

Christian Counseling 200

CCS - 211

International College of Bible Theology

ARE YOU BORN AGAIN?

Knowing in your heart that you are born-again, and followed by a statement of faith are the two prerequisites to studying and getting the most out of your ICBT materials. We at ICBT have developed this material to educate each Believer in the principles of God. Our goal is to provide each Believer with an avenue to enrich their personal lives and bring them closer to God.

Is Jesus your Lord and Savior? If you have not accepted Him as such, you must be aware of what Romans 3:23 tells you.

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God:

How do you go about it? **You must believe that Jesus is the Son of God.**

I John 5:13 gives an example in which to base your faith.

13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

What if you are just not sure? **Romans 10:9-10 gives you the Scriptural mandate for becoming born-again.**

⁹That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. ¹⁰For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Take some time to consider this very carefully. Ask Jesus to come into your heart so that you will know the power of His Salvation and make your statement of faith today.

Once you become born-again, it is your responsibility to renew your mind with the Word of God. Romans 12:1-2 tells us that transformation of the mind can only take place in this temporal world by the Word of God.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

The Apostle Paul, giving instructions to his "son" Timothy states in 2 Timothy 2:15:

15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

What happens if we do these things? Ephesians 4:12-13 gives us the answer to this question.

12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: 13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:

By studying the Word of God, you will be equipped for service in the Kingdom of God and you will also be ready to take the position in the Body of Christ to which God has appointed you. You will be able to walk in unity with other Believers and you will be a vessel of honor to God that can rightly divide the word of truth.

If you are not saved and you do not know what to say, consider this simple prayer.

Lord, I know that I have need of a saviour. I believe that Jesus died for my sins and the God raised Him from the dead three days later. I ask to be forgiven and for Jesus to come into my heart and be the Lord of my life. I believe now by faith that God has heard my prayer and I am born- again.

If you have prayed this prayer, you must accept by faith that your sins have been forgiven. It is important that you tell someone of your decision to accept the Lord. Also, it is our recommendation that you should attach yourself to a local church and undergo water baptism.

For those who have prayed this prayer with sincerity of heart, we welcome to eternal life in the Kingdom of God. May the blessings of God overtake you.

May God grant you wisdom, knowledge, and understanding in all of His ways.

ICBT Directors and Staff

THE VISION

As we have been commissioned by the prophet of God, we now set our hand to write the vision of International College of Bible Theology, so that: "He that runs may read it, the vision having been clearly written and made plain" (Habakkuk 2:2).

1) UNITY - To build up the Body of Christ by networking with all churches, as well as with local and international ministries. This networking is to provide experienced leadership ministries to the small, local Church, to encourage unity and fellowship among pastors, church leaders and para-church groups, through active service.

2) GOSPEL - To go with the lifeline of the Gospel, wherein we desire to educate with love, integrity, and without compromise.

3) ONE CROSS FOR ALL - To cross cultural, racial, and denominational lines for unity, fellowship, networking, and progress. To have an open door through ICBT to all, of like faith, who desire to join with us in a common goal for the highest good. To proclaim one cross for all cultures, races, denominations, and peoples.

4) GO YE - To go wherever there is a need; to rich or poor, to majorities and minorities, to large and small churches, to free and incarcerated; to go where many fail to go and to meet the needs before us.

5) THE CALLED - To make opportunities available, to those called to minister, to expand their horizons through new associations and experiences. To aid new and/or younger ministers in fulfilling God's call on their lives.

6) EDUCATION - God has charged us with propagating the Gospel through education to whosoever will. This education is offered through certificate programs that teach the basics of Christianity and degree programs for those seeking more in-depth levels in Christian teachings.

7) APPLICATION - To make available to students the opportunity for education, as well as learning practical application, in traditional and non-traditional settings.

8) DREAM A DREAM - To cause all persons with which we associate to catch a vision, to dream yet another dream, and to keep their eyes on Jesus, the Author and Finisher of their faith.

9) THE CALL - To encourage each person (all persons) to move out of his/her (their) comfort zone, to be all he/she (they) can be for Christ and to fulfill the call upon their life (lives); To encourage each one (them) to pursue his/her (their) purpose, to live up to his/her (their) potential, and to produce the fruit of the Spirit.

For Your Consideration

Many times when we read material or study in an area, it seems that the subject matter does not apply to us. This can be because we do not fit the particular age group, gender, or situation that is being talked about. However, there is good reason to learn from any materials that we study; especially the Bible and Bible-based study courses, such as you are embarking on now.

Paul wrote to us in First Corinthians, chapter ten (10) and verse eleven (11), "Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." What Paul is saying here is that God had a purpose in everything He had the writers record for us. Everything that is written down will apply to us in some way or another, whether as a warning, as material for future ministry to someone who needs it, or simply to help us avoid a pitfall that the enemy places in front of us.

The same is true in the Bible courses of International College of Bible Theology. However, there is a possibility that some might think that something does not apply to them, because of the way the materials are written, when we use words that appear to refer to a particular gender. At times the material does apply to gender, as when it is talking about marriage relationships, or possibly the rearing of children. However, there is one area that does not refer to gender, though it may appear so.

In the courses, as well as the Bible, there are areas where the word "he" is used extensively. This is not necessarily designed to refer to gender. God is certainly no respecter of persons, and neither are we. The King James Bible especially, has a myriad of references that use the word "he" which are in no way gender significant. For instance, the Scripture that says, "Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: The soul that sinneth, it shall die" Ezl18:4. We all know that women have souls, the same as men. However, the use of the words "father" and "son" here would seem to imply that women are left out. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Also, there is the use of "he" and "she" in terms of natural things. For instance, the Church is continually referred to as "she" in the Scriptures. "She" is pictured as the Bride of Christ. Isaiah 61: 10 speaks of the Bride who has adorned herself with her jewels. Of course, this does not preclude the male gender from being a part of the Church and those who are delivered from the destruction of the end times, the Great Tribulation (Re.21:2).

Ships are referred to as "she," airplanes as "she," yet pastors and elders as "he." Does this mean that women cannot be pastors or elders? No. It simply means that for ease of reference, there has been a gender applied to some words.

No one should feel left out or slighted because of this nuance in the English language. You will find that both genders are not referenced every time in the course materials you are studying, and will study through International College of Bible Theology. It is double referenced in some places, and in some it is not. It is by no means meant to leave out some precious souls, just because we did not double reference every time a gender was referred to.

International College

Of

Bible Theology

*"Study to shew thyself approved unto God,
a workman that needeth not to be ashamed,
rightly dividing the word of truth"*
II Timothy 2:15

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Christian Counseling 200

77 pages of Commentary
10 Homework assignments
6 Quiz assignments
1 Midterm Exam
1 Final Exam
34 pages of Answer Keys for school sites only (Answer keys are not included in the student's copy of material.)

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the Commentary.

Do Homework I, which covers pages 9-11 in the Commentary.
Do Homework II, which covers pages 11-15 in the Commentary
Do Quiz 1, which covers Homework I-II.
Do Homework III, which covers pages 15-20 in the Commentary.
Do Homework IV, which covers pages 20-30 in the Commentary.
Do Quiz 2, which covers Homework III-IV.
Take Mid Term Exam, which covers Homework I -IV.
Do Homework V, which covers pages 30-36 in the Commentary
Do Homework VI, which covers pages 36-41 in the Commentary.
Do Quiz 3, which covers Homework V-VI.
Do Homework VII, which covers pages 41-50 in the Commentary.
Do Quiz 4, which covers Homework VII.
Do Homework VIII, which covers pages 50-53 in the Commentary.
Do Homework IX, which covers pages 53-66 in the Commentary.
Do Quiz 5, which covers Homework VIII- IX.
Do Homework X, which covers pages 66-72 in the Commentary
Do Quiz 6, which covers Homework X.
Take Final Exam, which covers Homework V-X.

13 weeks in a Trimester: 11 weeks of teaching and 2 weeks of testing. You will need to cover 5.8 pages per teaching session.

18 weeks in a Semester: 16 weeks of teaching and 2 weeks of testing. You will need to cover 4 pages per teaching session.

NOTE: The Instructor is encouraged to add his/her personality to the teaching sessions and to add knowledge to the Commentaries. The Instructor had some latitude if they desire to give some outside homework or essays. Before doing so, please check with the administrator of the school.

ALL TERM PAPERS MUST BE COMPLETED AND TURNED IN TO THE INSTRUCTOR BEFORE THE FINAL EXAM. NO GRADES WILL BE GIVEN FOR THE COURSE WITHOUT THE COMPLETION OF THE TERM PAPER.

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INTRODUCTION

Many people have begun to want to counsel, for the opportunity to help those in need. Some have wanted to get into counseling in order to put themselves “in the know” about other’s problems. Others have been looking for a profession in which they can have status and not have to work at a job. Whatever the motive, there are people who need counseling. Counseling has been going on in the Church since Apostolic times. We are commanded to “...admonish one another...” (Ro.15:14), ...”encourage one another and build up one another...” (He.3:13), and “...comfort one another with these words...” (1Th.4:18).

These instructions are to the whole church, not just the clergy. It is a duty of the believer who is walking in the Lord’s Word, to apply this Word in their own lives, and to help others to do likewise.

More and more, as the end times press upon us, there is a flood of people desiring counseling, many of whom go to the psychologist and/or professional counselor. However, even with this flood of people desiring help from professionals, there is a call back to the Scriptures for the help that man needs. The Scriptures are superior to all human wisdom (1Co.3:19), the Word is an effective discerner of our hearts (He.4:12), and the Spirit of God is the only One who can bring change in us (Ep.5:18-19). So why should we turn away from the One who is able to change us, to the beggarly elements and wisdom of this world?

Some “experts” have said that the Bible alone does not answer all the problems of humanity, that it is not a sufficient resource for dealing with people’s spiritual problems. When people need counseling, sin is at the root of their problem. Where else will we get insight into sin if not from the Bible? There has been a proliferation of psychology into the Christian culture, with a multitude of evangelical psychological clinics springing up. While some, perhaps many, claim to offer Biblical counseling, many if not most of them are simply couching secular psychology in spiritual terminology.

The church is the arena for counseling. God is all-wise, and He alone, by His Spirit, can guide a pastor/counselor to the right answer for a person’s deepest needs. No technique or idea from human wisdom will hold the key to helping people when sin is at the root of it.

Psychology holds to several principles that fly in the face of the Scriptures. It says that man is basically good, that the answers to life’s problems are inside of us, and that the answer to the problem is by understanding something from a person’s past. No, it is sin, and it must be gotten under the blood, with forgiveness being extended to anyone who has been offended in the matter. Not only that, psychology trots out the theory that an individual has a problem because of what someone else did to them. There is no personal responsibility in psychology, but God says that every man shall give an account before Him, personally. It is not what a family member did to us that God will ask about, but it will be what we did with the Christ. Psychology also says that human problems are not related

to spiritual or physical conditions, and those deep rooted problems that so many have can only be overcome by the help of a professional counselor using therapy. They also say that Scriptures, prayer, and the Holy Spirit are not able to solve certain kinds of problems. Yet, it is quite apparent that the Bible is the “manufacturer’s handbook” on the human being. Who else would know how to fix us? We do not go to a mechanic to have our house built, nor do we go to the carpenter to get our oil changed. Why should we go to a human being alone for the repair of our spiritual problem, when God is the One Who created us?

It is quite possible that there are certain problems people have that are medically related, but not all of them. Some kinds of therapy may be of a help to the person who is a victim of rape or severe battering. Medications may be needed to stabilize a person who is otherwise dangerous both to themselves and society. However, these are rare situations. Dealing with the issues of life that are from the mind being unsettled, causing strange or bizarre behavior, or simply sin, requires sanctification, a setting apart from sin and unto God if they are going to be fixed.

Some want to use “Christian psychology” as the avenue to fix people’s problems. However, this is not even an accurate term. Psychology does not today refer to the studying of the soul, but is used to describe therapies and theories that are basically humanistic. Jesus demonstrated how to react to life, with a perfect and holy reaction every time. Should this not tell us that we should be formed into the image of Christ if we are to react thus? He suffered more than all of us, yet in every temptation, trial, and trauma in life, He reacted as God ordained.

Psychology is simply a pseudo-science, a recent invention of man to explain, diagnose, and fix a person’s behavior, all the while ignoring the basic problem of immorality, spiritual issues, and a failure to be Christ-like. The behavioral sciences touted by some are simply man proving again that he does not have the answers. Screaming at others about the problem only creates more problems, not fixing anything.

Though many in the church have embraced theories and practices of psychologists, others have raised warning signals, such as Time magazine, who asked the question, “...if psychiatry is a medical treatment, why can its practitioners not provide measurable scientific results like those obtained by other doctors?” (Time, April 2, 1979, Pg.74), or the Los Angeles Times quote of R.D.Laing, a psychiatrist of the 1960's, who said that “...he could not think of any fundamental insight into human relations that has resulted from a century of psychotherapy” (The Los Angeles Times, Dec. 18, 1985).

Psychologists sell a vast variety of supposed cures for a high price, even inventing diseases that need their “expert” help to fix. Several of these have become common to our everyday conversation, such as emotional abuse, mid-life crisis, co-dependency, and a myriad of others. Infirmities used to be the common nomenclature by which we described things that bothered us, but now we give them a \$100.00 per hour name that came from the psychiatrist himself, and since he gave it the name and our diagnosis, we evidently

have to go to him for help. Though psychotherapy has become a tremendously lucrative business, the proponents of it have not solved one spiritual problem.

Even the “Christian Psychologists” tout out their dogma, such as “mental and emotional health.” What mental health? The man in the tombs was demon possessed, and he would not come inside a building, let alone lay on a couch. What did Christ do? He cast the demon out, and the man was found clothed and in his right mind. How is that for a behavioral change? Sin is not sickness, for that seems to place the problem outside of our ability to fix it. Let’s call things what they are, SIN.

Those who are spiritually weak are the ones who embrace the dogma of those who are misguided in this, and thus they do not follow the path of Christ, joining and identifying in His suffering that leads to spiritual maturity and a communion with God. There is an indictment for those who would counsel on the level of the world’s thinking. It is in the Book of Job. It says:

“He makes counselors walk barefoot [a sign of humiliation], and makes fools of judges. He loosens the bond of kings, and binds their loins with a girdle He makes priests walk barefoot, and overthrows the secure ones. He deprives the trusted ones speech, and takes away the discernment of the elders” (Job. 12:17-20).

He adds in verses 24-25:

“He deprives of intelligence the chiefs of the earth’s people, and makes them wander in a pathless waste. They grope in darkness with no light, and He makes them stagger like a drunken man.”

Job had to endure the folly of unwise counselors. Their advice was useless, and a grief to him, even as the satanic afflictions that they had come to help him solve.

The Church must not put her trust in that which cannot bring an answer to spiritual problems, when she has the answer in her hands all along. Scripture alone is “...profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness...” (2Ti.3:16).

I. WHAT IS BIBLICAL COUNSELING?

Perhaps we should look at what Biblical Counseling is, so that we would know where we are in relation to it. There are some core elements that leaders in this discipline have discovered, articulated, and defended. They have unified the Biblical Counseling movement across America and around the world. These might best describe Biblical Counseling.

A. The Center of Counseling

God is at the center of all effective counseling. He is the “Wonderful Counselor.” The Word of our Lord is the foundation of all lasting and good change in our lives. The Bible is authoritative, relevant, and comprehensively sufficient for counseling. God has spoken to every issue we will ever face, with an accurate description of the problem, and the fix. So, we should always rely upon His wisdom, as well as the Holy Spirit’s guidance in applying it.

B. Commitment to God

There has been counsel that contradicted what God said since the Garden (Ge.3:1, 4-5). False counsel must be noted and opposed. Secular psychology has moved into the domain of Biblical truth and practice, and must be refuted by the Word of God, in strict allegiance to Him. Secular theories will only deceive people, both inside and outside the Church. Any false “authority” must be exposed and opposed.

C. Sin is the Problem

It brings about wrong behavior, distorted thinking, impetus to follow our own desires, and attitudes that are rotten. The difficulty many times in counseling is bringing the sin to light, making people aware of it, and breaking its domination of the person. Even believers have a remnant of sin in them, while in the unbeliever it is sin that reins.

D. Good News Answer

The Gospel is the only thing that will break the power of sin in a person’s life. Christ dealt with sin, guilt, its power, deception, and misery at the cross. The Gospel and the Gospel alone will bring people into the light, causing them to come under Christ’s leadership, so that He can redeem them eternally at His appointed time.

E. Progressive Sanctification

Transformation is the goal for the life of a believer, no matter what kind of problem(s) they are going through. It is not instantaneous, but it can be done amid the problems of life. This includes ongoing repentance, renewing of the mind by the Word of God, and obedience through the power of the Holy Spirit.

F. Situational Difficulties

Difficulties come from the design of our God, in which our hearts are revealed to be what they are. Then faith and obedience purify those things, bringing change in us. Our heredity, temperament, personality, culture, bereavement, handicaps, Satan,

and a dozen other things are not the ultimate cause of sin, but simply the deceitfulness of a man's heart.

G. Pastoral Activity

Counseling is a church based pastoral activity. It is connected in content to the processes and activities of the pastoral duties, including teaching, preaching, prayer, discipline, missions, worship, use of the gifts, etc. It is the private ministry of the Word to an individual or individuals who have a specific problem.

