

Online Grace Bible School

With
Ken Legg, Australia

Copyright © Ken Legg, 2014
www.kenlegg.com.au

These notes may be copied and distributed (not sold) provided that due copyright acknowledgement is given in accordance with the details on this page

**Online Grace Bible School
Phase 3
Counselling God's Way**

1) My Brother's Keeper

Questions that are often asked regarding counselling are:

- ✓ "Is every Christian called to counsel?"
- ✓ "Shouldn't we leave counselling to the professionals?"
- ✓ "Should we have a degree before we counsel?"
- ✓ "Am I my brother's keeper?"

Do we have a responsibility towards our fellow Christians? What does the Bible say? (Note: This subject looks primarily at Christians counselling Christians.)

1) Heb.10:24&25. We are to _____

One of the dangerous practices of some of the Hebrews was that of forsaking fellowship. It was already producing backsliding. The Hebrew Christians were urged to:

a) _____

b) _____

2) Jn.13:1-5. We are to _____

When we do so, take care of the _____

3) Gal.6:1-5. We are to _____

v.1 "Restore" is from the Greek word *katartizo*, meaning to mend or bring something back to its former position of wholeness or soundness. (See, for example, Mk.1:19.)

Do not hurt him, but help him. Don't ignore the situation, yet treat him as you yourself would like to be treated if you were in his place. Ask, "What is wrong in this person's life that needs to be set straight?" Don't neglect the situation, but don't expose it publicly and crush the offender. The whole emphasis is not on putting the person down, but on building him or her up.

Note: Each of us have two loads to carry:

a) v.5 "*each one shall bear his own load*". The Greek word here is *phortion* = a man's pack; light enough for one man to bear alone. We are to:

b) v.2 "*bear one another's burden*". The Greek word here is *baros* = a heavy load or burden, too great for one person to carry alone. We are to:

4) Jude 22&23. We are to _____

What should be our attitude towards those being influenced by apostates? There are three groups:

a) The **wavering**. (Those in mental doubt) We are to:

b) The **burning**. (Those in mortal danger) We are to:

infectious. (Those in moral defilement) We are to:

c) c) The

“Are you qualified to counsel?”

Have you ever been asked this question? How would you answer? Usually, those who ask this question want to know if we have been trained in psychology. That question should be answered with another question, “What brand of psychology do you mean?” There are so many different systems. Also, most systems are at variance with one other. (More about that in the next session.) But what does the Bible say?

1) Rom.15:14. The Greek word for “admonish” is *nouthesia*. This word incorporates three ideas:

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

Note the two biblical requirements here for a counsellor:

i) _____

ii) _____

2) Jn.8:32; Col.3:16. The truth equips us to _____

3) According to 2 Cor.1:3-7 _____ equip us to counsel.

Lk.10:25-37. Wherever the Good Samaritan went he took oil and wine.

Wine = _____

Oil = _____

Are our sufferings working for us and for others?

See also Psa.51:12&13; Luke 22:31-34.

Christian counsellor, Selwyn Hughes, said, “Untrained lay people are as effective, or more so, than trained psychologists”.

Question: Am I my brother's keeper?

Answer:

2. Counselling – Which Way?

The belief that the safest kind of counselling is professional counselling isn't as simple as it sounds. For example, searching for a counsellor in the 'Counselling' section of the Yellow Pages leaves one confused. Here are just some of the different kinds of counselling on offer:

- Jungian psychotherapy
- Gestalt therapy
- Goal-directed treatment
- Mindfulness meditation
- Hypnotherapy
- Lifestyle coaching
- Neurotherapy – brain training
- Christian-based counselling
- Spiritual direction
- Dream analysis
- Clinical hypnosis
- And many more!

Q. Why do counsellors differ so much?

A. Each counsellor operates on the basis of _____

One thing becomes clear when we probe deeper into the belief systems of various counselling theories is that there is very little agreement between them; in fact there is much contradiction. This will become apparent as we look at the theories of some of major methods of secular counselling.

A) Freudianism. Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) theorized that through victimization man has developed an overly strict Superego (conscience, oughts); this clashes with his Id (wants, desires), resulting in his current problems and struggles. Each time he crosses his conscience (do, don't, ought, shouldn't) he feels guilty. In reality he is not guilty, but authority figures from the past have led him to believe that these actions are wrong, and so he feels guilt.

The role of the counsellor is to:

The counsellor does this by:

_____ Psychoanalysis is a long process necessitating many (paid) visits to the counsellor. After psychoanalysis has been undertaken the work of psychotherapy can begin. The therapist role-plays the figure, or figures, which caused the harm to the client, but he plays these roles in the form of gracious, liberal and kind persons. This way the client is re-socialized.

