. Not **dwell** on the incident mentally
    2. Not bring up the incident again and use it **against** the other person
    3. Not **talk** to others about the incident
    4. Not allow the incident to stand between you and the other person or hinder your relationship with them

“Forgiveness is not the same thing as trust. Forgiveness means that you give the offender the opportunity to re-earn your trust (which requires making yourself vulnerable).”

~ Pastor Brad Bigney

C. Forgiveness is a choice to **absorb** the cost of their sin against you.

## 5. So how do we forgive?

A. We must first **experience** biblical forgiveness ourselves

- i. Go to God in prayer with your need for God’s forgiveness, your need to forgive another, or your need to be forgiven by another.
- ii. Go to God’s Word to learn God’s truth about forgiveness.
- iii. Write down what the Spirit of God through the Word of God instructs you to do.
- iv. Seek counsel from your pastor or a trusted mature Christian.
- v. Follow up with obedience regardless of the way you feel about it.

B. We can then **offer to others** the forgiveness which we ourselves have experienced.

## Recommended Resources

Milton Vincent – 4 messages on Forgiveness – [bradbigney.com/forgiveness-milton-vincent/](http://bradbigney.com/forgiveness-milton-vincent/)

*The Peacemaker*, Ken Sande

*'I Just Can't Forgive Myself': A Biblical Alternative to Self-Forgiveness*, Robert D. Jones