II. THE COUNSELOR NEEDS COUNSELING ALSO

Counseling others can be a very rewarding experience. Much like than any job or ministry, it brings great joy to stand back and see the work of your hands. Painters feel a sense of pride when, through a few strokes of a paintbrush, an old house is restored to the beauty it once had. The auto mechanic can take an old broken down engine and make it run like new. The counselor can take a shattered life and with the help of God, impart hope once again. Paul told us that those who were "...strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength, and not just please ourselves" (Ro.15:1). He also told us to "...bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ" (Ga.6:1-2). So the counselor is to be like the painter, helping others, but not to the detriment of his own "house." Though all of these people take great pride and joy in their work, the painter often fails to paint his own house, the mechanic's car needs work and the counselor fails to take his own advice. There are marriage counselors that have been divorced and are still trying, some of them successfully, to help others, while all the time failing to adhere to their own teaching. Unfortunately this seems to be the pattern for far too many people.

The ultimate qualification for a counselor is Christ-likeness. A Christian counselor is to do work from the standpoint of the Word of God, not messing around by using techniques that are designed to modify behavior. Behavior modification falls far short of spiritual transformation, and if used, the problem will still exist. No matter how hard the person tries, at some point that sin will rise again and bite them and whoever else is involved.

Counselors must learn never to become emotionally involved with people. The problems of the counselee cannot be taken home. Home life must be separate and be a time of refreshing and revitalizing. A counselor can give twenty four (24) hours a day and still have people with needs, so prioritizing is very important if the counselor is to stay sane and meet his families's needs as well as his own.

Of all the things that will make a counselor successful is to first adhere to his own counsel. If it is true and will work for others, then it must work for him as well. This will assure that his life will continue to flow without any major interruptions. The counselor cannot be like most everyone else and wait until his life, marriage, and family is in shambles before he seeks help or begins to follow his own guidelines.

The counselor must maintain a consistent prayer life. Prayer will help the counselor in handling his own problems, but will also help guide him in his counsel to others. The counselor must remember, his needs and his families's needs must always come before those of the counselee. Too many people fail to follow this pattern. Eli and Samuel were both guilty of failing miserably in training and meeting their own families needs. They were too busy helping others. When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray, Jesus taught them to ask for their needs to be met first, when He said "give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." We will never be able to meet anyone else needs unless ours are met first.

The counselor must stay relevant to the ever-changing problems to this world. The answers are always the same, but the problems are not. The counselor must study the Word of God and read other materials on counseling. The Bible must always be the first and last source for every counselor. No book is of any use without it being qualified by the Word of God. God's Word existed long before any books on counseling and no one has a greater knowledge of man's problems and how to solve them than God does.

The counselor's success is never measured in changed lives. If this were true, Jeremiah would have been considered a failure. By today's standards, even Jesus would have been considered a failure, for the very people that cried Hosanna were shouting "crucify Him" a week later. The counselor must remember this one thing, that success is only based upon obedience. If the counselor obeys God's Word and passionately tries to help people, though no one is ever changed, he is still a success. Deliverance, after all, is always the choice of the one needing deliverance and not the deliverer.

A. People Have Crises

Crises are areas of expected or unexpected, real or imagined events that take place in our life. There are two (2) areas that come to the forefront when crises arise. The first is that crises can change one's life, as in the death of a loved one. It can be very challenging for individuals when they have to deal with crises that can alter the way they live and think. Losing a loved one is a crisis that most everyone will eventually face. It will no doubt bring confusion and turmoil into one's life, but it can be conquered with guidance from the Word of God. The second (2nd) area is that crises can provide the individual with an opportunity to grow and mature. One example is when someone gets married. Though being married is a wonderful thing, it is a crisis that will change your life and the way you think; so not all crises are bad or harmful. Many of them provide us with the opportunity to grow, if we face them and are willing to learn from these crises.

There are three (3) types of crises. The first is accidental or situational, which deals with areas such as death, rape, serious illness, loss of a job, etc. When the crisis is caused from external means such as fire, persecution, or natural disasters, families and people tend to pull together and unify. When it is caused by internal means, such as alcohol, drugs and abuse, it tends to tear the family apart and bring turmoil

and confusion. Job went through this type of crises, but he sinned not nor charged God foolishly. Job understood how a loving God could allow bad things to happen to a righteous man, for he said, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb and naked shall I return." Job's wife could not understand and allowed the pressure to cause her to turn on Job and God when she said, "curse God and die."

The second (2nd) type of crisis is developmental. Examples of these are, going away to college, joining the service, marriage, parenting, aging, retirement, and moving. Most of these crises are helpful in the process of maturing and developing, but there are some such as aging and retirement, that can cause the individual much stress and anxiety.

The third (3rd) type of crisis is existential. These types of crises overlap with the other two (2). Examples of these types of crises are realizing certain truths or believing them to be the truth, such as I am going to get old and my children will eventually leave home. Others include incurable illness, divorce, and death of a loved one.

There are three (3) areas of counseling, namely remedial, preventive, and educative. Remedial deals with problems existing now. Preventive counseling seeks to help others avoid problems, such as pre-marriage counseling. Educative counseling deals with teaching principles of counseling and mental health. A good counselor will be prepared to give all three (3) types.

We do not always know why crises happen. One thought is that God uses them to bring us into recognition of His mercy, or to bring us back to Himself. It is somewhat like His dealing with Jonah, in that the storm was sent and the great fish prepared for their purposes in God's plan. Whatever the reason, counselors must be prepared to assist those having a crisis by helping them decrease their anxiety, teaching them crisis management techniques, and referring them to others that may have more expertise in a particular area. There are three (3) areas that can cause crises and can also be affected by them. They are spiritual, physical and emotional. The Word of God can help in all three (3) areas, though other resources may be of benefit to help make the individual whole again. Counselors must always take into consideration that no two (2) people can be treated the same way.

B. Counseling at its Center

It is difficult for people to come for counseling, for in doing so, they are admitting that they need help. The counselor must therefore administer the Gospel of grace, bringing the counselee God-ward. Primary in the counseling process is that God created us, sin prejudiced us, and God has made provision. Therefore, we must accept that provision, coming into union with Christ if we are to get our problem fixed.

It is in bringing people into distinct union with Christ that problems are solved in their lives. Union with Christ is the foundation of all our spiritual experience and all spiritual blessings. It is the central truth of the doctrine of salvation. Union with Christ is an all encompassing doctrine, and the doctrine that embraces the factors of what Christ has accomplished, as well as what believers are commanded to do. This union with Christ is nowhere more emphasized than when we look at what we are in the first Adam, and what we are in the “Last Adam.” In the first, we all die, death reigns, all sin, sin rules and it enslaves us. In the Last Adam, Christ, we are alive, reign in life, are righteous, grace rules, and He, Christ enslaves us by His love.

It is in union with Him that we are justified. It is when we are set free in the judgment of God, Himself having discharged us from the Divine sentence of death. It is in union with Him that we are restored to right relationship with the Father. It is in Him that we are “...in the Spirit...” (Ro.8:9). This is to have the New Life that only comes from union with our Savior. Union with Christ is spoken of as “...in Christ...” in Paul’s writings. Likewise, we are brought into union with Him when we are baptized. It is here that the “...old has passed away, and the new has come...” Paul even argues that death to sin is the fruit of being united with Christ. So we can see that it is in Him that our problems are solved. It is without Him that we go on in the way we have been, hurting, unable to change, seeking out the worldly wisdom to cope with our problems. Outside of Christ, we are spiritually dead (Ep.2:11-12). In Christ, we are alive to Him (Ep.1:13-14), and dead to sin (Ro.6:1-11).

If we are going to help people, we must come down to the level where the people are. That is not to say that we condone their sin or participate in it, but we identify with them. The Bible tells us that Jesus was in all ways tempted as we are, yet without sin. He was touched with the feeling of our infirmities, as the counselor must be with empathy for the hurting one.

Christ took upon Himself flesh to identify with man. The Father knew that in order for man to understand Him better, He had to take on flesh and dwell among the people. Jesus was always moved with compassion when he healed people. He didn't do it just because He could. Even when He was about to raise Lazarus from the dead, Jesus wept.

In giving the plan of salvation, most people start with the Romans Road. The first scripture of the Romans Road is Romans 3:23, which states, “for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” This scripture immediately identifies the believer with the non-believer, enabling him to be a more effective witness. Likewise the counselor must not make the counselee feel inferior just because he has a problem, but instead try to identify with the counselee and their problem.

Counseling techniques vary with each counselor and are often times based on the counselor's personality, but there are a few techniques that every counselor must use if they wish to be of help. The counselor must be genuine and sincere. The

counselor must be attentive. Posture and eye contact is very important in making the counselee feel comfortable enough to share their heart.

Another critical area is listening. No matter how intelligent the counselor is, if he does not listen to the counselee's problems, he will be unable to help. Many times, when the counselee is given the time to share, they will. Ultimately produce their own answer. Most counsees know what they should do before they ever come in for counseling; they just need guidance or sometimes affirmation that they are still normal. Many times in marriage when the wife shares her problems with her husband, she doesn't want an explanation of how to fix the problem, she just wants him to listen and encourage her. Sometimes the counselor, like the husband can help just by being a sounding board for the counselee and giving them encouragement. Never assume that the counselee is helpless and that they need you, but rather instill confidence in the counselee that they have the answers from God within them and the ability with Christ's help to overcome. If the counselor comes across too confident in his ability, the counselee could become dependent upon the counselor for continued guidance, instead of learning to handle their problems on their own.

We cannot, however let people pass the blame to their family, circumstances, or environment. They must be held accountable for their choices. This is one of society's biggest problems and counselors are much to blame. People do not want to take responsibility for their sins. This is not a new concept, for Adam picked up on the idea when he said it was the woman's fault. Eve then blamed the serpent. People will always try to pass the blame onto someone else if we let them. We must be careful not to put all the blame on the counselee, but we cannot let them remain blameless. The counselee must be held accountable for their part, even if their only part is to forgive.

III. CAN ANYONE COUNSEL?

Counseling is a very sensitive issue and must be dealt with carefully, because we are dealing with people's lives. One wrong suggestion by the counselor and the one being counseled may commit suicide, end their marriage or make some other bad decision based on the counselor's advice. So we must be prepared and be trained in this area before attempting to help someone.

A. What is Our Motive for Counseling?

Why do you want to counsel? If it is primarily to meet your own needs, it is a wrong motive, and will cause a person to not be of much help to the counselee. There are other factors that will limit the effectiveness of a counselor. There is the need for relationship, which causes a counselee to tend to see the counselor as their closest friend, at least temporarily. There is the need to control that will limit the effectiveness of the counselor, and the need to rescue, which takes the

responsibility away from the counselee.

Further, some have a need for information, so the counselor has interesting and helpful information that they would not know of otherwise. And, there is the need for personal healing, as some counselors are carrying hidden needs and insecurities that interfere with good counseling.

Only individuals that are qualified should give counseling. Counseling can be very rewarding when we see results, but it can be devastating to those whose personality easily accepts failure. The counselor must not accept the blame for the failure of the one being counseled. It is the responsibility of the one being counseled to accept or reject the counsel given, evidenced by their actions. Counselors need not be ordained ministers, for some ordained ministers are not qualified or gifted in counseling. Those that have a prophetic anointing usually are not very good counselors. In these cases, God will always send someone to the church that is gifted in this area.

A basic necessity in counseling is spiritual discipline. This means that the counselor must have a growing relationship with the Lord, growing in knowledge and obedience to Him, and being aware of the potential in them to sin also. This will include reading God's Word, memorizing Scriptures, prayer, a relationship with a local church, worship, theological correctness, a goal of Christ-likeness, stewardship, evangelizing others, disciplining others, serving others, and dealing with criticism. They must have a good marriage and family relationships, refusing to respond to temptation, and continuing in personal discipline. They must see life from God's eternal perspective, with an understanding that no event in their life is isolated from God.

The job of the counselor is to guide and instruct, never to force. We must never tell a person what they should do, that is their decision; they must decide what they must do as we guide and direct them. The counselor should never attempt to change a person's personality. Our personality comes from God. They must be taught to control and guide their personality, like Jesus taught Peter to do.

We need to know why we have a desire for counseling. Some people want to counsel to be nosey and get information, others because they feel the need to rescue and others because they like to be in control. The only legitimate reason to counsel is to help people. If our motives are wrong, we will do more damage to the counselee than good. The Bible tells us to make our calling and election sure. We must be certain that God is calling us to counsel people or we should stay away from it. It is not a game to play, nor is it entertainment.

The counselor must focus on the need of the counselee and not be judgmental but compassionate and sympathetic. He must never get involved emotionally with them or carry their problems home. The flesh is weak, so it is wisdom to never counsel

someone of the opposite sex alone. If the counselor is married, they should always have their spouse with them when counseling the opposite sex. When counseling the opposite sex, a counselor should never tell the counselee if they are sexually attracted to them. This emotion should be dealt with in private before God. To do otherwise is wrong and foolish. Many pastors have counseled the opposite sex alone, even mentioning that the counselee was attractive, and in the end, they fall one by one. If our spouse is with us, these pitfalls can be avoided.

The counselor must never jeopardize their own values and marriage in order to help anyone. Counselors must realize they are not invincible. It is very easy for the opposite sex to be attracted to the counselor and it happens very often, especially with pastors. Many of these problems associated with counseling sessions could be avoided if we follow the simple rule of having our spouse, or at the very least another witness, with us.

In the role of counseling, the counselor must avoid visiting instead of counseling, being hasty, disrespectful, judgmental, directive, emotionally involved, impatient, artificial, and defensive. Any of these attributes demonstrated will limit the effectiveness of the counselor.

B. Counseling - the Churches Business

Biblical counseling is not an option for the local church. Jesus told us to love one another, so considering counseling an optional ministry is to withhold what the person who is in trouble needs. The greatest threat to true discipleship is to have a believer overtaken by sin. Any person with a continual pattern of sin needs help to change, so as to come to the place that they can grow again. We will never become like Christ if we do not win the battle against sin in our own lives. This must be accomplished so we can reinvest our lives into the lives of others.

The pastor cannot elect as to whether he will counsel, for people will inevitable bring their problems to him. Pastoral care is the most basic form of counseling in the church and takes place on a regular basis. It deals with preaching, teaching, visiting the sick, marrying, burying, baptisms and other such things. Counseling is not a weekly hour of magic, or a ministry independent from the church. The pastor's involvement must be more than a token effort, but ministering daily to those who are in need. Paul tells us that he made a selfless sacrifice, with his bold, nouthetic confrontation (counsel) on a day and night basis, with tears. Obviously, there must be balance in this, for the pastor must not counsel, to the detriment of his preparation to feed all the sheep. Christ ordained the local church to help the believers grow in His likeness, and the better organism He said He was going to build will be ongoing as we who are mature give care to those who are not.

Pastoral care is reserved exclusively for the pastoral staff of a church. Even though others can visit the sick and perform certain forms of pastoral care, the pastoral staff

of the church must also do it. Anyone that has pastored for a while can tell you, no matter how wonderful a hospital visit is from members of the church, the one in the hospital expects someone from the pastoral staff to visit them. So it will be in the church with those needing counseling. However, the pastor may assign someone who is trained and trusted, having the same vision as he, to help in these matters.

Pastoral counseling is much more specific and is not exclusively reserved for pastoral staff; but must come from someone that has the personal makeup to handle counseling and they must be trained. The bottom line in every counseling session is sin. The Pastor/teacher is there for the "...equipping of the saints..." Therefore, those who are strong in good doctrine, avoiding deceitful philosophies, are those who can counsel. God has given spiritual gifts to help us to accomplish the work that has to be done. He tells us that every "...joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love...." (Ep.4:16). The Bible always has the answers and is the only real and permanent solution to helping people. Books on counseling and other resources are always helpful, but deliverance only comes from God. Secular means of counseling and their tools to counsel people should only be used secondary to the Word of God.

Some people need to forgive and others need to repent. Many times God is the one that needs to be forgiven. It is not because God did anything wrong, nor could He ever, but we sometimes blame God for hurt in our lives. The world is limited in their ability to help people, but the church has no limits on what we can accomplish in God. When the world says, "you were born that way," the church says, "with God, nothing is impossible." When the world says, "there is no hope," the church says, "God can make a way out of no way." We cannot fall prey to the world's views and their methods of counseling. It is a fact that when God delivers someone, they are more likely to stay free than when the world helps them. By guiding people with the Word of God, they will know the truth and that truth revealed in their heart will make them free.

Pastoral psychotherapy is an area that churches must avoid. The pastor who counsels and preaches to bring about change is what God has in mind for the body. This will produce growth. Therefore, his counseling and preaching must not become to the ones he counsels a crutch, but a life-changing event. The pastor is not there to thrill the congregation, but to facilitate growth. It is in making a long process of counseling that people come to depend upon a man rather than upon God. A good rule is if they cannot get it after a few sessions, they do not want it. Everyone that Jesus ministered to was made whole immediately, that is not to say that people will not still need disciplining or guidance. Non-churched people that have been bound by sin for years will need much guidance, but what they do not need is a dependency upon a counselor. It is very easy for people to replace one addiction with another, and that is an important fact in real deliverance. People can become addicted and dependent on the counselor and that is dangerous. Instead

they must become addicted to God and learn dependence on Him.

As we teach people to replace their addiction with an “addiction” to God, the deliverance will come faster and more easily. This is to say, “and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (Jn.8:32). The devil that was cast out of the man in the New Testament came back to the man and saw that his body was clean, but empty. He went and brought back more demons worse than himself, and the condition of that man became worse than before. It is a lesson to us all that we cannot be delivered of something without replacing it with something else. We overcome all by doing good and this is the basis of deliverance and counseling. The Word of God must replace what we are having problems with if we are to continue to be free.

C. Counseling the Community

Individual counseling is a great tool that is very helpful to people in their time of need; but there is another form of counseling that most not be overlooked. Community counseling is a form of counseling that is increasingly becoming popular and has been an added benefit to counselees. Though it will never replace individual counseling, it must be considered a viable resource for the counselee and the counselor.