What the Bible says:

The Bible readily acknowledges the way in which persons and experiences can influence us, particularly those early in life (Prov.13:20; 1 Cor.15:33). Yet, whilst we have no control over what may happen to us:

B) Humanism. The basic presupposition of humanism is that:

Humanism is virtually the deification of man. Self is god and self is saviour.
The main goal of the self-gospel is to help man:

Advocates of humanistic counselling, such as Maslow and Carl Rogers (1902-1987), believe that the role of the counsellor is not to advise, direct, persuade or instruct, but to:

What the Bible says:

1. Man is not _____
2. God has designed for us to _____
3. This counsel will be _____

C) Behaviourism. Behaviourism, as taught by J.B Watson, and later by B.F. Skinner (1904-1990), begins with the premise that man is born in a morally neutral state. Therefore the behavioural problems learned along the way are the result of man's environment. Born innocent, man is a victim of the pressures and circumstances that surround him. He is what his particular environment has programmed him to be. If his environment is good he will become good. If his environment is bad he will become bad. As his environment is, so he will become. This is determinism.

Determinism is the belief that _____
_____ is the presupposition of behaviourism.

Since behaviourists believe that behaviour is caused entirely by natural processes their energy is focused on

What the Bible says:

1. Man is not an animal who has been wrongly trained. He is:

2. The reason man behaves the way he does is not due to his corrupt environment, but:

3. The answer to man's need is not modification of behaviour, or manipulation of environment, but:

4. The role of the counsellor is not that of an environmental engineer, but of:

D) **Existentialism.** Existentialists teach that:

Man is a free agent and he alone is responsible for his life. He must not allow others to dictate his moral values. These must come from within. For this reason the concept of guilt is absurd. How can a person be guilty when there are no absolutes? The role of the counsellor is:

What the Bible says:

- 1. A person who shuts God out of his life _____
- 2. It is not a man's frustrations or the way his environment impacts upon those frustrations that is his problem. Man is anxious, restless and depressed because _____

- 3. Guilt is not autogenic (self-engendered), nor allogenic (other-engendered) it is _____

Which way?

Today, there are approximately 250 different schools of psychology, not to mention thousands of different therapeutic techniques.

Most of these schools _____

With so many conflicting brands of psychology and psychotherapy on offer how can we entrust our lives to systems that cannot find consensus?

Furthermore, how can psychology be regarded as scientific? Science is based on tests that follow a four-step process:

- 1) Observation of phenomena.
- 2) Collection of data.
- 3) Creation of a hypothesis or theory by deductive reasoning.
- 4) Testing of the hypothesis by repeated observation and controlled experiments.

Psychotherapy is usually not subjected to empirical testing of this kind. Psychological findings are usually the result of

_____ and _____

Its studies are not rigidly controlled as other scientific fields are. Testing is mostly carried out in a limited fashion that does not allow for repetition of observation. Many times tests are conducted on a tiny group of people and the findings, which are interpreted subjectively, are applied to society as a whole. How can something so complex as human behaviour be measurable and predictable? Can human motivation and behaviour really be categorised? Is it really scientific? Each individual

Eclecticism.

Many counsellors (secular and Christian) follow an eclectic approach. That is, they take a little bit of this and a little bit of that, and mix their own concoction of psychotherapy. Whenever biblical and secular counselling models are integrated into a single counselling process there is conflict.

Inevitably_____

There are perhaps two main reasons why Christian counsellors practice eclecticism:

- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____

Proverbs 14:15 says: *"The simple believes every word, but the prudent man considers well his steps"*

To believe every word of God is _____

To believe every word of man is _____

What Is Biblical Counselling?

A biblical counsellor is a Christian, but a Christian counsellor is not necessarily_____

A biblical counsellor can be identified by the following:

1) A Belief In The Sufficiency Of The Scriptures To Counsel God's People.

According to 2 Tim.3:16&17:

- a) The Bible is _____
- b) The Bible is _____

The Bible will provide us with four things:

- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____

- c) The Bible is _____

2) A Dependence Upon The Ministry Of The Holy Spirit In The Work Of Counselling.

Both secular counsellors and biblical counsellors want to see change. But there is a difference.

Secular counselling aims for_____

Biblical counselling aims for_____

3. CHRIST-DEPENDENCY

The goal of true Christian counselling is to enable Christian counselees to discover the resources that are available to them in Christ. This usually involves a transition from

_____ and/or _____ to _____

The normal Christian life is a life of _____

This means _____

Jesus said: _____

In order to abide in the true Vine we must renounce any trust in the false vines of independence and co-dependency.

Independence

Before we came to Christ we developed a life of _____

We learned to become comfortable with, and confident in, our _____

And uncomfortable with our _____

In Christ that philosophy is reversed. Grace is:

The flesh is _____

The flesh produces _____. The Vine produces _____

The Father is the vinedresser. His work includes helping us to abide in the Vine.

The way He does that is by ensuring we have _____

Because _____

Grace operates best when we are weak or in need. Many times we find ourselves like this. These are opportunities to discover the sufficiency of His grace.

Counselees need to learn how to _____

Co-dependency

Co-dependency is _____

It is to depend on someone else to meet a need in our lives that we have no right to expect from them.

The co-dependent looks for perfect love from imperfect sources. Therefore his expectations are

The co-dependent structures his life in such a way as

Co-dependency is learned behaviour, developed by the counselee as a _____

The co-dependent is so convinced that his happiness hinges upon another person that he feels he has no independent identity. Outside of the relationship to which he is bound, the co-dependent sees himself as a non-entity. Those trapped in co-dependency constantly fear being rejected, abandoned, and betrayed by or outliving the one they are dependent upon.