Community counseling is geared in part to helping or changing the community rather than the individual. In helping the community we indirectly help the counselee. The stress of living in a poverty and drug infested area can be alleviated through community counseling. As individuals become aware of the consequences of drugs and they are taught how to get out their poverty, their stress and many of the problems that they were facing will be gone. There are many organizations that have targeted these types of neighborhoods and set up computer learning centers, GED programs and other helpful programs to educate the people, so they can get come out of their troubled situation. Neighborhood Watch programs have helped to reduce and even eliminates drug activity in these areas.

There are many benefits to community counseling. There are many people that will never come to a counseling session one on one, but will come into a group setting. The result is, more than one person can be helped. Once the people in the community become educated, they will in turn educate others, changing the community as a whole.

There are many support groups that have been very successful in targeting specific types of people rather than just one. Weight Watchers targets the overweight people and creates support groups where individuals help encourage and counsel each other. By creating an environment of people who are struggling with the same condition, they do not feel threatened and are more likely to come for help. There are many types of groups such as the Disabled Veterans and other groups that

come together around a common interest. Great success has come from this type of community counseling and has become a valuable resource to the counselee and the counselor.

There are other individuals that have been of great value that are not considered professional counselors. Teachers are able to counsel and guide students in their studies and college choices, better than the professional counselor because of their trade. Coaches have counseled players about certain habits that can be detrimental to their health and affect their quality of play. Medical professionals have been great resources for the professional counselor. Many times the counselee does not need counseling to help them solve their problem, but their problem is caused by a medical condition. This is especially true with women, as their emotions can be greatly affected in certain stages of life. The reassurance from the doctor that this is only temporary can often times save their marriage. Lawyers are another source for counseling, especially in cases of divorce. Family members have a big part in the process of helping the counselee. There are many others in the community that can be of help to the counselee. A good counselor will take full advantage of all the resources available, in order to best help the counselee.

IV. FAMILY PROBLEM COUNSELING

While there are many problems in the family and many families with problems, it is a fact that a good family life produces the best adults. It is sad that for many young people and adults the word “family” is synonymous with problems. God never intended it to be that way. Family should be a source of strength, encouragement, safety, values, and many other positive and uplifting traits. Family should be a means by which there is a pulling together, learning from each other, gaining mutual strength, and always persisting, even in the face of failure.

The Bible is filled with examples of families and their problems. It all started with Adam and Eve. Adam blamed Eve for sin and Eve blamed the serpent. Ever since then, people have taken up a victim mentality, with no one accepting blame for anything. This is why it is so hard to help people, because they tend to say “it’s not my fault.”

Isaac and Rebecca each had a favorite son; Jacob favored Joseph more than the others. Joseph was probably a brat, perhaps prideful in sharing his dreams, and it got him sold into slavery. God judged Eli because he spent more time in the ministry than raising his kids. Samuel was guilty of the same thing, though Samuel was a far better priest. There are many other examples that God gave to us, and He gave us the answers for the problems as well. Since God is no respecter of persons, parents should practice this with their children.

As we see in the Bible, favoritism is the cause for some of the problems in the family. Parents must not treat one child better than the other, that is not to say that they should be treated the same, for each child has a different personality and should be treated

accordingly. Each child however must know that they are loved equally with no restrictions.

Lack of communication or improper communication can also contribute to problems in the family. Families must communicate and do so with respect. There are too many family members that do not share what their desires are or what their feelings are concerning certain things. Others communicate, but they do it with nagging and disrespect. Even children must be talked to with respect.

Children that are abused will often run away from home, many times becoming prostitutes in order to survive. Others commit suicide. Depression, verbal abuse, divorce, abortion and a host of other things are some of the devastating effects arising from problems in the family.

In counseling families with problems, every family member involved needs to be heard. The best approach is to meet one on one with each member, taking notes and then later with the whole family. There will be many conflicting views as to what the problem is and how it is to be resolved. The goal is not to find someone to blame, but to find the solution to the problem. The problem usually cannot be solved unless everyone involved participates. Getting the family to work together to solve the problem will not only solve the problem, but will encourage family unity.

Many of the problems that arise within families can be prevented. Families must be educated in the Bible and learn to follow its principles. We must learn from the mistakes of Eli and Samuel and love our children and train them up in the way they should go and when they are old, they will not depart from it.

Healthy families are those who communicate and listen, support each other, respect and trust each other, share responsibilities, and have a sense of play and humor. They have traditions, share a common faith, value their service to other family members, have interaction amongst the members, share leisure time, and admit to and seek help with problems.

A. People Have Trouble with People

Human beings are social creatures, as evidenced by God's statement that it was "...not good that the man should be alone..." (Ge.2:18). Not only was this important for Adam, but for the propagation of the race (Ge.1:26-28). We thus deal with interpersonal relationships on a daily basis. While these relationships may be smooth and harmonious, often they are difficult and marked with conflict. Each of us has various traits that may turn off another, such as independence, self-determination, and individualism. These traits, though useful, can actually be detrimental, bringing loneliness and an inability to get along with others.

These problems in interpersonal relationships come from satanic involvement, personal attitudes, and conflict patterns, lack of commitment, communication failures, and social irritants. Because of the tension they create, these problems can cause physical, psychological, social, and spiritual problems in our lives.

Problems in our interpersonal relationships have long been an enemy to peace and harmony. Most of a pastor's time is spent, either trying to resolve interpersonal conflicts or thinking of ways to prevent them. The very first man and woman did not communicate properly and as a result sin entered the world. Even as spiritual a man as Paul was, he, John Mark, and Silas had an interpersonal relationship conflict in the beginning of Paul's ministry. Later, the problem was resolved between Paul and John Mark, but too often, conflicts are never resolved.

There are many causes for problems arising in interpersonal relationships. The most predominant reason is that most of us battle with being self-centered instead of Christ-centered. The Word of God tells us in Romans that the "...carnal mind is enmity against God" (Ro.8:7). Enmity means bitter hatred, so if our mind can have bitter hatred against God, how much more can we have enmity against others.

The devil is also a reason for problems in interpersonal relationships. Many times a problem arises that is not really a problem, but people perceive it as a problem because they were deceived by the devil into believing something that was not true. Satan is often able to persuade people to speak before they think about the situation. The old saying, "sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me," is not true. Not only can words hurt us, they can also kill us. Death and life are indeed in the power of the tongue (Pr.18:21).

Conflicting interest, lack of commitment, social irritants, and communication failure are some of the other things that can cause problems in interpersonal relationships. There are probably many others that could be listed as well

The effects of interpersonal relationship problems can be enormous. For example, some type of interpersonal relationship has caused almost every problem known to man. Sin entered the world, wars were started, and the crucifixion of Jesus was even caused because of interpersonal relationship problems. There are many other effects that interpersonal relationship problems can have such as separation, divorce, sleeplessness, bitterness, and anger.

In counseling people that have had problems in their relationship, one of the first things the counselor must do is to hear both sides. Trying to get each person to communicate and to see things from the other person's perspective is also important. Without communication, nothing will ever be resolved. Sometimes one or both individuals will need to change in order to resolve the problem. This is especially true in marriage counseling. Jesus was a reconciler and the goal must always be to reconcile.

Interpersonal relationship problems can be avoided by first dying to self, and becoming Christ-centered. Learning to change one's attitude and habits will go a long way in helping to get along with others. We will never be able to fully conquer the problems that arise from interpersonal relationships, but being willing to forgive and receive forgiveness should be the goal when we make mistakes in our relationships.

Paul wrote about living in peace with others, and used the qualifiers "...if it be possible..." and "...as far as it depends on you...." There is an implication here of the fact that it is probably impossible to live at peace with everyone, but we certainly are not to be the reason for the conflict. Our attitudes and behavior are our responsibility. God's Spirit helps us to help others to prevent the strain that is so prominent in many interpersonal relationships.

B. Bringing up Your Child

The most important ministry that anyone will ever have is rearing their children. The Bible tells us in the Book of Psalm that children are the heritage of the Lord and the man that has his quiver full of them is blessed. Children become like arrows in the hand of a mighty man. We never know what purpose God has for our children. They may be the next Elijah or Paul. Children are gifts from God, which can bring both sorrow and great joy.

Paul told Timothy that the man that does not provide for his own house is worse than an infidel (1Ti.5:8). God has given parents a great task in rearing children. There would never be any great men or women without them being reared by someone. God judged Eli for not training his children properly and Samuel made the same mistake.

Christian parenting involves loving and teaching children in the ways of the Lord. In order to effectively teach them we must love and obey God, for they will not do what we say, but they will do what we do. We must not hesitate to spank for Proverbs tells us that spanking will deliver their soul from hell (Pr.23:14). The parents must not provoke their children, but train them in the ways of the Lord and when they are old they will not depart from it.

Children also have a part in being reared. They must honor and obey their parents that they may live long on the earth. They are responsible for accepting Christ as their personal Savior and living for the Lord.

Neglecting spiritual issues can have a negative effect on child-rearing. Since prayer and the Bible has been taken out of schools, we have seen the evil that prevails in children as young as eight (8) and ten (10) years old. Children are now committing all kinds of terrible acts. Now that we see the effects of neglecting spiritual issues,

we must not let this happen in our homes.

Instability in the home can also effect children negatively, whether it is financial, spiritual, divorce, etc. The home should be the most secure and stable part of a child's life. When it is, child-rearing will be more effective.

Psychological abuse of children can also hinder their maturation. Parents must not criticize or punish too harshly, nor should they humiliate their children. The Bible tells us not to provoke our children. There are other things such as physical influences, mental retardation, unmet needs and traumatic experiences that can also greatly effect child-rearing.

Child-rearing can have positive effects on parents whose children turn out well and negative ones if they do not. Rearing children with mental retardation, asthma and other illness can be very difficult on the parents and their marriage. Parents can feel like they have failed when their children do not become mature, responsible adults.

Spiritual training, discipline, marital enrichment, and parental training can prevent many child-rearing problems. Parents must adhere to God's Word and the principles found therein if they are to have success in child-rearing. It is only through faith in God that many of the difficulties in child rearing can be overcome.

C. Adolescence - A Time of Conflict

Conflict is a certainty in this period of life. There is tremendous change taking place in the young person, physically, sexually, emotionally, intellectually, and socially. They are trying to move away from depending upon their parents to an independence that they will need in the near future. Not all adolescents are in turmoil, not deeply disturbed, nor at the mercy of their impulses as some would indicate. The vast majority of young teens are trouble free, but the fact that they are going through changes is evident. Those in this period have to adjust to physical and social changes, as well as having to make significant decisions about their values, beliefs, identity, careers, lifestyle, and relationships with girls and boys alike.

There are three (3) periods of adolescence:

1. The first period is preadolescence.

This period normally occurs from eleven (11) to fourteen (14) years of age. The bodies in both male and female begin to change. Girls begin to menstruate and develop breasts, while boys begin to develop body hair and their voice deepens. The interest in the opposite sex also begins to develop.

2. The second (2nd) period is mid-adolescence.

This period is around the ages of fourteen (14) to eighteen (18). Negative influences that predominant here are the influences of sex, drugs and vehicles. It is important that Christians, as well as properly trained mid-adolescents, not be influenced by these things. Many mid-adolescents are thinking about college, and their future, not sex and drugs.

During the mid-adolescent years, sexual urges become stronger in males, and females begin to desire relationships. These two (2) combinations often lead to teen pregnancy. Even though girls do not develop strong sexual desires until their thirties (30), their need for relationship causes them to give in to the sexual urges of the males.

3. The third (3rd) period is post-adolescence.

This period begins at the end of high school. It is the time when the individuals begin to utilize all their preparations or they realize they have failed to prepare themselves for life. Careers, marriage and many other issues begin to be at the forefront of their thinking as they prepare to move away from home. Questions, such as “Who am I? How do I get along with others? Where do I fit? What do I believe” are four (4) basic questions that adolescents will have to answer before they can go on to a satisfied adult life.

In the Bible we do not find all the problems of adolescence, because children were disciplined and trained properly. Children were very mature during Bible times and adults treated them with respect. Josiah was only eight (8) when he began to reign as king, and David was just a boy when he killed Goliath. These are only a few of the children God used.

Physical, sexual, and interpersonal changes are believed to be reasons for many of the problems in adolescence. While everyone faces these pressures, and the fact that they are no different than the ones adults face, children are less likely to be able to cope than an adult. The real issue is that both adolescents and adults alike must be taught to trust in God and cast all their care upon Him for He cares for them. How can we explain how one individual gives into peer pressure and becomes pregnant and another does not. The obvious answer is choice, but proper training and discipline will help adolescents make the right choices.

Problems in adolescence can bring sickness, suicidal tendencies, and the desire to runaway. With these kinds of potential problems, education is critical. The first place to start in helping adolescents is with the parents. Quite often the parents are to blame because of loose guidelines in the home. Limits should be placed upon adolescents, such as not being allowed to date, have their body parts pierced (some would disagree with this in the case of a girls ears), get tattoo's, talk on the phone

for hours, use the Internet without supervision, or stay at home by themselves. Instead, they must be taught Godly and family values so they can make the right choices when the time comes.

D. Young Adulthood - Freedom and Stress

Young adulthood can be described as a period of rich satisfaction in terms of love, sexuality, family life, occupational advancement, creativity, and realization of a person's life goal, and yet it can be a time of intense stress. It is a time when the young person is assaulted by passions and ambitions from within and the demands of a burgeoning family, society, and community outside.

Young adulthood should be a time of excitement and adventure, for it is when careers are launched and families started. Instead, young adulthood is fast becoming the most confusing time for many people. Part of the problem is because most of them think that they are educated when in reality they know far less than their parents did at their age.

Today's society has learned how to make things work, but they do not know how they work. Computers do most of the work for us and if we know how to make the computer work, we think we are smart. Most young adults today cannot even tell time. They read the numbers on a digital clock, but do not know what quarter till eight (7:45) is. Many of them cannot work out math problems without a calculator. There was a time when a young person would receive a failing grade if they were caught with a calculator in school, now it is required to have one. Most young adults would not have a clue how much change is due a customer if the cash register did not tell them. Young women do not know how to cook or wash clothes, and young men cannot even change the tire or the oil in their car.

We have produced a society of ignorant young adults that do not know how to reason or make calculated decisions. If the computer or television does not tell them how to do it, they become stressed and confused. They are used to instant answers and results. They have not learned how to think for themselves and be patient. This results in many young adults making the wrong career decisions as well as wrong marriage decisions.

The challenges that many young adults face can be grouped into four (4) major categories.

1. The first (1st) is competence.

Young adults must become competent in decision making, interpersonal relationships, physical skills, self-management and spiritual skills.

2. The second (2nd) category is independence.

Every young adult must learn how to become independent as they build their own identity. The Bible even says that the man must leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife.

3. Intimacy is the third (3rd) category.

No one is ever totally dependent. Every one needs relationships. The most important relationship, of course, is with God. Young adults must rely on God. Friendship is also important. Young adults need someone that they can share things with and marriage is very important to most young adults.

4. The fourth (4th) category is direction.

Young adults need direction in order to fulfill their dreams. Many different types of individuals can help with this, from a pastor, parent, friend or spouse. Very few people stumble into their dreams; most of them become fulfilled because of direction.

There are many effects of young adulthood that are negative and the counselor must be prepared. Many young adults try to accomplish too much in their twenties (20's) and guidance from a counselor can save them much heartache later in life. Many of the problems in young adulthood can be avoided by education, mentoring, and by destroying the "dream killers." Doubt, double mindedness, the devil, division and disobedience, can kill the dreams of young adults. With the Lord's help, these dream killers can be destroyed and young adults can become fulfilled adults as they live out their dreams.

E. Is There a Mid-Life Crisis?

Some would say this is the prime of life, and a person is to feel fabulous in this era. However, it is also a forgotten generation, ignored by the social planners, neglected by the educators, and forsaken by the fashion industry. It tends to be a time of crisis for many, even though "mid-life crisis" is not supposed to exist according to some. Movement into middle life is a time for adjustment and reevaluation. Some see this as a threat, instability, and times of uncertainty.

Middle age is a time when individuals should be fulfilled, as many of their dreams have become reality. It can also be a time of fear and frustration as goals and dreams that were prepared for in the thirties (30's) appear now to be out of reach.

There are four (4) major categories that cause problems for the middle aged person.

1. The first (1st) category is in the physical realm.

It is realizing that our youthfulness is leaving us. This can cause depression in some at middle age. Gray hair, balding, loss of strength and stamina are all physical changes that can have a negative effect on how one feels about middle age. Sometimes these changes can have a positive effect in motivating people to take better care of their bodies.

2. The second (2nd) category is psychological changes.

Middle age can begin when a person begins to be effected psychologically. For some, middle age can begin as early as thirty (30) and for others as late as fifty (50). The old saying, "you are as young as you feel," has a lot of truth to it. This is why it is so important to take care of our bodies. Fear is one of the psychological effects of middle age. As people see their bodies changing, they begin to realize their mortality.

3. The third (3rd) category that can cause problems in middle age is vocational changes.

After many years at the same job, boredom and lack of challenge can cause one to review their options. Changes in vocation at mid-life can be stressful and scary. Many middle age people stay with the comfort and security of the same career, but remain unfulfilled in their job. Others take the risk of failing and plunge into the pressures of a new career.

4. The fourth (4th) category that can cause problems in middle age, is a change in marriage and family.

Both middle aged men and women can become unfulfilled as their children leave home and move on with their life. Marriage can become unfulfilling as sex becomes routine and the challenges of rearing children are gone. The loss of a spouse during the middle age period can be extremely difficult after years of being marriage.

Problems at middle age can have emotional effects on the individual. Anger, frustration, guilt and bitterness are just a few. Sometimes the effects can be noticed outwardly as many middle age people dye their hair, have face lifts, change jobs or residence, or go to the extreme of having an affair. All of these are attempts to remain youthful and overcome the feelings associated with middle age. Unfortunately, these are only temporary solutions.

Anticipating changes that will eventually come can prevent many problems at middle age. Educating oneself about the changes of mid-life can also be a significant help in avoiding many of these problems. The church is the best

source for those having problems in mid-life as well as helping to prevent problems. As middle age people get involved in ministry, they can receive the fulfillment they have lacked in their careers.

Apart from God, family is the best source for fulfillment at mid-life. Seeing children serve God and become mature adults with their own families can be extremely satisfying for the middle-aged. Grandchildren also become a joy to the middle-aged. All in all, life is what we make of it, and is viewed best from the angle that God takes, through His eyes.

F. Growing Old

One Egyptian philosopher said that “old age is the worst of misfortunes that can afflict a man.” Some others have called it a time of “rags and relics,” but others said it is a “second childishness and mere oblivion, without teeth, without eyes, without everything.” Others say that it is the prime of life, with several examples. For instance, Ronald Reagan celebrated his seventieth (70th) birthday functioning as the President of the most powerful nation on earth. Douglas MacArthur was commander of the United Nations forces when he was seventy (70). George Burns and Bob Hope refused to sit down and retire, continuing their heavy entertainment schedules well into their late senior years. Many attained fame as an elderly person, including Moses, Abraham, and John the beloved. Others, less famous, have contributed to life in unusually productive ways at ages when others have relegated themselves to the rocking chair.

There are several categories of areas that can cause problems in later years. One of the most obvious is physical change. Physical changes such as, graying, weight loss, loss of teeth, or disease will eventually affect everyone. Mental changes can also cause problems for the elderly. Many elderly people experience loss of memory, creativity and the ability to learn new things.

Another area of potential problem is economic. Retirement can bring on a sense of uselessness and boredom. If the person did not plan properly, there will be financial problems. Many of the poor people in America are the elderly. Poverty is something that could be avoided but must be dealt with early in life.

Low self-esteem is a major problem for many elderly. Most people are in a hurry and do not have time for the slow moving elderly person. Not even family members seem to have time to visit their elderly relatives. Their vast experience and knowledge of life is not valued as it used to be. This leads to a sense of worthlessness for our elderly.

As each person reaches the later years, they have seen many friends and relatives die. This along with the aging of their body ever reminds them that death could be just around the corner. Regrets of unaccomplished goals, and wishing they had

lived life differently, can cause the elderly to give up on living.

In counseling the elderly, the counselor must be patient and understanding, helping them to understand their value and input in life. Encouraging them to have a physical if needed is also important. They should be counseled to try and maintain a healthy diet, getting as much exercise as they are able. If the person is saved, then they can always take comfort in that. If not, then they should be counseled to accept Christ.

There is nothing that anyone can do to stop old age, but there is plenty that can be done to avoid at least some of the problems caused by old age. Planning ahead is one of the most important things to do in the early twenties (20's) or thirties (30's), but is so often neglected. Life insurance and retirement funds are absolutely crucial in helping to avoid financial difficulties in later years. Social Security cannot and should not be relied upon. Making sure that our house will be paid for before we turn sixty (60) is another must, as hardly any elderly can afford rent.

Exercise and a healthy diet should be consistent throughout life and not just when we get older. Not only should we exercise the body and eat right, but the mind must be exercised as well. Reading and being involved in things that stimulate the mind are important, making sure that the mind is fed good things that promote and not corrupt. Likewise the spirit must be exercised and fed as well. The elderly that are the most fulfilled and problem free are those that have built a strong relationship with God. In their later years, instead of fear, there will be peace and confidence.

V. MARITAL PROBLEM COUNSELING

Though marriage was one of the very first things that God created, it is not a very stable institution in today's society. The average duration of a marriage in America is about ten (10) years. It was created not only to reproduce, but for enjoyment. Despite attacks by liberals, homosexuals, and the media, marriage is the most honorable and fulfilling institution that has ever been created. Marriage is much like heaven, in that it is a very stable institution when under His direction. If we want to participate and enjoy its benefits, we must choose to do so.

Some marriages are happy. Most frequently, those who rate themselves as "happily married" say that having a generally positive attitude toward their spouse and viewing their partner as their best friend causes them to be happy. It is when we are married to someone who cares, is concerned about the mate's well-being, gives as well as gets in the marriage, is open and trustworthy, and has a generally good outlook on life that we tend to have a happy marriage.

The Bible says much about marriage. It is one of the first and last topics discussed in the Bible. It is the example of marriage that God chose to demonstrate the relationship between Christ and the Church. The Bible gives all the answers for marriage problems.

We do not necessarily find the problems in the Bible, but we can find the solution there. The answer to every marriage problem is in the Bible, in fact, one Scripture alone can answer any marriage problem that arises "...as ye would that men should do unto you, do ye also to them likewise."

One of the biggest problems facing marriages today is sex. Wives withhold sex from their husbands to punish them. Husbands eventually stop trying and have an affair. In these cases the wife is just as much to blame as the husband. The excuse, "I'm too tired" or "not tonight" should never be said. Each spouse must realize that their partner owns their body. In contrast, the husbands often rob their wives of the affection that they need, making them just as guilty. Very few women have affairs because of the sex. Instead, they have affairs for the affection they failed to receive from their husband.

There are many causes of marriage problems. For some, the problem comes because a spouse is too reliant on parents. Communication is another area that many couples have problems with. Communicating each other's needs is important if the marriage is to be successful. Money is another major problem in marriages in America, from who controls the checkbook, to not having enough money to fulfill the needs and desires.

Problems in marriage can have many effects. Some of the effects can be life threatening, as in the case of physical abuse. Other problems can cause depression, hopelessness and confusion. In some cases the spouse will desert the family, leaving behind not only the spouse, but also children. Divorce is another effect of marriage problems. Most people today do not know what covenant is. They are not willing to work out and work through their problems, so they bail out.

In counseling couples with problems in their marriage, the first place to start is in educating them about covenant. Their marriage vows most likely contained the words, "for better, for worse, in sickness and in health, till death do us part." The couple must realize anything worth having is worth working for.

Premarital counseling is the best form of prevention for marriage problems. Education in how to meet the needs of the spouse, as well as developing proper communication skills is very important. Finally, but foremost, Biblical principles in relation to marriage must be adhered to.

A. Pregnancy Can Be a Problem

Pregnancy can and should be a wonderful thing. Psalms chapter one hundred twenty seven (127), states that children are a heritage of the Lord and blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. All children are a blessing from God and there is no such thing as a mistake. Someone may say we did not want or plan on having any more children, but God knew the child before he was ever formed in his mother's womb.

We do not have all the answers as to why we are blessed with the wonderful surprise of children later in life, but God always has a purpose. It can be difficult for couples to deal with having another child that is not planned, but abortion is not an option. The Bible has many wonderful stories of how God used children and separated them at an early age for His purpose. So we must trust the Lord for His strength and guidance during these times.

There are many causes of pregnancy problems and not all of them have to do with being pregnant. Some of them have to do with not being pregnant. The Bible tells us of many women that were barren and prayed to the Lord for a child. There are so many women today that desire to become pregnant and have been unsuccessful. One of the reasons is that either the husband or wife is infertile. Stress can also prevent the wife from becoming pregnant. One very common cause in recent years for women to have frequent miscarriages is because they have had a previous abortion. The female's body now rejects the child and she has a miscarriage.

Childlessness can cause anger, grief and feelings of inferiority. In the Old Testament, women had a very difficult time if they were unable to bear children. Many of them agonized over it. Even today, for a couple that had their heart set on having children, it can cause great pain and agony.

Unplanned or unwanted pregnancies can have a terrible effect on the child if it is communicated to them. Many women have an abortion and the child is killed. Even if the child is allowed to be borne, he may be adopted out or told that he was an accident, causing feelings of rejection. God does not make mistakes. No child ever born is a mistake and should never be told such. Though they may be unplanned, God knew they would be born. A young teenager will be affected in many ways, from having to drop out of school, to having a hard time finding a spouse that wants the instant family. Even older couples can have a difficult time in dealing with a child born in later years.

In counseling couples that are childless, they should both be instructed to have an examination to determine the problem. Then they should fast and pray. God will answer our prayers just as well as those in the Bible. They should also consider adoption. There are many children that have been deserted by their parents that need love and care. Other pregnancy issues should be handled with care and always discourage abortion, encouraging the couple or young lady to trust God to help them during this time.

The best way for young people to avoid pregnancy problems is abstinence. For older couples, contraceptives, or vasectomy should be considered. If God wants a couple to have a child, having their tubes tied or a vasectomy will not stop them from becoming pregnant. There are actual cases of pregnancies under these circumstances.

B. Divorce/Remarriage - Curse of the Late 20th Century

Divorce and remarriage is something that has only become a major problem in the last fifty (50) years. Divorce is a tearing away from the mate, with guilt, anger, resentment, fear, and/or disappointment dominating the divorced persons thinking. Unfortunately, Christians also suffer from many of the same problems in marriage as unbelievers. Unbelievers still suffer from heartache because of divorce, but most of them never question whether or not they can or should get remarried. However, for Christians, the question of whether or not to remarry can be very stressful.

Divorce has been portrayed as a welcome route to freedom, like an escape hatch, to those in troubled marriages. Television sitcoms dismiss the idea of a lifelong commitment to marriage with one mate. While many disapprove of these views, we have learned to live with infidelity, illegitimacy and divorce in our modern society, to the detriment of our society.

There have been many debates over the issue of divorce and remarriage. The teachings in the Bible are very clear on this issue. Remarriage is permitted in the case of the death of a spouse, when a spouse commits fornication, (idolatrous sexual immorality) or if their spouse, saved or not, divorces them for any reason other than fornication.

Divorce on the other hand, is permitted for many reasons. The Bible says that a bill of divorcement must be given. A spouse that is being physically abused does not have to stay in that marriage, but unless the abusive spouse has committed fornication, they are not allowed to remarry. This is why premarital counseling is so critical. No one should ever get married without it, and even then there are no guarantees.

There are many causes of divorce today. One of the most prevalent reasons is adultery. Some couples have a hard time remaining faithful to one another. Others divorce because of the desertion of their spouse or because of immaturity, not being able to handle the stress and work involved in being married. Still others divorce because of irreconcilable differences. Perhaps some divorces come about because of society making it easier to vacate the vows of marriage, rather than working it out. Many divorces come about because of immaturity in one or both of the mates. Certainly stress on a marriage can bring about the couple drifting apart and causing at least the thought of divorce. Financial pressures, vocation demands, drug abuse, alcoholism, and the instabilities of society today all are contributing factors in divorce.

The effects of divorce can be extreme. Some are unable to handle the rejection that comes from divorce and become depressed and suicidal. For those in ministry, it could mean the end of ministry. The effects can be devastating for parents with children, especially younger children. Children can find it very difficult to deal with

their parent's divorce. Their grades in school are often affected, their behavior becomes worse, and many times they blame themselves for the failure of their parent's marriage.

Divorce can have emotional effects, bringing anger, guilt, fear, frustration, and a host of other emotions to play in the tension that is created. Behavior is affected, with some struggles in just carrying on the daily routines of life, paying bills, solving daily problems, and even eating. Socially, divorce causes problems, for other family members have to deal with shock and rejection, personal friends who complicate the situation through their advice and even meddling, critics who condemn, blame and reject, and married and singles who now have to treat the divorced person in a different manner without knowing just how to do that. Then there are the spiritual effects, with some drawing nearer to the Lord, while others become angry at God and even spiritually rebellious.

When counseling the divorced person, the counselor must stay Biblical. The counselee at some point must realize their part in the failure of the marriage. There is never a time when only one person is solely to blame. The counselee should be referred to get council if they have not done so and are only in the process of getting the divorce.

Making sure the person we marry is a Christian can help in preventing divorce. Finding out their past relationships and what they were like before they were saved is also important. Always meet their family and friends and get to know the person before becoming engaged. The couple should communicate openly about the past and future goals, both before and after marriage. Getting premarital counseling before marriage and marriage counseling after marriage will also help in preventing divorce.

It has been said that a marriage license is the only one issued without a show of competence. Rarely is there any teaching on marriage, the most important institution in the universe. Only when there is persistent commitment, knowledge, sensitivity, interpersonal skills, and willingness to live according to Biblical standards can a couple expect to have a stable marriage.

C. Sex in Marriage is From God

God created sex to be used and enjoyed within marriage. Sex is the central strand, in the cable of many strands that holds a marriage together. And yet, there are probably as many as fifty percent (50%) of the marriages have some sexual maladjustment. While sex problems can show up first, more often it is a drifting apart of the couple that brings anger, disappointment, resentment, and/or tension that there is no mutually satisfying sex life. These problems in the sex life can come from misinformation, cultural attitudes, fatigue, haste, lack of opportunity, stress, boredom, psychological blocks, and/or physical causes. There can also be causes

like a poor self-concept, bad breath or body odor, selfishness, clumsiness, and of course, infidelity.

The Word tells us that the marriage bed is undefiled. Sex is more than reaching climax; it is the union of two (2) bodies into one. Men are to leave their father and mother and cleave to their spouse and the two (2) shall become one flesh. Many people do not teach that married couples become one flesh, but the Bible clearly teaches this. The New Testament says that we no longer have control over our own bodies, but our spouse does. This means in every area we become one. We lose our former identity as individuals and become one in the eyes of God.

Sexual problems in marriage come from a variety of reasons. Misinformation is one of the causes. Too many married couples are going into marriage with the sexual images and ideas they have seen on television and in magazines. Sex in marriage can be equally and even more gratifying than it is pictured in the illicit affairs shown on television, but it usually does not happen the first night. It takes time for individuals to become comfortable with each other's sexuality before they can begin to experiment with their bodies.

Stress and fatigue are also causes of sexual problems in marriage. Working late hours under deadlines can cause stress and make sexual stimulation difficult. Busy schedules and poor planning cause couples to become fatigued and too tired for sex. Often times the reason for the sexual problem is boredom. After years of marriage, sex becomes routine and not spontaneous. This can eventually lead to an affair if it is not dealt with

Cultural attitudes can also cause problems especially if the couples are from two (2) different cultural backgrounds. Studying the Word together and getting God's perspective on sex can eliminate any problems that may arise from cultural attitudes.

Sexual problems in marriage can have many different effects, some of which can lead to an affair and even divorce. When partners become bored with their sex life, they will often fantasize, which can lead to other problems such as an adulterous affair. Low self-esteem is an effect that can come from sexual problems in marriage. When one partner rejects the other, for any reason, feelings of inadequacy come.

In counseling married couples with sexual problems, sometimes a physical should be recommended, because certain sexual problems can be physically related. Most other sexual problems can be counseled adequately if both parties are willing to cooperate. Finding out what kind of sexual problems exist is the first step and then getting them to share openly about what they like and do not like during sex. Sometimes financial stress or any other stress can be the real culprit of the sexual problem.

Education is always the key in preventing problems, and sexual problems are no exception. Couples must be educated. Education can come from premarital counseling and marriage enrichment seminars. The most important education will come from each other as they explore their bodies and communicate what they like and dislike before, during and after sex. Maintaining good hygiene and weight control will always be a plus in helping to make sex in marriage gratifying to both parties.

VI. SINGLENES COUNSELING

Singles make up a large part of the population and are increasing in number due to the high divorce rate and couples living together instead of getting married. Singleness is something that for some is what we might call a gift. The Apostle Paul was not married, but marriage by no means is wrong, for Proverbs tells us, that “he that findeth a wife findeth a good thing.” If a person is not blessed with the gift of singleness, their life can be very lonely and challenging.

Being single is not necessarily a problem, but God realized the dangers of man being alone. God created Adam as the first single man, but the Lord soon realized it was not good for man to be alone. Every animal had an opposite with whom they could interact and reproduce, but man had no one. Once Eve was created, Adam had a helpmate that he could now be sexually intimate with. Being single is not something that should be looked down upon, for singles can make commitments in doing things for God that married couples cannot. Despite the Apostle Paul's opinion, being married, is however, the better option, for it is what God created man and woman for.

There are different reasons for singleness. Some individuals choose to be single, while others are single because of the death of a spouse. One of the more predominant causes of singleness is because of divorce. There are still other people that desire to marry but remain single because of personal problems they have. Too, some simply choose not to marry.

One of the predominant effects of being single is loneliness. Married couples always have someone to talk with about the movie they just watched or the book they just read, or what the children are doing, but singles have no one with whom to share that way. Sharing fears, concerns and other feelings is always a problem with singles, because they do not usually have anyone to share their innermost feelings with.

Being single can also produce problems with self-esteem, identity and sex. Seeing many of their friends get married can cause feelings of worthlessness for singles that desire to get married and have not found a spouse. Having a desire to be married and still being single can cause identity problems. Without a spouse the single person must battle with their sexual desires and need for affection. This often leads to promiscuity.

In counseling singles, the counselor should encourage the counselee to accept who they are in Christ, for there is much that a single person can do that is difficult for a married person. The counselee should set realistic goals for their life and be involved with other singles in church. Single parents and singles that are divorced will need extra care and guidance.

The counselor needs to be careful to evaluate their own attitudes about singleness. Negative attitudes about being single will turn off the person being counseled. Singles are not misfits, simply without a mate at a given time. There has to be help to the single person to deal with being accepted. Counselors can help by giving a listening ear to the single person, understanding the pain, bitterness, and struggles they go through without any condemnation at their failures.

Counselors need to stimulate realistic life planning for the single. While clear plans for the future should be laid, it is also necessary to face the fact that they must live fully in the present; even recognizing that marriage may not be a possibility in the near future.