The other person has become_____

In order to get or to keep the person he believes he cannot live without the co-dependent becomes a master of control, manipulation and domination. Counselees become dependent upon family members, partners, pastors, churches, counselees, etc. Some people readily take advantage of the need of the co-dependent because

The True Vine

Counselees need to see co-dependency for what it is. It is_____

They need to seek_____

Maybe those who have been used in this way will also need to repent of allowing this unhealthy relationship to develop.

The counselee must be made to see that the term 'co-dependent' is_____

The counselee probably has a wrong understanding of_____

He, or she, must be shown that_____

The world's answer to co-dependency is to transfer it from one wrong source to another; for example, to set a person free from others by making him dependent upon a program. This is not freedom. Real freedom is only found when the counselee switches dependence from every finite, imperfect being to the omnipotent, all-sufficient true Vine, the Lord Jesus Christ. Only Christ can fully answer to all of man's needs.

The answer to co-dependency, then, becomes an issue of_____

The biblical process of change will involve_____

4. Identity-driven Counselling

Biblical counsellors and secular counsellors both want to see change in counselees. However, their means of reaching this goal is different. Secular counsellors seek change through behaviour modification. Biblical counsellors seek change through transformation.

Behaviour modification works _____

Transformation works _____

It is the truth that transforms a believer. No truths are more powerful than the identification truths. These truths are foundational to biblical counselling.

The most important question a biblical counsellor can ask a counselee is _____

Sadly, many Christians receive their identity messages from the same sources as the world. Three examples:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

Furthermore, Christians too readily accept psycho-labels in an attempt to understand themselves.

In this case identity is based on _____

Psycho-labels do more than describe human behaviour, they _____

A person's life will be dominated by the behaviour of the label he wears.

Dr. Ed Bulkley asks, "Why are people drawn to psycholabels?" He answers by quoting Herbert Fingarette of the University of California:

"Life is so puzzling and mystifying and obscure that giving something a name seems to give it clarity and power."¹

Bulkley goes on to comment,

"The mental health industry is seldom at a loss to create a new label for "abnormal behaviour." Erica Goode says that in 1917 only 59 distinct forms of mental disorders were recognized by the American Psychiatric Association. When the APA first published its *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) in 1952, the number of official labels had grown to 106. The third edition (1980) lists 292 specific disorders – a veritable smorgasbord to choose from – including "nicotine dependence," "Self-Defeating Personality Disorder," and the titillating "Hyperactive Sexual Desire Disorder."²

Quoting Erica Goode, again, Bulkley reveals the alarming fact that most diagnoses for psycho-labelling is not scientifically based, but is determined by taking a read of the symptoms.

¹ Bulkley, Ph.D., Ed, *Why Christians Can't Trust Psychology*, (Harvest House Publishers, Eugene Oregon 97402, 1993) quoting Erica E. Goode, "Sick, or just quirky?" *U.S News & World Report*, February 10, 1992, pp.49-50.

² Bulkley, Ph.D., Ed, *Why Christians Can't Trust Psychology*, (Harvest House Publishers, Eugene Oregon 97402, 1993)

As Christians we do not receive our identity from our achievements, behaviour or appearance, nor from the approval or disapproval of others.

Our identity is based upon _____

A Christian is no longer the person he or she used to be. This is vital to understanding our identity.

Who we were _____

Who we are _____

Helping Christians understand their new creation identity is a crucial part of biblical counselling. It is a fact that our brain will steer our lives in the direction of the picture we have of ourselves.

For this reason _____

The world teaches _____

The gospel teaches _____

Before conversion we had _____

Now we have _____

We are no longer sinners, but saints. How did this happen? See Rom.6:3-5.

We were _____

This means:

- ✓ We died with Him
- ✓ We were buried with Him
- ✓ We were raised to new life in Him

The problem with many Christians is that they have _____

But have kept _____

How do we help counselees to bring their thinking into line with their status? There are four keys in Romans 6 to appropriating the power of our new identity:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5. Deficient or Sufficient?

Some Christians have the impression that when we were born again all we received was a ticket to heaven, and that between now and when we get there we just have to do the best we can. Others believe that what we received at salvation was only the first installment, and that this will need to be supplemented from time to time with new experiences and blessings which come onto the market.

This theology of deficiency sends us on an endless pursuit for "fix-ups" for the past and "top-ups" for the future. It is at complete variance with the teaching of the New Testament. For example,

In Rom.8:32 we are taught that _____

There are no instalments to the Christian life. God has given us one gift, His Son Jesus Christ, and included in Him is every other blessing we will ever need for life.

The apostle John says, "He who has the Son has life" (1 John 5:12). Literally the verse reads like this – "He who has the Son has the life." There are certain building blocks that are absolutely crucial to living the Christian life successfully. One of those building blocks is this:

Phil.4:13 assures us that _____

And, Col.2:9&10 tell us that _____

When God saved us He baptized us into Christ. That's where we reside. It's our true position. It's where we are right now. In Him we have everything we need. In Him we are righteous, we are strong, we are holy, we are kings and priests and we are victorious. In Him we have the mind of Christ, we can never be separated from the love of God, we are branches in the vine and have permanent access to the life of Christ. We are complete in Him.