Marriage is not the cure for singleness, for many of the same problems exist with married couples, but God is the solution. Praying for God's guidance and direction along with seeking pastoral counseling can prevent many of the problems that single people face today. Education, planning ahead, and changing attitudes about singleness will help singles in avoiding some of the pitfalls that so many singles face today. Singleness is not a disease or blight for those who are living productive lives without a mate. Single people are not second (2nd) class citizens, just in a different situation. Though there are similar struggles for the married and single person, the one without a mate faces some unique challenges.

A. So You Want a Marriage Partner

Choosing a life partner is probably the second (2nd) most critical decision we make in life, right after choosing to follow Christ. While some cultures arrange marriages that are hardly the way it is done in the Western world. Choosing a marriage partner can be challenging to say the least, especially if the one a person chooses does not agree to marry then. Most Christians will agree that Christians should only marry other Christians, but there is much controversy over how much involvement God actually has in the matter.

Many people feel that Christians are free to marry whomever they choose in the Lord and others feel that God has only one person selected for a given person out of all the others on the planet. The Bible actually supports both views. God clearly ordained Rebecca for Isaac, but David chose Bathsheba. Their son, Solomon is in the lineage of Christ. Christians need balance in this area and should realize that though we are free to choose to marry anyone in the Lord; it may not be wise to do so. Instead, we should trust the leading of the Holy Spirit to guide us to a mate that will be more suitable for what God has planned for our life.

There are many reasons why individuals make poor mate selections. One reason is because people think they are in love, when in reality they are in lust or just infatuated. Others fail to make a choice at all because they are waiting for Mr. Perfect. As Christians, we do not have to settle for a person who is not suited for us, but we must realize that no human is perfect. The Bible says that there is "...none that doeth good." So, when we are in pursuit of a mate, we must take this into consideration.

It used to be that people would marry within their social status, race and religion, but this is no longer true. Though many still abide by these traditions, there are some that go by their heart and the leading of the Lord, which very often, will lead them outside their race, financial status and intellect. Those that choose wisely are those that communicate well with each other and do not enter marriage blindly. They also educate themselves with as much information as they can about married life.

One thing is for sure, regardless of whom the spouse is and the problems a person may have, with God nothing is impossible. Just because we made a poor mate selection does not give us the right to mistreat our spouse or get a divorce.

Premarital counseling can be a great help in deterring poor mate selection. Open communication with the each other about past experiences, present status, and future goals will help in avoiding poor mate selection. If one desires to have ten (10) children and the one chosen as a mate does not want any children, it is likely there will be some tension in future years when one or the other's desires do not come to pass. This could be called incompatibility.

Choosing within the Christian faith is a must in preventing poor mate selection. The Bible clearly tells us that there is no fellowship between light and darkness. Many people have married an unbeliever in hopes that they would latter become saved, only to find out that instead of their spouse getting saved, they have backslid in their relationship with God. One good apple will never make a bad apple good, but one bad apple can make a whole basket of good apples bad.

Facts and warnings must be given ahead of the emotional bonds that humans form. Single people then can evaluate their relationship intelligently, avoiding harmful involvements. It will help them to avoid falling into love with someone that is really not right for them.

B. Premarital Counseling - A Time Waster?

Premarital counseling is based primarily on prevention of potential problems in marriage. Issues of race, financial status, or disapproval of parents are some of the current issues that premarital counseling can help to solve. Premarital guidance can help those who are contemplating marriage by: revealing unrealistic expectations about marriage; pointing out personal immaturity which can lead to

being insensitive to the others needs; help the couple avoid changing roles in marriage; help avoid alternative styles of marriage; avoid loosening sexual standards that lead to immorality; bring to light an overconfidence due to previous experience; deal with divorce not being an option; and talking out circumstances that can lead to misery in the marriage.

The Bible speaks to premarital guidance. The Word of God is the best premarital handbook that any counselor can use. If it is followed, many of the problems that exist in marriage today will not be a problem. In the Book of Genesis, God tells us that a man will leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. Leaving, cleaving, and becoming one flesh are three (3) of the best topics that can be discussed in premarital counseling. The New Testament tells us that we should not be unequally yoked together and the Book of Ephesians give guidelines of how we should love and treat one another.

There are a lot of reasons for premarital counseling. Many couples have unrealistic expectations of what married life will really be like. It is very different from the romantic bliss that they experience on a date. Immaturity is another reason why premarital counseling is needed. Understanding the responsibilities of paying bills, raising a family, and what marriage is all about, is crucial for a couple. Financial problems are one of the biggest problems that couples face today. Because of resistance in some to premarital counseling, many ministers require it before performing a ceremony.

The fact that the divorce rate is above fifty percent (50%) nationwide, with it being even higher in Christian circles, is enough reason for any couple to seek premarital counseling. Couples need to be taught that God hates divorce. It was only because of the hardness of the hearts (mind) of people that God ever allowed divorce. The vows taken at marriage must be taken seriously, "till death do us part." In marriage each individual loses their identity and together they take on a new identity as one flesh. Just as Jesus said, "if you see me, you have seen the Father," the same should be true of couples.

Premarital counseling has had many positive effects in marriages. Couples have a greater understanding of their responsibilities as a spouse, leading to greater fulfillment. Husbands can come to understand that they are the priest and head of the home. They also should learn that they must love their wives as Christ loved the Church. Wives should learn to be submissive to their husbands. Many sexual problems are avoided as both husband and wife realize that they have no control over their own body, for it belongs to their spouse.

Since premarital counseling is not based entirely on prevention, there are areas that can be dealt with prior to marriage. Two (2) people from different races can experience guilt because of their upbringing when they decide to get married. Since the Bible teaches that there is neither Jew nor Greek, premarital counseling can be

very effective in helping to solve this problem. Other issues that premarital counseling can help with are disapproval of parents, getting married now or finishing school, pregnancy before marriage and many others.

C. Sex Outside Marriage is Not From God

Sex outside of marriage has been widely accepted in Western society, frequently with the tacit blessing of the church. Premarital sex has actually become “no big deal” in our society, and yet God says it is wrong and detrimental to our spiritual and mental well-being.

The Western society is rightfully criticized by Eastern peoples as being decadent, corrupt, and immoral. Sexual innuendos are a part of advertising that is plastered on every billboard, television screen, magazine cover, and movie. Some go farther than the innuendo. Sexual overtones appear in business, education, politics, and at times even in the church. What God has created for pleasure and intimacy, man has perverted, showing the character of modern human beings.

Sex apart from marriage has long been a problem for man. Sex is not bad or sinful, but it can cause us to sin. Fanaticizing about sexual intimacy with someone other than your spouse or looking at sexually explicit pictures is sinful and could lead to actual sexual contact with the opposite sex. It wasn't long ago that the Playboy magazine started with women in bathing suits and underwear, now we can see this in J. C. Penneys' catalogue.

God gave us our sexual desires and passions, but for most men, it is a constant struggle to control these sexual desires. Paul said it is better to marry than to burn with passion. We must be careful that we don't marry just anyone to meet our sexual needs, but the one God has chosen for us.

Jesus said "...whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery" (Mt.5:32). The word fornication here refers to harlotry, including adultery and incest. Figuratively, it means to commit idol worship. Fornication in marriage then would be as a spouse worships sexual immorality, such as continued affairs or addiction to pornography. Single people can also commit fornication, since it refers to the worship of sexual immorality.

There are many causes for sex apart from marriage. The biggest culprit is our own God-given desire for sexual intimacy. It can be difficult to control these desires, but self-control can be achieved, in fact it is one of the fruit of the Spirit.

Our environment can be stimulation to sex apart from marriage. Television, magazines, newspapers, and improper sex education all influence us, causing thoughts that will eventually lead to sex apart from marriage if not curbed and controlled.

Sex apart from marriage can have severe detrimental effects on the single person as well as the married couple. These effects are mostly in the emotions, where they experience guilt, depression, self-condemnation and fear. Also, there can be interpersonal effects with a spouse that can lead to separation and divorce. Sex apart from marriage can wreck careers and ministries. Our lives can be spiritually effected by the sin which will separate us from God is we do not repent. One of the most obvious and prevalent events of sex apart from marriage is physical, demonstrated by Aids and other sexually transmitted diseases. Pregnancy has also created problems and increased abortions, due to sexual relations apart from marriage.

Though there are easy answers for problems in dating, many times they are not applied. Dating most likely should be forbidden by parents until the young person has become responsible, for some as early as sixteen, others not until seventeen or eighteen. However, the chronological age does not determine what they will do when alone with a person of the opposite sex. Dating should only begin for the purpose of finding a spouse, not for the purpose of experimentation. The minute a young man or lady finds out that this person is not the one for them, dating should stop with that person. Dating should also take place in public places, to help avoid any temptation. Our society has taken up dating as if it is "something to do," and certainly young people need to mature socially. However, if a person has no intentions to marry, they probably should not date. Sex apart from marriage can be prevented through proper education that cannot and should not be taught in schools. It must come from the home first, and the churches, for God's views are far different from the worlds.

While sex was created by God and is good, sex apart from marriage is sinful behavior. Sex apart from marriage involves sinful thinking, sinful talk, may involve masturbation, and restricts freedom. Satan has put all believers in a spiritual battle with their minds, desiring to destroy them through illicit sex. Humans are vulnerable to sexual temptation, as it is one of the strongest drives in a human being. Satan is successful in bringing down Christians through sexual sin due to the fact that many try to fight the battle in their own strength. The One who is greater is on the inside, and He can win the battle for us, but we will have to apply the Word to the situation.

VII. SPIRITUAL ISSUES COUNSELING

Many Christians struggle today with problems that they don't have the answers for. Serving God with all our heart and walking in His ways will not prevent us from having problems. Job was a man who was upright and perfect in all his ways, yet he suffered more than probably anyone ever did, but Job was also blessed more than almost anyone, twice, and the second time he received double.

The story of Job gives us some insight as to why Christians face difficulties. The New Testament also gives us reasons as to why, for "...the trying of your faith worketh patience"

(Ja.1:3). We can always take confidence in God's Word and know that whatever we go through, "...all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose" (Ro.8:28) Even if our children stray from God, we have the assurance that they will return if we trained them up in the ways of the Lord.

Spiritual problems often come about because of where we are. This is not a geographic location, but a spiritual one. We may be that we appear to the world and other believers as moving along well, but Christianity is not about what we do, but who we are. We were dead, but now alive through grace. Other spiritual problems can come because of what we do. Pious legalism was the thing that stirred up Jesus the most. In the religious system of His day, we can see the abuse of sex, power, and money as regular behavior, all designed to further the selfish ideals of the religious hierarchy.

What we think can cause spiritual problems, thinking ourselves to be self-sufficient, having pride, bitterness, and distorted values. What we lack can cause spiritual problems, as in a lack of understanding, nourishment, balance, giving, commitment, simplicity, Holy Spirit power, and Body life. What we experience can cause spiritual problems, as well as what we fight and what we must accept.

Sin is the biggest culprit in most spiritual problems. It was the beginning of all spiritual problems when Adam chose to sin in the Garden. Though most people try to avoid taking any blame for their actions, what we do as well as what we do not do, are major causes of spiritual problems. The Bible tells us "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (Ja.4:17). Disobeying God in not doing the things we should do, will cause spiritual problems just as fast as the committing of a sinful act.

Spiritual problems can have effects in our physical body as well as our spirit man. Many illnesses come to the body when we are out of touch with God. There were many that Jesus healed that were sick because of their sin. AIDS is a good modern-day example of sickness associated with sin.

Spiritual problems can have an effect on social behavior. When someone is having spiritual problems, they often withdraw from fellowship with other believers. There are some that take the reverse approach and preach or teach out of selfish ambitions, rather than out of genuine concern for others.

In counseling those with spiritual problems, the Bible is the only source of a correct answer. It is necessary for the counselor to give to the counselee what the Word of God says about their situation. Pray with them and be patient, making them aware that God is not in a hurry and that He has everything under control. Though we may not have all the answers, we should take confidence in the fact that God does, and we must trust Him to reveal them to us. The counselee should be encouraged to continue in fellowship with God, most importantly, but also with other fellow believers, for they can be of help as well.

Spiritual problems can be avoided by simply walking in the Spirit. It sounds much easier than it is, but, nevertheless, this is the key. People with problems must be taught to walk in the spirit and obey God's principles. If we are faithful in our relationship with God, we can have confidence, and that whatever we go through, it will work out for the good. Of course, walking in the spirit also means reading the Bible, praying, fellowshiping with other believers and attending church faithfully.

A. Addictions Counseling

America is a land of addictions. Americans are more addicted to legal and illegal substances than any other group of people in the world. Fifty (50) years ago, not many people had addictions in comparison to today. There were not that many alcoholics, drugs were relatively unheard of, and anorexia was unheard of. The fast paced life we live, television, the need to belong, and not being able to cope, has led many people into addictions. Many of the problems faced by the western world are not seen on a large scale in India, China, and other third (3rd) world countries.

Addiction is the thinking and/or behavior that is repetitious, habitual, and difficult or impossible to control. While these addictions may bring short term pleasure, they are the source of misery for the addict as well as others. Addictions tend to gain more and more control over a person's life, eventually bringing them to total disruption of normal life if there is no change in their thinking and behavior. These addictions can be both physical and psychological. Most addicts will admit that the habit is harmful, but seem unable to change without an intervention in their lives, having help from God and others.

The Bible deals with all forms of addictions through the statement that man can only have one master, Jesus Christ. The Bible also teaches that we are to have self-control. There are many things in themselves that are not harmful, but when a person becomes addicted or controlled by them they are not only harmful, but sinful. Gluttony for example is sin. It is one of the biggest addictions in our society. Food is obviously not bad, but the addiction to it and control of it is.

Biblical principles that should be applied to life that deal with addictions include:

1. Do not be mastered by anything.
2. Obey the law.
3. Do not assume that addiction to any substance can resolve a problem.
4. Keep the body pure.
5. Never think that God will be found through drugs.

6. Practice temperance, self-discipline, and self-control.
7. Do not get drunk.
8. Be filled with the Spirit.

These principles will help the person who is not an addict remain free.

Parents are often the cause of many addictions. Most children that have parents that drink, smoke or take drugs will do the same when they become adults. The inability to handle stress is another reason why some become addicted. Not everyone turns to drugs or alcohol to handle their problems. Some people eat, sleep, watch T. V., work, and even shop to deal with stress they feel in our fast-paced society. Peer pressure and television are some of the other reasons that people become addicted.

Certain addictions have caused most of the crimes in our society. Alcohol and drugs cause many of the murders, rapes, and robberies. Addictions can have many other negative effects, not only on innocent people, but even on those with the addiction.

Caffeine is not something that people are too concerned with, but can cause headaches and heart palpitations. Smoking can cause lung cancer. Alcohol brings on liver damage. Drugs can cause death from overdose. Eating disorders can cause loss of weight and death, or excess weight and the risk of heart failure. Many of these addictions can cause permanent damage in our bodies and spirits.

In counseling people with addictions, the first step is helping them to realize that their addiction is a problem, not only for them, but for others as well. Teaching the counselee to avoid tempting situations will be extremely helpful. The counselee should be accountable, not only to the counselor, but also to a spouse, friend, and their pastor.

Addictions can be prevented with education in God's Word. We must educate people on how to deal with their problems so they will not feel the need to become addicted to something to ease their pain or help them forget their problem. Replacement is the key to deliverance from problems that lead to addictions. This principle is taught in the New Testament. When the demon that once possessed a man, came and saw his body clean and unfilled, he brought seven (7) other demons. For the spirit of heaviness, we put on the garment of praise. For the spirit of fear, we have the spirit of love, power and a sound mind. If counselees can learn to conquer their problems with these Biblical principles, they will not be driven to become addicted to anything other than Christ.

B. Alcoholism Counseling

Alcohol abuse is a serious problem, and growing throughout the world. It disrupts families, careers, friendships, and even physical and spiritual lives. Not only in the Western world, but around the world with the exception of the Middle Eastern Islamic countries, is alcoholism a problem. Two thirds (2/3's) of Americans over the age of fifteen (15) consume alcohol occasionally. Almost half of all ministers are users of alcohol.

More people die from drunk drivers each year than by any other cause. In the days of prohibition, we did not have the kind of problems we now face. But man's desire to do that which is forbidden always drives him to take up things that are wrong.

In man's attempt to continue to justify his actions and blame someone or something for his sin, he has called alcoholism a disease. Alcoholism is no more a disease than is murder, drugs or smoking. Alcohol may produce a disease in our body, just as cigarettes can produce lung cancer, but alcoholism is definitely not a disease. Alcoholism is a sin of choice and should be treated as such.

Many people believe that the Bible teaches abstinence in relationship to alcohol. However, that is not totally true, though it is a good practice, especially in the light of the misery alcohol can bring into a life. There will be no drunkards in heaven, so obviously if a man has a problem with alcohol, it is foolish for him to practice any social drinking. Only a fool would risk his eternal salvation. Paul told Timothy to take a little wine for his stomach sake. It was not because he was sick, but because the quality of water, much like today, varies from place to place and the wine was at least of a quality as to help Timothy's infirmity.

Alcoholism is not an inherited trait. There is no evidence that a person becomes an alcoholic because of something they inherited from their parents. Instead, many children become alcoholics because they learned this behavior from their parents. Many children that grow up and do not drink, usually had parents that did not drink alcohol, thus they learn a different behavior pattern. Peer pressure, stress, and the need to fit in are some of the many other reasons for alcoholics. There is also the factor of familiar spirits, along with curses that come because of the sins of the fathers.

Alcoholism causes murders through drunk drivers. It also destroys families and causes many of the crimes and rapes. It is a terrible sin that never just affects the sinner, but many innocent people. Apart from all the effects on others, alcohol can also cause liver damage.