Just think of that last statement for a moment. We are complete in Him. Either that is true or it is not. If it isn't true then you will always need more. Many will tell you that you need another experience, another blessing, another "touch from God". And then, when you have received this, you hear that you still need more. Such teaching implies that you are, in fact, incomplete. This is the exact opposite to what the Bible teaches.

2 Pet.1:3 tells us that _____

The Christian life does not consist in running everywhere to get our needs met. It's about having Christ and possessing all things in Him. As we journey through life God teaches us that we are not working *towards* adequacy, but *from* it. We have been made sufficient for all things. Understanding this truth is critical if we are to prosper. If we doubt this in any way life will be a struggle.

Growth Is Natural.

There is nothing more natural than growth. Every living thing that God has created has the inherent ability to grow to perfect maturity. Each seed possesses the full potential of producing the life from which it came. Growth does not consist of receiving more life, but is an expansion of the life it already possesses. Growth, then, is a development by the natural process through which all forms of life reach maturity.

We don't need more because we have all things. But we do need to discover what we already have in Him. According to the last verse (2 Pet.1:3) and 2 Pet.3:18 there are two requirements that are conducive to growth as Christians. These are:

_____ and _____

We cannot force growth. Struggling, striving, sweating, commanding and worrying do not produce fruit. There is, however, one thing we can do to assist the growth process. Every kind of life form will grow when it is placed in the right environment. The spiritual condition most conducive to growth is an environment of grace and an accurate "knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Just as soil, water, air and sunshine are vital to the growth of corn, so it is essential for counselees to be immersed in the truth about our life in Christ in order for them to grow.

See Col.2:6&7. We began the Christian life by trusting in Christ's work on the cross. Sadly, many Christians move away from the Christ-life and place their confidence in their works, church programs, worldly philosophies, etc. These then become their life-source. They have never understood that Christ who saved them is also their source of life. It is He who began a good work in us, and He alone will complete it (Phil.1:6).

Gal.3:3. Some Christians don't seem to grow because:

Consequently they get stuck in the same place with the same problems. Yet establish those same people in the truth, and then watch them grow! The truth will set them free to grow.

Natural, Spiritual, Carnal

In Paul's epistle to the Corinthians he describes three kinds of people:

1. First, he speaks about the *natural* person. The natural person is someone who is alive naturally. He lives by natural means only, for he is dead spiritually and disconnected from the life of God. He is unsaved. He doesn't even understand the things of God, let alone experience them (1 Cor.2:14).
2. Next there is the *spiritual* person. This is someone who is alive spiritually (1 Cor.2:11, 12&15). He has been born again through faith in Jesus Christ. He is positioned in Christ and lives by the resources of His grace.
3. But then there is the *carnal* person. The carnal person is someone who is born again, but is living like the natural person or like the unsaved. The carnal person is a Christian and therefore has access to the same spiritual resources in Christ as the spiritual Christian. But the carnal person chooses to live according to the flesh, i.e. according to the limited ability of his own resources (1 Cor.3:1-4).

Living according to the flesh produces the works of the flesh, or fleshly behaviour. A list of this kind of behaviour is found in Galatians 5:19-21. Many of the Corinthian Christians were carnal. They were characterized by several of the traits mentioned in this list. They experienced only half a salvation. They had forgiveness of sins but were not living from the resources of Christ, like so many today.

Living By Faith

The reality of God's abundant provision for us in Christ is depicted in the Old Testament by the Promised Land. One of the features that characterized the Promised Land is that every thing was provided for God's people. They would not need to build cities or homes, dig wells, plant orchards, sow fields or even stock their food cupboards. Everything would be laid on for them. Unlike pioneer settlers who have to start from scratch, all they had to do was walk in and...enjoy! This is a picture of the abundant resources that God has made available to us in Christ.

What does it take to enter the promised life? _____

The children of Israel could not enter in because of unbelief; we enter in by faith. Every day the counselee wakes up and even before he or she gets out of bed, they need to reckon on this fact:

This is an indispensable building block in the Christian life. Take this away and whatever we try to build will keep collapsing.

Getting The Victory, Or Having The Victory?

Christians often talk about "getting the victory". The New Testament teaches that the victory has already been won. Jesus was tempted and tried in every way that is possible for a human being to be tempted and tried, and yet He overcame. Now He is equipped, as our High Priest, to minister that victory to us. When Jesus died on the cross He did not say, "It is partially completed." He cried, "It is finished!" In the Greek language this is just one word, meaning, "It is perfectly perfect. It is completely complete!" Then, when Satan and man tried to keep Him in the tomb by sealing it and placing guards from the most powerful army on earth to watch over it, God raised Him from the dead! Satan and sin, the world and the flesh, death and life have all been conquered by Him.

Counselees do not need to _____

Because Christ has _____

In 1 Cor.15:57 we are told _____

According to 1 Jn.5:4 we receive the victory by _____

6. The Counselling Process

Whilst every counselling situation may be different, there is a basic counselling process for each case. This can be summed up as follows:

1. Gathering Data
2. Interpreting Data
3. Giving Hope
4. Counselling That Brings Change

Gathering Data

"He who answers a matter, before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him" (Prov.18:13).