Alcoholism could be prevented in part by outlawing it again, but that will never happen, so the best place to start is with the adults. We must try and win them to Christ lest they continue to infect the innocent children in their own homes and they

become alcoholics as well. Though alcoholism causes the individual to become addicted to the alcohol, just as the person chooses to start drinking, the first step in deliverance is choosing to be delivered. Counselors must help them make the right choices.

C. Counseling the Mentally Unstable

Mental illness has a broad range of symptoms, but in describing it, we could say it is generally those things that produce stress and/or disability in a person's social or occupational life. While these can be mild and just an annoyance, they can also be so severe that a person's thinking is distorted, communications faulty, contact with reality impaired, and cause a person to have great difficulty getting along with society and others. These in the latter group may even be a danger to themselves and/or others.

Mental disorders are a term used loosely in today's courtrooms. It is a way of escape for many individuals that have committed horrendous crimes. Most of the criminals that get off by reason of insanity knew what they were doing. Many have had plenty of time to think about what they are going to do, and make the wrong decision.

The Bible does not say much about mental disorders because a more accurate definition of someone with a mental disorder is demon possession. The Bible clearly talks about those that are demon possessed and how it affects them mentally.

Mental disorders are much rarer than doctors admit. Many people try to blame their problems on some mental illness so as not to be personally blamed. A more accurate term to use would be emotional duress.

There are many people who suffer from emotional duress. Emotional duress can be caused by divorce, abuse, death of a loved, extreme stress-filled environments, and even unfulfilled fantasies. Many people react with violence after years of mistreatment. There are men that have raped because of continued unfulfilled fantasies. This does not mean that they have a mental disorder, but that they reacted to the continued emotional duress. Everyone goes through periods of duress and never lose control, but continued emotional and physical duress can cause even the strongest person to snap.

Mental disorders have many different effects, both on the individual and others not even related. Families are affected by the problems surrounding the one with the mental disorder. Extreme fears, attempted suicide, and violent behavior are but a few of the other effects of mental disorders.

Once the individual snaps under the emotional duress, there are other people that can be affected as well. Unfortunately, this is the case with many of the situations

surrounding those that are under emotional duress. Innocent women are raped and murdered because of some man being abused by his mother as a child. Teenagers abuse and even murder little children because they were abused as a child. These types of individuals are not mentally ill, but they snapped under the continued emotional and physical duress of their environment. Under different circumstances these individuals could have been great citizens. With proper training and love they still can be.

Counseling those that have snapped under the duress can be difficult. If the counselor can get to the individual prior to them responding to the duress, they can be of much help. Educating the counselee is very important as well as providing support, not only for the counselee, but for the family as well.

Education is one thing that can prevent mental disorders. Governments, churches and communities must come together and stop the abuse of women and children in the homes. If we can stop creating these monsters within the home, soon the problem will be gone.

D. Homosexuality - A Late 20th Century Phenomena

Homosexuality has been around for centuries, but was rarely mentioned in society until a few years ago. One researcher estimated that as many as four percent (4%) of the men were homosexual and as many as thirty seven percent (37%) had participated in one homosexual act. With the AIDS epidemic, homosexuality has come to a high public awareness. While some lash out in condemnation of homosexuality, others have tried to make “Christian homosexuality” a legitimate way of life in the sight of God.

Homosexuality is easily defined. Dwelling on thoughts, fantasizing, or committing sexual acts with the same sex is an abomination to God and defines homosexuality. Having a thought of homosexuality is nothing more than a temptation and does not make a person a homosexual. However, without control of the thought life continued fantasizing of homosexual acts will bring them about. God did not create individuals to be attracted to the same sex and He does not deserve the blame for making homosexuals any more than He does for people becoming murders.

Most homosexuals have very distinct personality types. They are very aggressive and violent and will do anything to spread their cause. Many unsaved preachers, especially those who are supposed to be celibate, molest young boys, damaging them for life. The Book of Genesis confirms the behavior of homosexuals when they tried violently to have sexual relations with the angels at Sodom and Gomorrah. It is a sad fact, like the story incident the Book, that there are many homosexuals in the church teaching the Bible who have been deceived into thinking that they are saved.

The Bible says little about the sin of homosexuality, being singled out in only seven (7) occasions, and then only briefly. The King James Version deals with the sin of homosexuality more harshly than other translations in reference to homosexuality.

There are many things that influence individuals to become homosexuals. Molestation, exposure to pornography, a child being told constantly they are a sissy or tomboy, or not having a proper mother or father figure, may possibly have an influence on the decision to become a homosexual. God did not create homosexuals; they chose to be that way. A person may think about murder, but never be a murderer. The same is true for homosexuals. There is evidence that a homosexual preference and behavior comes about by psychological development and social learning.

There is nothing “gay” about being a homosexual and many negative effects come from their lifestyle. Family members and friends may disown them, and God's judgment of Aids will eventually catch and overtake them. Having children is not an option without adoption. Fortunately, most states prevent homosexuals from raising children because of the overwhelming evidence that these children could be molested and most of them will become homosexuals, just as abused children usually abuse their own children.

In counseling the homosexual, the counselor must show genuine concern, realizing that though they made the choice to commit this sin, there may have been many reasons as a child or even molestation that has led them to their choice. Reassuring them that God loves them and will forgive them is a must. God is not willing that any should perish, but that all come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. They must be reassured that God did not create them this way, and that their sexual orientation was either learned by their past experiences or chosen. Therefore, with encouragement and God's help, they can choose and learn to be straight. The church has a big part in the healing and restoration of the homosexual.

Building Godly and healthy home environments can prevent homosexuality. Children must be trained in the ways of the Lord and protected from the radical homosexuals that would try to influence them. We must teach them that homosexuality is a dangerous sin that is an abomination to God.

E. Violence and Abuse

Violence and abuse are running rampant in America and throughout the world. There are those who will commit violence and abuse in Christian homes. Environmental stress contributes to many of the acts of violence and abuse. When there seems to be no answer or end to the crying baby or the elderly person that needs more and more time, a person can snap and react under the stress. Another contributor is learned behavior. Many children that have witnessed their mother being abused or have been the victim of abuse very often grow up to become the

abuser. Finally, personal insecurity contributes to violence and abuse. A husband may beat his wife, because of his extreme jealousy or possessiveness.

Abuse can have many long-lasting effects. Molestation can often lead to homosexuality. Rape can lead to fear or hatred of men, as well as depression, anger, sexual difficulties, family tensions, and general problems in social adjustment. Feelings of anger, bitterness, fear, guilt and low self-esteem, are some of the many effects of abuse. Death is very often one of the effects if abuse is not stopped. When there is adult abuse of a child, the child will tend to be overweight, anxious, and depressed. Many of these children will have nightmares, problems in developing stable relationships, and problems with sex also.

Abuse of the elderly is especially a problem, due to their general dependency on others, rather than being independent. They are often abused by employees of nursing homes, hospital employees, vandals, their own mates, and other family members who are to give them care.

There are four (4) stages that most victims will go through after abuse has occurred. The first stage is the impact stage. This stage may last for several days and is characterized by shock, disbelief, anxiety and fear. Counselors should give guidance during this stage as what to do, for the victim is often too confused to think rationally.

The second (2nd) stage is denial this is when the victim denies the event that occurred and tries to function in the same way they did prior to the abuse. This stage may end after a few days, so friends, family, and the counselor must be aware that everything may not be back to normal

The third (3rd) stage is the process stage. This is when the victim begins to process what has happened and either accept and go on or stay here for the rest of their life, feeling fearful, threatened, and afraid to trust anyone. This stage is when a counselor can be most helpful by helping the victim forgive and begin to pursue their life.

The final stage is integration. This is the stage where the victim begins to conquer the effects of the abuse. Though feelings of hurt and scars may remain, the effects of the abuse no longer control them

Learning to control our emotions is the best thing we can do to prevent us from committing violence and abuse. Reporting violence and abuse is one way that we can prevent ourselves from being a victim of abuse. Becoming educated, alert and not trusting deeply those we do not know will also guard against being a victim of violence and abuse.

VIII. FINANCIAL COUNSELING

People never need to be taught how to spend money; even children do it with great success. The real problem lies in teaching people to manage their money. Money problems are very often the number two (2) problem in marriage, number one being sex. It causes frustration for teenagers when parents do not have the money for their braces or college education. When it is time to retire, many individuals can not do so because they have not prepared. In fact, many people do not even know how to balance their checkbook much less prepare for retirement.

Money is one of the most talked about subjects in the Bible. Jesus preached about managing money in the parable of the talents. Many times people use this Scripture in reference to talents such as singing, but the word talent here refers to money. Jesus also taught that it is easier for a camel to enter through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into heaven. The Word of God even declares unto us that the love of money is the root of all evil.

Financial problems come about because of: distorted values, such as materialism, desires to achieve riches quickly; greed and covetousness; and pride and resentment. It also appears when there are unwise financial decisions, lack of a budget, and especially a lack of giving. God would have us to give to Him the tithe, as well as to other believers and the poor. There are abundant Scriptures informing us of God's blessing upon our obedience in giving.

In most cultures, financial problems exist because there is no money or because of famine and disease, but in the western world this is not true. Poverty really does not exist in America. According to our standards it does, but anyone in poverty in a third (3rd) world country would trade places with the poorest in America anytime. The poor in our country spend more money on lottery tickets than people in other countries earn in a month.

Financial problems exist in western cultures primarily because of materialism. People are never able to get ahead because every time a raise comes along, they find a way to spend it. When the money really begins to come in they buy a bigger house, new car, or some other thing that they do not really need. They fall victim to the advertiser's slick promotion of things that are not necessarily needed. Credit card companies have been the blame for financial problems with many people, but they cannot be blamed. They should be praised for being smart enough to think of the idea. People must stop blaming others and take responsibility for their own actions. The credit card company did not make us take their card, nor do they make us use it.

People worry about money more than any other thing. Some worry about losing their home, car, and even their marriage. Our children not being able to attend college or knowing that we will never have the money we need to retire are some other effects of the financial problems that face so many people today.

Financial counseling is a much-needed resource in our society. Counselees must be taught the principle of giving first. The tithe belongs to God and is holy. They should know how to balance their checkbook and set up a budget, making sure that they do not forget retirement, for we cannot count on social security.

We can prevent financial problems with proper education. People must be encouraged to buy a house at all cost, for once the house payment is set, unlike rent, it will never go up. Soon the house will be paid for and retirement will be much easier when a person owns their own home. Credit cards must only be used in emergencies and be paid off each month. Tithing will also help us with our finances as we honor God in our giving.

The counselor can help a person with financial problems by helping them to recognize the problem and making a decision to solve it, helping them to seek Divine guidance, teaching Biblical principles of finances, and helping them to develop and follow a financial plan.

Helping those who are not in financial trouble to stay out of it can be accomplished by teaching Biblical values concerning finances, giving practical guidelines for managing money, emphasizing finances during premarital counseling, and raising the issue of finances when there is a crisis or life change.

A. So You Need a Job?

Too many people make choosing a vocation more complicated than it is. Most people find it difficult to decide because they are too wrapped up in having fun in college rather than finding a major which will guide them to a vocation in the future.

Not more than one hundred (100) years ago, children at the age of twelve (12) were often more mature than adults of twenty five (25) today. Twelve (12) year-old children were ready for marriage, they knew how to work and many of them had learned their father's trade. Now between their immaturity and laziness, kids cannot settle on a vocation, because they want to make lots of money and do little or no work.

The Bible tells us that if we do not work, we do not eat. Solomon warned that poverty and foolishness would come to those who were lazy. A man of God said that labor was a shield against the temptations of the enemy. This is the first principle that should motivate young people to find a career. The Bible condemns laziness and everyone that Jesus called was busy working. Work is honorable and should be done unto the Lord

Several conclusions we can make about work:

1. Work is honorable.
2. Work is to be divided by periods of rest.

3. Our work is to be of a high quality.
4. Work is for the common good.
5. Work and vocational choices are guided by God.

People that make good vocational choices are those that have planned ahead. They understand the Biblical principle of working in order to eat. They have sought counsel from God, pastor, parents, and school counselors before making their choices. Their choice is based on God's direction, the need for the skill, their desire to earn a particular income, and their personal preference in a field that they will enjoy.

Factors that help a person make a good vocational choice include: personality influences; aptitudes; interests; family influences; values; roadblocks; and most importantly, Divine leading.

People often make poor vocational choices because of laziness, poor guidance from parents and counselors and the desire to make a lot of money rather than choosing something that they would enjoy doing. Failure to seek God's direction is another reason that so many people make bad vocational choices. Even social influences can have an effect on a person's choice. A child that grows up in a neighborhood that has gangs and drug activity may choose to be a gang leader.

Making a good vocational choice can bring great fulfillment to one's life. A teacher for example will never get rich in their profession, but the joy and fulfillment they receive from teaching others is very rewarding. Good vocational choices are also healthy in marriage relationships and can make the environment for rearing children perfect.

Poor vocational choices can cause great dissatisfaction and even depression. It can cause problems in marriage, and make the environment not suitable for rearing children. Choices that have great salaries can also cause problems in marriage. Doctors for example have one of the highest divorce rates, because they are never home. The vocational choice can also be dissatisfying if there is no joy or fulfillment in the choice.

Poor vocational choices can always be avoided. God is the first place to start in finding a vocation. God will direct us into the perfect vocation that is suited for our potential and personality. If we follow His direction, we can be sure that we will receive joy in our vocation. Counseling is the second (2nd) thing that must be sought in the choice of a good vocation. Parents, pastors, and school counselors will all be helpful in making a good choice.

IX. OTHER PROBLEM TYPES COUNSELING

Counselors face many different and stressful problems each day. It is a challenging task to help so many different people with so many different problems. With this challenge comes frustration, as many counselees fail to change and the process is very slow for the ones that do change.

Someone that is deaf will require new procedures for counseling them. A translator will help, but even then the flow of the counseling session will be hindered. Facial expressions and body language will be a great help in these cases. If the handicap was not at birth, they may need comfort and direction with how to handle this new problem. Parents of children born with a handicap will also need comfort and guidance.

Individuals that are mentally retarded are very often demon possessed and need an anointed minister to cast the demon out. There are other cases of mentally retarded individuals that are not demon possessed. Some become retarded because of different types of brain damage and some are born that way. Fortunately there are many programs and homes where these people can receive specialized care and help.

In counseling minorities, the best approach is to treat everyone the same. Too many people have catered to minorities and many now feel they deserve special treatment. They do not.. Never treat a minority as of little value. No one is any more or less valuable in God's Kingdom. We are all the same. If minorities are treated as equals rather than minorities, their low self-esteem will be improved. This is the same as a person with a physical handicap. They do not want to be labeled or treated as handicapped, because it makes them feel less than whole.

Prisoners always have some problem prior to imprisonment and many other problems arise after imprisonment. Families need comfort and guidance while their loved one is in prison. There are no easy answers for the prisoner or their family, but support can make a big difference in their life.

Military families also need special attention. With their constant moving away from familiar environments, each new place becomes harder to adapt to. Husbands are often away from their families for months at a time and the wife and children will need support and some will need counseling.

Some women suffer more than others do from premenstrual stress. Women that have a pleasant attitude do not seem to suffer from stress as much as women that have a bad attitude. All women can be counseled to prepare themselves mentally for their menstrual cycle and God will carry them and their husbands through without any problems.

AIDS has been called the judgment of God against the sin of homosexuality. Certainly God is against deviate sexual lifestyles. The first thing homosexuals must do is repent. Through a change of lifestyle and relationship with God, His grace and healing may come

upon them just as it did with Nineveh. For those infected with AIDS other than homosexuals, counseling can be very hard. The counselee must be reassured that God is in control and can turn everything around for good. Every counselee must be encouraged not to become bitter or angry with God, for bad things can also happen to good people.

A. Guilt is a Critical Factor in Life

Guilt is at the root of much human suffering. Each person is unique, but guilt is a broad-based problem, pervading all the problem areas man has. No matter whether it is a homosexual, alcoholic, the terminally ill, lonely, or depressed, almost all of these people experience guilt as part of their problem. Guilt is the place where religion and psychology will often meet. It is the critical factor in people seeking counseling. Understanding the roots, trunk and branches of guilt are critical to an understanding of failures in psychological adjustment.

There are two (2) broad types of guilt. The first is objective. Objective guilt can be broken down into four (4) types: legal guilt (breaking laws of society), theological guilt (breaking God's laws), personal guilt (breaking one's own standards), and social guilt (breaking unwritten social rules), such as gossip, or rude behavior.

The second (2nd) type is subjective guilt. This type of guilt can be appropriate or inappropriate. Subjective guilt is having feelings of regret, remorse, shame or self-condemnation for something we have done wrong or feel that we have done wrong.

Most people speak of guilt as something that you feel, but guilt is not an emotion, it is a verdict. Someone does not need to feel guilty in order to be guilty. Many criminals never express remorse after committing a crime, but they are still guilty. The state of being guilty has been one of the greatest assets in motivating people to do right. Often time's people hurt someone's feelings and are not even aware until it is brought to their attention. Once most people find out they are guilty, they repent and try to correct the damage if possible.

The verdict of being guilty is what has allowed Christians the opportunity to be saved. No one can be saved until they realize that they are guilty in the eyes of God. Once guilt is realized, and then repentance can come, followed by salvation. No one would ever repent unless they knew they were wrong.

What has been a major problem for many people is that once they know they are guilty, they do not know how to accept God's grace. Many criminals in today's society are allowed to walk out of a court after having received a guilty verdict because they have a good attorney. Christians can also walk out of God's courtroom after having received a guilty verdict, because Jesus, the greatest attorney in the world, argues our case on the basis of our repentance and His blood. Jesus Christ Himself not only paid our bail, but He paid the penalty for our sin and guilt, allowing us not only to be free, but free of guilt.

There are many people that have allowed guilt to destroy them. When someone loses a loved one, the one left behind often blames themselves. They have given themselves a verdict of guilty and sentenced themselves to suffer grief. God does not want these people to live this way and with His help, they can be free.

Godly sorrow or guilt is constructive and usually brings about change. Worldly sorrow, or feelings of guilt should not exist in Christians, but some people still deal with this type of subjective guilt. John, in his first epistle, gives us a great Scripture that brings relief to anyone that has feelings of guilt because of sin (1Jn.1:9).

Satan persuades people to blame others in order to escape guilt. Just like Adam, many people fall into this trap of blaming others. The counselee might blame his parents, environment, or something else in order to escape the verdict of being guilty for choices he made. As Adam was responsible for the choices he made, God will also hold us accountable for the choices we make.

No one can escape the consequences of guilt. There are consequences of jail time, eternal damnation, suicidal feelings, etc. depending on the type of guilt. Repentance and forgiveness are some of the good consequences of guilt.

In counseling the person with guilt, the counselor must be gentle and understanding and never condemning of any decisions that may have led to the guilt. The goal is not to prove the counselee's guilt, but to free them from it. The guilt can be real or imagined as in cases of suicide, where the parent or child left behind blames themselves. It would be helpful to find out what the source of the guilt is, parental upbringing, church teaching, etc. Guilt can only be overcome by God's grace and mercy. The counselee must be taught the Word of God and it's principles in order to overcome guilt.

B. Be Angry and Sin Not

Anger, whether displayed or hidden, is at the root of many psychological, interpersonal, physical, and spiritual problems. Anger has been described as the chief saboteur of the mind. Elimination of anger will be a key factor in the solution of any problem, no matter what it is being expressed at. Anger seems to come most often because of the actions of others, not just the circumstances or events that take place. Jonah became greatly displeased and angry, but it was actually a time to rejoice when people repented and God spared them. The ten (10) disciples got angry when James and John wanted to be seated at the right and left hand positions on the throne. Jesus got angry at the self-righteous attitudes of the religious leaders, as well as His disciples wrong attitudes toward the little children who simply desired to see Him.

Each of us is affected by anger. The very first murder that ever took place was motivated by anger. Cain was angry because God received Abel's offering and not his, so he murdered his brother. If Cain would have controlled his anger, he would have never killed Abel. The lack of controlling anger is one of the world's most difficult problems today.

Anger in itself is not harmful, nor is it a sin. In fact, controlled anger is an asset. Where most people have problems is in two (2) areas. The first is that we can get angry at ridiculous things like, our football team's loss. The second (2nd) is that we do not control our anger.

Anger is an attribute of God, so we know that it must have some redeeming qualities. God has the ability to control His anger and His anger is always just and is seasoned with His grace and mercy. Man's anger is too often unjust and is seldom controlled. Uncontrolled anger is a dangerous thing, for it can lead us to sin. In Ephesians 4:26, we find that it is alright to be angry, but we should not let that anger lead us to sin, nor should we let the sun go down on our wrath. When we do not deal with our anger before the day ends, we have opened the door for bitterness, unforgiveness and vengeance. God told us that vengeance is His.

Anger is indeed a powerful force in our lives, for it can cause physical problems, psychological reactions, and unconscious attempts to harm ourselves. We can have wrong thinking such as self-pity and revenge, and spiritual struggles which will come out of us when we wrestle with bitterness, anger, slander, and wrath.

There are several causes to anger. Biological causes come from a reaction to certain types of food, drugs, or a chemical imbalance in the brain that can cause outbursts of anger. Injustice can also cause anger. When we are wrongfully accused or someone is not punished for wrongful deeds, anger often follows. Frustration when things do not go right can also cause anger. A threat or hurt from being rejected, humiliated or criticized is yet another cause of anger. Learning actions in specific conditions can also cause anger. Children learn anger from their parents. People are taught to be angry at certain things. Racists are not born, they are taught to be that way. The same is true for many types of anger.

There are four (4) ways that we deal with anger. First, we can repress, or refuse to admit that we are angry. Taking a vacation to get away or leaving the room when anger comes is ways in which individuals that repress their anger deal with it. We can also suppress our anger or hide it from others. When anger is suppressed, it can lead to physical sickness or even suicide. The third (3rd) is to express anger. There are three (3) types of expressed anger. The first is direct aggression, where the responses to anger are verbal or physical. The next is passive aggressive, where someone may have an affair or take drugs in order to get back at someone. The third (3rd) is redirected aggression, where the anger is expressed to an innocent person. The fourth (4th) way that we deal with anger is to confess it to God

and others. This, of course, is the only real way to deal with anger.

In helping the counselee deal with anger, we must get them to admit their anger, and express it through communication to God and others that are involved. The counselee must consider the sources of anger and avoid things that cause anger. The counselee must focus on humility, confession, forgiveness, and self-control. As the counselor deals with these issues, the counselee will be able to build a healthy concept and self-esteem and become a person that is Spirit-controlled instead of anger controlled.

C. Depression - A Tool of the Enemy

Christians should never be discouraged. However, we tend to have “mountaintop days,” when we see everything as having a bright future; “ordinary days,” where we go to work or school or into the yard, working as normal with nothing much happening; and “dark days” when we struggle to get through the confusion, doubt, despair, and discouragement. When these days string out into weeks and months, we take on a depressed attitude and outlook, and depression has opportunity to set in.

The Bible clearly supports the view that we should not be discouraged. Paul said that he learned to live with joy in whatever state he was in. It is wrong for Christians to be depressed; in fact it is sinful. If it was not wrong for Christians to be depressed, then why would they want help and why should we bother helping them? Nevertheless, we Christians do suffer from occasional depression.

There are two (2) major categories of depression. The first is genetic-biological. This type of depression is caused by medical conditions such as chemical imbalances or brain tumors. The second (2nd) type is psychological-cognitive. Family, stress or significant losses, cognitive, anger, sin, and guilt cause this type of depression. These types usually affect everyone at some point in their life, but are easily overcome by trusting in God.

There is no evidence that depression has any genetic basis. It appears to unlearned doctors, counselors and researchers, to be genetically based, because we often see patterns of depression in both parents and children. This, however, has nothing to do with genetics and everything to do with generational curses, or learned behavior. Children that see their parents depressed all the time, never have the opportunity to experience moments of joy and therefore grow up to be depressed as well.

Almost all depression is a result of a lack of faith. Most people get depressed because of some trauma that took place in their life. Usually as time passes, most individuals find a reason to go on. There are, however, many that lose hope and that do not have the faith that God can turn things around in their life. This is not a

reason to judge or condemn them for these feelings, because we are all capable of feeling this way.

There are many effects of depression. A few of them are unhappiness, physical illness, low self-esteem, and suicide. Some of the signs of depression are sadness, loss of energy or desire in work, sex, or hobbies, self-criticism, insomnia, and loss of appetite.

Finding out the source of the depression is the first step in helping the counselee. Any depression other than those caused by medical illness should never be treated with any kind of medication. The medicine gives them a reason not to try to be set free and will hinder deliverance and most of the time will make the person worse.

After finding out the reason or source of the depression, we must instill hope into the person we are counseling. Those who have tried and failed to fix their problems need hope, for without it, they will not even try again. Hope is what produces joy that will remain when the going gets tough (Pr.10:28), produces perseverance (Ro.8:24-25), confidence (2Co.3:12) consistency (1Th.1:3), increased energy and enthusiasm (1Ti.4:10), stability (He.6:19), an intimate relationship with God (He.7:10), and personal purity (1Jn.3:3). Thus, hope must have a strong emphasis in our counseling also.

Many women in mid-life become depressed and often times, something as simple as a medical doctor saying that “what you are feeling is normal and will pass,” can be enough to give that person hope. One of the best ways to help the counselee come out of depression and to avoid it, is found in Philippians 4:8.

We must be sure to help the counselee avoid false hope. This is not to get what they want, for God never promises us all we want and we should not either. If getting all we want would cure all our problems, God would have already given it to us. However, we find that getting things many times simply aggravates the real problem. False hope is many times based on things that have no Biblical substance, such as the thought that “devotion a day will keep the devil away.” No such thing is said in the Bible. Even Jesus, who was more devoted than us all, said that “Satan is coming and has nothing in Me.” Yes, the Scriptures are our answer, but there is no magic in them to accomplish what we need.

Others have a false hope based on an unbiblical view of prayer. Prayer is not all that God requires, although He requires it. We do not simply “put the ball in God’s court” as if it is all up to Him now. In one place we are told to ask for “...our daily bread” (Mt.6:11), and in another we are told that if we do not “...work, neither let him eat” (2Th.3:10). God is simply telling us to pray for what we need, but not to expect them to rain from heaven as the manna did in the wilderness.

At times false hope comes because of a misunderstanding of Scriptures. We cannot read personal meaning into a text. We have to take the Scriptures in the contest in which they are given. Many times the counselor will have to challenge the hopes that people have when they are known to be false. True hope will hold firm for the person who stands on it, but those who have a false hope will find it to be shifting sand over time.

True hope is a Biblically based expectation of good, based on God's promises, not our wishes. It is the result of true salvation, and is holistic in focus. It does not focus on the part to be received, but God's eternal plan as well. So, we can see that true hope is realistic, and must be renewed daily. It is by the continued communion with the Word that we arrive at a lively hope, trusting in what God has said. We will have to have a diligent and accurate study of God's Word, seeking Him regularly to receive that hope we need in tough times. Also, true hope is a matter of our will, connected with His will. Hopelessness is a choice, just as hope is.

D. Loneliness Can Be a Struggle

Loneliness is something that everyone suffers from at various times in their life. In most cases, the loneliness we go through is normal and passes as quickly as it came. Sometimes, however, loneliness can be a struggle to overcome and the individual needs help and guidance. A person can be surrounded by people and still suffer from loneliness. There are five (5) basic causes of loneliness. The first is social causes such as technology and television. When people spend most of their time watching television or interacting with a computer, they tend to be lonely because they have less time for real relationships. Developmental causes, such as the need to bond with others, are another cause for loneliness. Everyone has this basic need to bond, but things such as divorce or the death of a loved one disrupts this and can lead to loneliness. Children that are excessively criticized or pastors that are not appreciated by their congregations can become lonely. The third (3rd) cause is psychological. Low self-esteem, fear, or lack of control due to a death, divorce or imprisonment is a few of the psychological causes. Situational causes is the fourth (4th) type, and include being single, individuals who rise to the top of their profession or children who move away from home for the first time. The fifth (5th) is spiritual causes due to not being saved or being out of fellowship with God. Unconfessed sin or unforgiveness can also be spiritual causes for loneliness.

There are many different types of people who suffer from loneliness, for many different reasons, and just as many effects of loneliness. Teenagers often feel lonely because of the need to fit in. Pastors and counselors often go through periods of loneliness, when there seems to be no change in the people or when all their time is spent helping others and not spending time with their own family. It is like the mechanic that is so busy fixing other people's cars that they don't have time to fix their own.

Many people who rise to the top of their profession suffer from loneliness because they become isolated from others. High profile sports players and actors are examples of those who suffer from loneliness for this reason. People do not have to be alone to suffer from loneliness. Often times married couples are the ones who suffer the most from loneliness. Loneliness can come as they reject and fail to meet each other's needs.

There are many effects of loneliness. Low self-esteem, depression, thoughts of suicide, becoming extreme in one's dress or behavior, alcohol, drugs and even violence are a few. The effects of loneliness are short term, if the loneliness is short term. Unfortunately, there are many people who suffer from long-term loneliness and therefore the effects are also long-term. Prostitutes are an example of this, as well as many juvenile delinquents. Most long-term sufferers have experienced some traumatic event in their life such as rape, divorce, or a death of a loved one.

Overcoming loneliness cannot be changed by being around people, but by changing one's mind set. Proverbs 18:24 says, "A man that hath friends must show himself friendly...." Finding the cause of the loneliness will always help in overcoming it. The lonely person must be willing to risk failure in order to gain success. Changing social habits by spending less time watching television and being on the Internet is another way to overcome loneliness. Above all, the lonely person must start having their spiritual needs met. The local church is a good place to start.

Most of us live where the tendency is to loneliness, with rapid change and modern technology, which actually discourage intimacy and helps to create the environment for loneliness. These feelings of loneliness tend to cause us to try to find closeness, such as with complete strangers, casual sex partners, fellow drinkers, and seat-mates on airplanes. Caring relationships will help remove these feelings, not a one-night fling or hoisting a few with a person who has the same problem that the individual who is lonely has.

E. Be Anxious For Nothing

Anxiety comes from threats, conflict, fear, unmet needs, physiology, and individual differences. Included in the area of threats is the fear of danger, as in crime, war, or violent weather, self-esteem; as in not looking good or having a potential failure in self-image; being separated from those who are important to us; having our values threatened as in failure to receive a promotion; and unconscious influences which we cannot place our finger on, but it is there.

Each of us will experience anxiety attacks from time to time. A certain amount of anxiety is both profitable and healthy. The kind of anxiety that is related to anticipate excitement for something good that is about to happen is not bad. Even the anxiety that comes from knowing we will get old and die can be helpful, by causing us to eat

right and exercise. Anxiety becomes dangerous when individuals become depressed or are constantly anxious about things that could happen but probably will not. When a person will not go out at night for fear of being robbed or will not drive a car for fear of crashing, the anxiety caused by this is always satanic. The source of the anxiety may have come from having been robbed or being in an auto accident, but the continued fear or anxiety attacks that have them bound is from the devil. It is like the child learning how to walk for the first time, he is very anxious in his first attempts and even more so when he falls a few times, but the desire to go on is instilled by God. The child will eventually conquer any fear of having fallen and learn to walk with great skill.

Prolonged anxieties will lead to stress that can cause even physical illness. Doctors can be of no help in these situations, because the illness is not caused by something that is treatable with medication. Medication may relieve the headache or the upset stomach, but it will come back because the root has not been dealt with. This is why we must never counsel someone to use medication for anxiety. Most medications for these kinds of problems are dangerous, addictive and have serious side effects and will cause the person to be dependent on the drugs rather than on God.

There is a so-called “anxiety disease” that is related to a minor heart abnormality. The heart abnormality does not cause people to have anxiety attacks, but they have them because they become concerned with the pain caused from the minor heart abnormality. In simple language, we do not have an anxiety disease because we have cancer. Once a person continues to have anxiety attacks they open the door for the devil to begin to oppress them and this is why individuals get worse and not because of anxiety disease. Prior to the twentieth (20th) century, we did not have all these psychological terms to give our behavior problems, so many people overcame their problems by facing them head on. Now we blame the burn from the hot coffee on the restaurant. We blame the murder on the gun. People are looking for someone or something to blame for their issues rather than to take responsibility for their own actions.

The Scripture in Philippians 4:6 tells us to not be anxious or allow anxiety to control us rather that we pray. Peter said to cast all our care upon the Lord. The reason that so many people have anxiety is because they do not want to cast their cares on the Lord until they are in trouble. If more people would give God all their cares as the Scripture tells us, there would not be so many bound by anxiety attacks.

We can help people with anxiety by trying to calm them and find out what the source of their anxiety is. The counselor must be gentle, encouraging and understanding as he tries to find the solution to their anxiety. The counselee must be directed to God and His Word, while not blaming others for their actions, lest they stay in that state and never change.

F. Counseling Those Who Are Grieving

The Bible speaks of grief in vivid tones, telling of Jacob mourning over the loss of Joseph, refusing to be comforted. It tells of David's grieving ahead of the anticipated death of his and Bathsheba's son, and of his grief at Absalom's death. Jeremiah lamented over the death of King Josiah. However, today the meaning of grief has been changed by Christ. For those with no hope, it is a time of grief, but for the believer, it is a time of rejoicing to go and meet, face to face, with our Maker. Death is not the end of existence, just a change of realms for the believer and non-believer alike.

This does not mean that grieving is wrong, for Christ said that "blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." At Lazarus' death Jesus was deeply moved, as well as when John the Baptist was killed, withdrawing Himself for a while.

Grief is something that almost everyone will experience in their lifetime. It can be one of the most difficult emotions to deal with and overcome. Anyone of the age of forty (40) has probably experienced the loss of a grandparent or some other loved one. How a person deals with grief is important, as grief has destroyed the lives of many people.

The Bible tells us that we should mourn at the birth of a child and rejoice at the death. What the Lord is saying is that a child is born into sin, but death is nothing more than a door that leads to eternal life for the Christian. Though most Christians do not rejoice in the death of a loved one, knowing that they are saved definitely makes it easier to deal with the loss.

Prior anticipation of the death of a loved one can reduce the amount of grief, whereas sudden unexpected death can be extremely difficult to bare. Different types of loss can also have an effect on the degree of grief. Most people are prepared for the death of their parents, especially when they are older, but losing a spouse, even in old age, can increase the amount of grief a person will experience. One's beliefs can also have an effect as to what extent a person grieves. Since Christians believe those that are saved will go to heaven to be with the Lord, death is easier to bare when the person is saved. The opposite is true for those that are not saved. There is usually more grief for a person that is unsaved.

Social environment will cause a person to react differently to grief. Some societies may not grieve very long or at all in the death of loved ones, but in America, much care is given in preparing the dead as well as time allowed for grief.

Depression is one of the many emotional effects of grief. Feelings of guilt, fear, anxiety, loneliness and forgetfulness are some other emotional effects that grief can have. Individuals suffering from some of these problems can also be affected socially. They often lose the desire to be around other people, even family members

that they once enjoyed. Emotional problems can also lead to physical problems. Studies have shown that extended periods of grief can hinder the body's immune system.