God calls counsellors who hastily offer counsel before correctly appraising the situation foolish and shameful. At the beginning of every counselling situation we need to gather data. There are two ways this can be done:

- ✓ Using a Personal Data Inventory (PDI). See sample on pages 62-64.
- ✓ Using Extensive and Intensive Questioning.

Extensive questioning _____

Intensive questioning _____

Remember, the counsellors task is _____

Change takes place _____

Interpreting Data

There is one valid standard by which to evaluate and comment upon the counselee's data:

_____ We must discover whether or not the counselee is aware of the Bible's commentary on his situation.

After interpreting data the counsellor needs to help the counselee

Giving Hope

The biblical meaning of hope is _____

Biblical hope is based upon the fact that _____

And _____

Counselling That Brings Change

Remember, the change the New Testament speaks of is _____

First, a correct basic belief system needs to be established in the heart of the counselee, beginning with the identity truths.

Counselling must then be implemented.

This will involve _____

And _____

Counsellors must destroy _____

Practical change does not take place in the counselling room, but

Counselees must be encouraged to _____

And taught how to _____

Personal Data Inventory

This form is to be completed in full before your first counselling session. The information required on this form is to enable us to best assess your situation, so that we can offer the most appropriate counsel. All information will be treated with strict confidentiality.

Date: _____

1) Personal Background

Name: _____ **Phone No:** _____

Address: _____

Occupation: _____

Married Status:

Married _____ Single _____ Separated _____ Divorced _____ Widowed _____ Dating _____

If you are married, please give your ages when married. Me: _____ Partner: _____

If you are married, is this your first marriage? _____

Do you have children? If so, please state how many, and their ages: _____

Why have you come for counselling? (Please describe your situation briefly)

What have you done about it? (What ways have you tried to solve the problem yourself?)

What would you like us to do? (What are your expectations from your time of counselling with us?)

Have you seen any other counsellor about your situation? If so please give details. _____

2) Health Background

How would you describe your health?

Very good _____ Good _____ Average _____ Poor _____ Declining _____

When did you last have a medical examination? _____

What was the result? _____

Are you presently taking medication? If so, what? _____

Have you taken drugs for reasons other than medical? _____

If so, please give details _____

Have you recently gained or lost weight? Please give details _____

Are you experiencing any current physical problems (e.g. sleeplessness, menopause, etc.) _____

3) Spiritual Background

Do you believe in God? _____

Have you received Christ as your Saviour? _____

If you were to die tonight, do you know for sure you would have eternal life? _____

Please explain why, or, why not _____

Have you been baptised? _____

Do you attend church, if so which one? _____

Approximately how many times per month do you attend a church or mid-week meeting? _____

How often do you read the Bible? _____

How often do you pray? _____

Describe your relationship with Jesus Christ _____

Is there any other information you feel we should know about your situation? _____

Important. Please be aware of the following points:

- ✓ Limits of confidentiality. All information shared with us in counselling sessions will be treated with the strictest confidentiality and will not be shared with others without your permission, except for the purpose of supervision. However, we are obligated to notify the necessary authorities if a client informs us of their intention to take harmful, dangerous, or criminal action against themselves or others.
- ✓ We are not psychologists or psychiatrists. The counselling we provide is on the basis of the Scriptures, which we believe to be adequate to direct the lives of God's people in all situations of life.

I have read and understood both points listed above. I have also filled in the questions in this form accurately and truthfully.

Name: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

7. General Principles

Basic Principles For Biblical Counsellors

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

Question-asking techniques

Before we give counsel or advice to people regarding their problems we must ensure that we really understand what their problem is. In order to do this we need to ask the right kind of questions that will give us that information. The following three basic questions will help us to understand the counselee's problem:

1) WHAT IS YOUR PROBLEM?

Jn.1:38. When asking this question we need to probe deeply in order to ensure that the answer given

Is at the _____ and not at the _____

As counsellors we must learn to move from the symptomatic level to the level of cause.

2) WHAT HAVE YOU DONE ABOUT IT?

Jn.5:6. Have you done all you know you can and should do?

3) WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO?

Mk.10:36; Lk.18:41. This ensures that the counselee's agenda and yours is the same regarding this counselling session.

Ask _____ questions to obtain basic information about the counselee's situation.

Don't ask _____ questions.

Avoid _____ questions for information.

Use _____ questions only for commitment.

_____ questions get to the trouble/problematic areas.

_____ questions homes in on the problem.

Listening when counselling

The most important technique is that which allows the person to express himself. It requires discipline to curb impulses to speak and really listen to what the counselee is saying. Prov.18:13; Jas.1:19.

Listening involves three things:

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

ERRORS IN THE LISTENING PROCESS

- 1. Errors of the _____
- 2. Errors of the _____
- 3. Errors of the _____

Special cases

Whilst every Christian is called to care for and admonish their fellow Christian, not everyone is equipped to deal with every specific situation. When we feel we are out of our depth we need to pass the person on to someone who is able to give them the help they need. This are called referrals.

When do you refer a person to someone else?