The counselor must realize that grief in itself is not a bad thing. Every individual should be able to grieve when there are losses. Encouraging the counselee to take the time to grieve is important. Once a reasonable amount of time has passed, the counselee should be encouraged to go on with their life. The counselor should point out reasons why to go on and point out their value to God and family members.

Grief cannot be prevented, but excessive and unhealthy grief can be. Keeping one's house and family in order is an important first step. Having life insurance, eliminating debts and other financial and family planning should be set in place early in life. A grieving spouse should not be concerned with losing their home, paying for a funeral or the children's college tuition. Building friendships and maintaining strong family ties can also help with grief. Teaching the family to serve God and building strong relationships with a local church is one of the greatest things we can do to help in times of grief.

G. Physical Illness and Counseling

While our body is a marvelous creation, with the ability to recreate itself in its original form, physical illness seems to be something that is almost unavoidable. While our bodies can fight disease, adapt to temperature changes, react to environmental stimulation, and survive many physical abuses, at some point during our life, each of us are likely to have some time of physical illness. Many of these will be minor annoyances, while others may be serious and even life threatening. Physical suffering brings us to the reality that we are in a temporal body, facing an exit from this life at some point.

The Bible tells us that it is appointed unto man once to die and after this the judgment. There are also numerous stories recorded in the Bible about individuals who suffered from physical illness. The Word tells us that "...with His stripes we are healed..." (Is.53:5), and in the Book of First Peter, it says "...by whose stripes ye were healed..." (1Pe.2:24). Everyone that Jesus prayed for was always healed; so we know that it is always God's will to heal us and we do not have to die from sickness. We do not, however, know why that Christians still die from physical illness and are not healed.

There are many causes of physical illness. Much of the sickness today, especially in America, is not treatable because the sickness is in the individual's mind. Stress causes actual physical conditions, such as headaches, sleeplessness and nausea, but it cannot be treated, because stress is not an illness. Stress must be dealt with in the mind by changing one's attitude and getting rid of sin. Other physical illnesses are caused by demons and the only way the pain and symptoms will go is to cast

out the demons. Jesus confirmed this when He cast out the deaf and dumb spirit. Still other causes of physical illness come because of the curse. Because of Adam's sin, our bodies slowly deteriorate and become susceptible to diseases and other causes of physical illness.

Some of the effects of physical illness, apart from the actual symptoms, vary with the individual. Everyone responds differently to pain and disruptions in their life. Some individuals have a sense of helplessness and loss of control. Others may want to die because the pain is unbearable. Fear is another effect of physical illness. As people realize that their condition is permanent and incurable, fear of death becomes a major effect on the person.

In counseling those with physical illnesses, the first thing that must be done is to evaluate the illness. The degree of seriousness will determine what approach is taken with the counselee. We must focus and deal with the specific concerns and feelings of the sick person, realizing that each person may react differently to the same illness. The counselee should be encouraged to make important decisions and not lose hope, for with God nothing is impossible. When seriously ill people have realistic views on their condition, it is hope that sustains them, even in the difficult times. As the Scriptures say "...hope deferred makes the heart sick..." The counselor should also be available to the family for any guidance and comfort they may need. It is good to discourage any unnecessary and prolonged treatment as some people thrive on the attention they receive when they are sick.

In order to do everything we can to prevent physical illness, the body, soul, and spirit must be exercised. Preventing physical illness must start early. A proper diet and physical exercise won't guarantee that we will never become physically ill, but not eating right and exercising will guarantee physical illness. Exercising the mind is important in preventing stress-related symptoms. Philippians 4:8 tells us how we should think. Walking in the Spirit and exercising the spirit man is also crucial in preventing and overcoming physical illness.

H. Self-Esteem - An Odd Problem

Self-esteem is touted as the major problem by the majority of psychologists. They say that there are no bad people, just people who think badly of themselves. Advocates of the "self-esteem are your problem" theories have been very successful in convincing people that this is the truth. Probably everyone has had feelings of inferiority at one time or another. It comes about when we compare ourselves unfavorably with others. These sometimes faulty comparisons can lead to human misery and a feeling of being inadequate. If we give up the fairly common desire to be superior, it will likely stop the feelings.

High self-esteem does not promote higher achievement. In a standardized test given to students from several nations, the youngsters that scored poorly though

that their math skills were just fine, while those who scored highest basically said that they were not good at math. Morally we are in the same kind of situation. Morality is at low ebb. This would, by those who claim that self-esteem is the problem, cause us to think that people's self-esteem would be suffering. However, when morality was high in the 1940's, a survey asking if a person felt that they were important was answered at an average of fifteen percent (15%) as yes. Similar surveys in the 1990's saw the numbers go to over sixty percent (60%) average, yet immorality is much higher. It seems that even though the moral fabric of our society is going to pieces, the self-esteem of people is going up. This would say to us that positive thinking has nothing to do with the elevation of a culture or cause us to live more moral lives.

Too often both worldly and Christian psychologists put too much emphasis on self-esteem. One prominent pastor has been espousing the self-esteem theory, calling a book he wrote as a "personal-improvement manual." The book was even marketed as motivational therapy, not theology, and for good reason. Time seems to have worn away the evangelical's resistance to the self-esteem theology. Psychology and self-esteem have fed off of each other, making the church more vulnerable to the dangers of it. Man who is into self-love and self-righteousness are actually sinners, in need of spiritual salvation. Human transgression is sin, and self is not the part of us that is to be elevated in that transgression. It is because of self that we sin in the first place. It is in the recognition of our utter hopelessness and helplessness that we begin to see our need, not when we feel good about ourselves.

Many disagree as to how self-esteem or self-love is defined. The Bible does not teach us to love self, but to deny self and put it to death. Where many misunderstand is that we are to know who we are in Christ, for if God be for us who can be against. The Bible teaches that our righteousness is as filthy rags and that there is none that is good. We do not need to love self or have a high self-esteem; rather we need to accept that we belong to Christ, and it is not our righteousness, but His that will enable us to be great in His kingdom

People must be of great value, first of all because God created us, and secondly, because He also bought us with His blood. Finding the balance is the key to avoiding both confusion and problems in these areas.

Inaccurate teaching has caused much of the problems people have in the area of self esteem. Sin and guilt have also contributed to feelings of inadequacy and low self esteem. Past experiences, parent-child relationships, unrealistic expectations, faulty thinking and community influences are some of the other areas that can greatly influence how we feel about ourselves.

Inferiority and low self-esteem can have a variety of effects on an individual. Every individual is different. One individual may become suicidal and another controlling

and violent, and both can suffer from low self-esteem. Depression and feelings of worthlessness are other effects. Some people will feel the need to constantly gain other's approval in order to help them cope with their feelings of inferiority.

In counseling individuals with inferiority or self-esteem problems, we must give them genuine support, acceptance and approval. As we seek to develop understanding, we must share the Biblical perspective on self-esteem. The counselee should be encouraged to share openly and give a realistic self-evaluation. As the counselee evaluates themselves, encourage them to focus on their strengths, and make them aware that everyone has weaknesses. Self-esteem is actually the value that comes to us when we have been restored to a right relationship with God. This is the only place that we can be assured that we are valuable. It is to be aware of ourselves, without being absorbed with ourselves. The believer should have a positive value of self, not because of any worldly achievement, but because of God's grace and redemption.

It is necessary for the counselee to look back at past experiences and goals, helping them determine if they were realistic. The counselee must be taught new skills in setting realistic goals and learning not to accept everything that people say about them. They must be taught to avoid destructive tendencies, deal with sin, and to participate in group meetings.

As in many of the issues we have discussed, education is one of the best ways to prevent problems, and inferiority and self-esteem is no exception. Proper teaching on all levels, beginning at home and continuing through school and even into the business world is a must, if we are to prevent these kinds of problems. Parents are usually the biggest key, because they have the most influence and should train their children in the ways of the Lord. The church can also have a big impact in helping those that may deal with these kinds of problems, by teaching them the truth about God's Word.

X. INDUCING CHANGE IN THE COUNSELEE

Change comes about only by choice. This takes a commitment. The writer of Proverbs said it this way, "In all labor there is profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty" (Pr.14:23). Inducing people to change comes about by our helping them to make Biblically sound decisions that are conducive to change.

A. They Must Take Responsibility

We have to help the counselee accept personal responsibility for their desires, motivations, thoughts, attitudes, actions, words, and feelings. No one else is to blame, so they must get past what they previously felt had motivated them to their wrong behavior.

B. They Have a Personal Choice

We have to cause the counselee to realize that Biblical change will require a personal choice. It is only when people want to change that they can. We are doomed to put up with what we are willing to put up with. God provides a way to change, but people can stay in their defeated state as long as they wish and God will not force them to change any.

C. Heart Sins Must Be Dealt With

We have to cause a concern about their heart sins, even more than their behavioral sins. Change in behavior will not come about without a change in the heart. That is what is wrong with the behavioral sciences, for they do not address the heart problem. We do not mend our garments, but our hearts. King David said that a "...broken and a contrite heart..." God would not despise (Ps.51:17). It is the heart sins that we are required to repent of. Jesus said in Matthew that there had been some teaching in the past that did not go far enough. "You have heard it said... but I say unto you..." was how He prefaced His teachings on the problem of heart sin.

D. Commitment is Required for Change

We have to get a commitment from the person we are counseling to put off the desires, thoughts, and actions that keep them from making a Biblical change. We have to help them see the need to put in new thoughts, desires, and actions that line up with the Word of God. It is only when this goal is reached that counseling can be called successful.

1. Commitment is to acknowledge personal responsibility.

This includes what they think and how they act. Any excuses, blaming, rationalizing, or defending of their behavior is to say that they are not going to change. Without that commitment, they will continue on in the sin. It is a must to help them realize they can respond Biblically through the power of the Holy Spirit.

2. Commitment is to choose to look at their circumstances, the past and present, from a Biblical view.

All human wisdom and feelings must be gotten past, for these hinder people from seeing sin for what it is, destructive. Using the Scriptures to see their actions and thoughts and feelings will bring light to them, not their own emotions or opinions.

3. Commitment is to get rid of whatever is stopping Biblical change.

We are to put on the "...Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh..." (Ro.13:14). It is necessary to get rid of the pornographic materials if a person has a problem with lust, as well as get the channels off of the television that have shows with sexual content. It is to also avoid other places that encourage temptation.

4. Commitment is to put all of ones energy toward the goal.

Change is seldom quick or automatic, just hard work. A person who will not stick with it, no matter how hard it gets, is just playing around and wasting time. There is no gain if there is no pain.

5. Commitment is a perseverance in obedience.

Substantial progress will probably not take place in just a week or so. Counselees must know that it takes endurance, so that when "...they have done the will of God..." they will receive what God has promised (He.10:36). There is a great recompense of reward when we do not throw away our confidence in Him.

6. Commitment is trusting God to bring the strength to change.

God has the resources for us to change. Paul tells us to work out our own salvation "...with fear and trembling..." because God is at work in us. We work at it, and rely also on God to work. We do not rely on our own abilities, but in His. It is with the commitment of ourselves to Christ, to obey Him completely, that His mighty power comes into play and meets the need.

E. Approaches to Motivation

Our approach can be man-centered or God-centered. The man-centered motivations are manipulations, sometimes inducing the action we desire, but the emphasis is on personal satisfaction. It is primarily encouraging us to focus on our own desires, with the visible results as what will satisfy us. This is, in actuality, idolatry (1Jn.2:15-17). While it may bring a desired change in behavior, it is actually trading one problem for another, making the change displeasing to God.

The God-centered motivation lines up with Paul's statement "...from Him and through Him and to Him are all things..." (Ro.11:36). When we make changes primarily for the purpose of bringing glory and honor to God, rather than having our own needs met, God is satisfied with that change. So, God-centered change is on the immaterial, not the material, invisible and not visible, eternal and not temporal (Mt.6:33; 2Co.4:18; Co.3:1).

F. Paul's Motivation Method

Paul gives us Scriptures on how to induce change, but none are clearer than in Romans chapter six (6). It was his goal to bring about a change in the readers of Romans.

1. Paul gave conclusive statements about our position in Christ.

Our identification with Christ makes us free is the theme of verses three (3) through ten (10). Paul said that our being united with Him was in His death, burial, and resurrection, so we have "...died to sin..." and are "...risen with Him..." This means that sin no longer rules us, for its power has been broken. The one who has died has been "...freed from sin..." It is in living with Christ that new power is available to us to live the new life in Christ. It is in this power that we conquer every temptation and potential sin (Ro.8:37). Thus, every counselee that is born again has the ability, through their union with Christ, to overcome any sinful habit or life pattern.

2. Paul gave imperative commands to live in our position in Christ.

He instructs us to "...consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus..." (Ro.6:11). We are to consider our relationship with sin to be broken. When Paul says to "consider" this, he is saying that we are to "record it as fact." He requires of us to think about our actions and words in light of these facts that he is teaching about our union with Christ. Paul goes on to tell us that sin "...shall not be master over..." us, for we are "...not under the law, but under grace." It is indeed the grace of God that we can even keep our commitment to Him.

G. God's Motivation of Moses

God convinced Moses to do what he did not want to do, go back to Egypt and lead the children of Israel out of bondage. God did not focus on fleshly desires or sinful pride, but on Himself and His Glory.

1. God reminded Moses of His promises (Ex.3:8, 12, 17-18), and Moses recognized God's faithfulness, honesty, and holiness.
2. God gave Moses concrete and attainable goals (Ex.4:15-17), so that Moses would know exactly what to do.
3. God gave Moses specific instructions (Ex.3:14-22), with which Moses would know how to attain the goal.

4. God gave Moses evidence of Divine power (Ex.4:1-8). When the snake turned to a rod again, Moses was convinced it was God directing the show, and that all he needed to accomplish the task was in his hands. This was further evidenced by the leprous hand that was again normal.
5. God gave Moses a redirected focus (Ex.4:10-12), away from his own inadequacy to God's sufficiency.
6. God gave Moses a description of His own character and plan (Ex.3:15-18), reminding him of the Divine ownership of the people and Divine presence to help in any situation.

H. Other Motivations

We can see other motivations used in the Bible. These principles will help us to bring those we counsel to an action that they did not think possible. It is through the preceding and following that people will be motivated to change.

1. Sharing our perception of the situation (Ga.2:11-14; 1Jn.1:7)
2. Eliminating specific reasons for resistance (Mt.28:18-20)
3. Reminding them of who God is (Pr.8:13)
4. Reflection on who they are in Christ (Ps.90:3-6; Je.10:23)
5. Sharing the love and grace of Christ (2Co.5:14; 1Jn.3:1-4)
6. Sharing the resources we have in Christ (Ro.8:34; Ep.1:3)
7. Sharing the promises of God (Is.41:10; Mt.6:33; 28:20; He.13:5-6; 2Pe.1:3-4)
8. Telling the consequences of obedience (Ps.1:1-3; Ep.6:1-3)
9. Giving specific instruction (Mt.5:21-26; Php.4:6-9)
10. Exhorting to choose to obey (Ro.6:11-13; 1Ti.5:21)
11. Giving the consequences of disobedience (Pr.5:22-23; Ga.6:7-8)
12. Expressing surprise at resistance (Is.1:2-9; Ga.1:6; 3:1)
13. Expressing love and concern for them (Php.1:3-8; 1Th.2:8, 19)

14. Sharing on proper values and priorities (Pr.15:16-17)
15. Sharing results of resistance affecting others (Pr.15:25, 27)
16. Warn about the Fathers discipline (He.12:4-14; 1Co.11:27-28)
17. Explain church discipline (Mt.18:15-17; 2Th.3:10; Ti.3:9-11)
18. Call to accountability before God (Ro.13:11-14; He.9:26; 1Jn.2:18)

I. Dealing with Resistance

There are two (2) kinds of resistance in counseling, covert and overt. The covert resistance is when there is outward consent, but no compliance in reality. This was demonstrated by Jesus parable of the two (2) sons who were asked by their father to go work in the vineyard. The one who said he would, yet do not, was covert action.

The overt resistance is when a person openly refuses to forgive or obey, as in Jonah's running from Nineveh. Covert action is harder to deal with than overt. A person who is covertly resisting will demonstrate it by several possible avenues. These include:

1. Covert resisters will be absent, or cancel appointments for no or questionable reasons.
2. Covert resisters will fail to do assigned work.
3. Covert resisters will distance or keep the counselor at arms length, refusing detailed information.
4. Covert resisters will give subtle communication of threats, such as, "if you are not careful, I will not come back." This can be physical threats also.
5. Covert resisters will use intimidation, become antagonistic, and even become withdrawn or tearful.
6. Covert resisters will try to manipulate by crying, flattery, or trying to sidetrack the conversation.

Addressing the foundational issues behind the resistance is a must. This can come about because of an unregenerate heart, repeated failures in solving the problem they have come to you about, fear, pride, ignorance, unbelief, bitterness, or

improper commitments.

If there is an application of the principles for motivation above and still no movement, it could be that a person will have to resort to church discipline. Jesus spoke about this in Matthew, giving us the principles of going privately to the brother who sinned first, then with two (2) or three (3) witnesses if there is no repentance, and then before the church if no change has taken place (Mt.18:15-18). Hence, the person who continues in sin habitually, after the proper course of action has been applied, is to be publicly rebuked (2Th.3:14; 1Ti.5:20). Fellowship is to be withheld until there is repentance. This is to be a warning as a brother, not as an enemy (2Th.3:15). This has to be done at times because of a refusal to submit to the Lordship of Christ, not just that we are trying to get them to straighten up.

There must be considerable wisdom used in such a proceeding, for it is possible to do more harm than good. We must act humbly, even though we may need to deal most sharply with them. It must never be carried out with any ill will, revenge, or lording over them, but as a necessary duty that we must carry out.

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"Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

I Corinthians 3:5-11