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____
- d) _____
- e) _____

Refer only with the counselee's permission. Offer support and encouragement while they are still getting help (phone calls, etc). Request to be in on the counselling, if possible - especially at the concluding sessions. Don't abandon the case once delegated.

8. Communication & Conflict Resolution

1) Communication

In every counselling situation it is important to establish some basic principles of communication. Here are a few important principles to work with.

Establish Clear Understanding

What is communication? It is more than the impartation of information.

Being a _____ of facts alone does not establish communication. When a counselee informs a counsellor of facts, the counsellor must then communicate that he or she understands of the meaning of those facts.

This requires a _____ from the counsellor in some form of feedback. The feedback may be a repetition of the original message in a rephrased form, indicating that the counsellor has fully understood what has been said. For example, the counselor might say,

By reflecting back the message in the receiver's own language he or she demonstrates that the meaning of the message has been understood.

Speaking is only one side of the coin in communication. We need to learn to listen to what the other party is saying.

- ✓ Learn to listen and hear what the person is really saying, (Jas.1:19).
- ✓ Don't interrupt the person talking to you. Hear them out.
- ✓ Make sure you appear to be attentive. Watch your body language. We communicate more by body-language, than we do by words.
- ✓ Remove distractions, e.g. take the phone off the hook or have someone else answer it.
- ✓ Pursue the subject. Ask questions, establish details, clarify facts, etc.

Establish Acceptable Communication

- ✓ Acceptable communication includes such things as prohibiting
- ✓ Shouting. It puts the other person on the offensive, see Prov.15:1.
- ✓ Intimidation
- ✓ Interrupting or speaking over another person
- ✓ A person answering a question that was addressed to another person
- ✓ Swearing, etc.

Setting up acceptable forms of communication helps close the door on *illegitimate* types, which tend to take the focus off the issues and turn the counselling session into a personal slanging match.

Establishing Christian Communication (Eph.4:25)

Note: the relationships spoken of in Ephesians 5 & 6, stand or fall on the basis of what Paul had to say about communication in Eph.4:25.

a) Christian Communication is _____
 "Speak the truth..." i.e. face-to-face communication (2 Jn.12; 3 Jn.13&14; Gal.4:20; Mt.18:15). Face-to-face encounter is God's way of dealing with issues between His people.

b) Christian Communication is _____

"Speak the *truth*..." It is a constant temptation to avoid or minimize the truth. But the truth is imperative for the well-being of the individual and for relationships. See the alternatives to speaking the truth, given in Lev.19:17-18. Jay Adams, Christian counsellor, says that by saying "the truth hurts" only reveals how insincere we have become. The truth may hurt, but it never hurts like a lie. It hurts like a physician who hurts in order to heal. It is the hurt of love.

c) Christian Communication is _____
 "Speak the truth *every man* with his neighbour..." It is not enough for one party only to apply this principle; all need to embrace it. Only the truth will set us free.

d) Christian Communication is _____
 "...but speaking the truth *in love*..." Eph.4:15. "Truth without love is a vicious weapon. Love without truth is a blunted blessing."

With love _____ will never result in _____
 Loving communication is the ability to make a point without making an enemy.

2) Conflict Resolution

Every conflict situation has the potential for disaster or redemption. The way we handle the situation may determine which. We must ask God for wisdom and grace each time. Here are some basic principles that will guide us when we are called to handle disputes between two parties.

Determine to be _____

Remember _____

Seek to take heat out of the situation by _____

Don't allow one party to _____
 Keep the discussion impersonal.

_____ is acceptable.

_____ is not.

Make sure that accusations are backed up with facts, not generalizations. Example:

Not _____

But _____

Get the counselees to stay in the present as much as possible - not 6 months ago. ("I remember when you...")

Don't allow a counselee to _____

Use humour _____ Ask, "Will this relieve tension, or increase it?"

When dealing with failure do so _____

9) Negative Emotions

When experts use the term "mental health problems" it is to describe those who are struggling with negative emotions, such as anxiety, depression, sadness/grief, hate, despair, etc., or mood swings.

Neil Anderson likens negative emotions, such as depression, to a smoke detector. If a smoke detector alarm goes off, what are your options?

- 1) You could ignore it, and drown out the sound by turning up the volume on your TV or stereo.
- 2) You could stop it by turning it off, or removing the battery.
- 3) You could investigate the reason why the alarm is sounding.

The problem with the first and second option is that most probably your house will be burned down with possible loss of life. Dealing with just the alarm is foolish, because the alarm is not the problem; it is a symptom of the problem. Option number three is the only sensible way of dealing with the problem. As crazy as the first two options in this illustration might sound, these are the paths some counsellors pursue when counselling those with negative emotions.

1) The "Turn Up The Volume" Approach. There are Christian counsellors who attempt to drown the sound of the counslee by telling the person to "cheer up," "get the victory" or play some Christian music, etc. See what Prov.25:20 says about this approach.

2) The "Remove The Battery" Approach. There are those who try to silence the alarm of emotions, like depression, by treating it as the problem itself. It is usually not the problem, but a symptom that there is a problem.

Emotions are _____

Yet they take the "silence the symptoms" approach by prescribing anti-depressants. Some mistakenly think that medical science has found a way to measure brain chemistry accurately so that medication can be prescribed accordingly to rectify any imbalance. The general procedure is to get a good reading of the symptoms (not brain chemistry), and then prescribe medication that has helped other similar cases. One psychologist estimates that depression as a direct result of chemical or organic imbalance accounts for only 10% of cases. Thus, treating the symptom only brings temporary relief. Proper diagnosis is all important.

If negative emotions, such as depression, fear, etc., are primarily responders, what are they responding to?

1) It may be _____

Gen.4:3-7. Cain was depressed because of a wrong response to God's rejection of his offering.

God's remedy was _____

It would be wrong and unkind to classify Cain's problem of depression, as mental illness, for it was only a symptom of the real problem, disobedience. Furthermore, it would offer no hope.

David too, smarting under conviction of sin, struggled with negative emotions. See Psa.38:4,6,8,9,17. At the end of this psalm he resolved to deal with his sin biblically, i.e. by confession (see v.18).

2) It may be _____

Emotions are mainly a product of our thoughts. To tell people to stop feeling the way they do is not only unhelpful, it is condemning.

But _____

Only truth can set us free because we still have to deal with our circumstances. Medication can't change circumstances. Change the mind and you can change the emotions.

Counselees need to aim at _____ not _____

Emotions are good responders but terrible leaders. God didn't create us to live from our feelings, but from the will. We must train ourselves to live from our will not our emotions.

Examples of Improving our Feelings by Changing our Thinking:

Feelings of condemnation can be cancelled when a person learns to make the biblical transition from "sin-consciousness" to "righteousness consciousness". Rom.8:1; 2 Cor.5:17; Heb.10:14;1 Jn.1:9.

Feelings of inferiority can be overcome when a counselee learns that God never compares us with others. We don't need to compete with others, or live up to their expectations (1 Cor.4:3&4; 2 Cor.10:12, 17-18). Neither do we need to prove anything to any one any more.

Feelings of inadequacy and insufficiency subside when a counselee believes that God, who has met our greatest need, has also supplied us with everything we will ever need to live a victorious and godly life (Rom.8:32; 2 Pet.1:2-4).

Feelings of despair can be brought under control when a counselee fixes his mind on the following truths:

- ✓ God is always in charge of our lives and He will never allow us to be tempted or tested beyond our ability to endure, but will give us grace for every situation in life (1 Cor.10:13; Rom.5:2).
- ✓ The trials and problems God does permit are opportunities for our spiritual growth (Rom.5:3-4; Jas.1:2-4).
- ✓ Everything that takes place in our lives has a divine purpose, and will ultimately work out for good (Rom.8:28). God has a greater purpose than taking all our problems away. We are training for reigning.
- ✓ Though we cannot eliminate our problems and we are not immune from the emotions they produce in us, yet we can live in victory through dependency on Christ. (Complaining about one's circumstances reveals the counselee is not trusting in God and has reverted back to an erroneous belief system which leads to depression (Phil.2:14&15; 4:6; 1 Thes.5:17&18).
- ✓ Weaknesses and inadequacies do not limit me, but open me up to the grace and power of Christ in our lives. They are not a cause for depression, but for rejoicing (2 Cor.12:1-10).

Over the next few sessions we will look at various negative emotions such as depression, anxiety, anger, fear, etc. and see how these may be brought under control by correct thinking.

10) Renewing the Mind

Whenever a Christian is struggling one of the first questions we need to ask is:

The Christian's power is in the truth. It is the truth that sets us free. The only real weapon the enemy has is deception. The mind is the battlefield where Satan contends against the truth.

The first sin was to seek knowledge apart from God. When Adam believed the lie, death immediately followed. This resulted in every kind of negative emotion. In Eph.4:17&18 Paul says that before we were saved we were alienated from the life of God who is the source of truth.

Therefore we were _____

Our minds were _____

Our understanding was _____

And we lived in _____

We had wrong values, judgments, opinions, priorities, beliefs, etc. We called right wrong and wrong right. Now we are exhorted to,

_____ (Eph.4:23).

The Spirit of the Mind

The spirit of our mind is that which determines the way we choose to think and view life. It is the basic belief system on which we operate. Before we were saved we lived according to our own understanding. Now we know that we were deceived. Truth can only be discovered as God, in His Word, reveals it to us. That's why when a person comes to God he or she needs to repent.

The word "repentance" means _____

To repent is to renounce the wisdom of man and replace it with the counsel of God. This is what it means to be renewed in the *spirit* of our minds. It is the first step in the process of renewed thinking. It is a vital aspect of the 180-degree turn that takes place in us at conversion. It involves dislodging from our minds the views, teachings, opinions, etc. that we have held in the past, which have originated from man and from self, and replacing these with the Word of God.

In counseling we must not take it for granted that the counselee has renounced his or her own way of thinking and embraced God's Word as the final court of appeal in all matters relating to life.

Even after a counselee has made that paradigm shift we need to help them to learn how to align their thinking with the truth of God's Word. In Rom.12:1&2 Paul refers to this process as "the renewing of the mind."

When we were born again we became a new creation. This is _____

We must now change our thinking so that it lines up with the truth of God's Word. This is _____

Satan is able to:

and _____

To add and to subtract is the two-fold operation of the enemy. How can we help the counselee to eliminate toxic thinking from the mind, and replace it with the truth?

This is _____ 2 Cor.10:3-5.

Some examples of toxic thinking:

1) _____

The carnal person sets his mind on the things of the flesh (Rom.8:5&6). It is impossible to set our minds on the things of the flesh and walk according to the Spirit. We follow whatever we set our mind on. If we mind fleshly things we will become worldly, carnal people. This gives Satan a stronghold. The longer fleshly thoughts stay the stronger the stronghold (see Rom.8:13).

Phil.4:8. God's way is to _____

We can't stop the birds flying over our heads, but we can stop them making a nest there.

2) _____

Definition of mental health is to be in touch with reality and relatively free of anxiety.

Isa.26:3. God's way is to _____

Phil.4:6-7. We do this by _____

3) _____

Eph.4:26&27. God's way is _____

4) _____

Passivity allows another to do our thinking for us. God never instructs us to vacate the control centre of our minds. Demons willingly fill any vacuum. Passivity is a dangerous thing and we are never to allow our minds to be passive.

Col.3:1&2; Rom.8:5&6. God's way is to _____

Mind Games

The mind is the *function* of the brain. The mind is the software; whereas the brain is the hardware. "Mind" is a psychological term and "brain" is a physiological thing. Drugs can help the brain, e.g. when there is a chemical or hormonal imbalance; but not the mind. It is wrong to assume that most mental health problems are the result of biological problems. The majority of problems in this area are psychological, i.e. caused by maladaptive thinking patterns which when understood and corrected can set a person free from negative emotions. So where do these patterns originate?

As newborn babies we come into this world with a clean slate. Nothing has been pre-programmed into our computer. Then our brains begin to record the experiences we have in life. This determines the way we think. Much of our mindset is determined by the following:

- ✓ Our environment such as family, church, community, friends, etc.
- ✓ Traumatic experiences, such as abuse, grief, etc. These are burned into our minds because of their intensity.
- ✓ Wrong teaching, training, etc. If you have grown up in a performance-based environment you will get your identity from your works.

The major reason why some respond differently to others under the same circumstances is because of the software, the programming. E.g. we all face the same problems but some have been programmed to see themselves as **victims**, others as **victors**. The mind chooses to interpret the data it receives according to the way it has been programmed.

There is no _____

So we need to _____

This takes time. To replace lies with truth is a process. Yet we have the means for this.

Girding Up Our Minds

1 Pet.1:13. Many Christians are out of control in their living because they are out of control in their thinking. Thoughts of condemnation, fear, guilt, inferiority, inadequacy, etc., swirl around inside their minds spinning them into a state of dizziness. In Bible days men working in the fields would lift their long garments up and tuck them under their belts. This prevented them from becoming encumbered or tripped up by their long flowing garments. Similarly, we must take hold of undisciplined thoughts before we stumble over them.

Eph.6:14. The piece of spiritual armour that God has given to us for this is _____

To gird up the loins of our mind means to learn to rein in those wayward thoughts with God's Word.

Lk.6:45. Whatever we meditate on in our minds enters our hearts and controls our behaviour.

According to Josh.1:8, meditating on God's word is the key to success and prosperity. The root meaning of the word 'prosperous' is to accomplish the end for which a thing was intended. The key to prosperous living is to continually meditate in the Word, and to walk in that which is being revealed.

Psa.1:1-3. Says the same, and adds that there are certain things that the blessed person does not do,

11. The Downward Spiral of Depression

Researchers tell us that at least 15% of Australians will experience a major depression at some point in life. Depression seems to be no respecter of persons or of generations.

“Spiritual giants such as David, Elijah, Peter, Jonah, John Bunyan, Martin Luther and Charles Spurgeon all battled with depression, not to mention other gifted people like Napoleon, Abraham Lincoln, Winston Churchill, Hans Christian Anderson, Robert Louis Stevenson, Virginia Woolf, Friderick Handel, Michelangelo, etc.”³

What Others Are Saying

- ✓ “Many people will suffer depression at some stage in their lives – up to 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men.”⁴
- ✓ A Sixty Minutes documentary program reported that by the year 2010 depression would be the world’s greatest health problem.
- ✓ The World Health Organisation has a similar prediction, stating that within a few years depression will be the world’s second leading cause of disease and disability.
- ✓ “Depression is a key factor in Australia’s alarming suicide rate. In fact depression, with a tendency to suicide, is the leading diagnosis on admission to psychiatric institutions.”⁵

Definition

Let’s clarify what we mean by depression. In a general sense the term ‘depression’ describes an emotion that is common to us all. This general type of depression is what some might call feeling down or being under the weather. It’s a typical response to bad news, disappointment or some unhappy experience. Since life is a mixture of good and bad our feelings tend to go up and down according to what is happening in our lives.

But depression, in a technical or clinical sense, is more serious. It is not just to go down but to stay down. It is a disturbance or disorder of one’s mood or emotional state over a prolonged period of time. It is a downward cycle characterized by some, or all, of the following:

The Australian Government’s Department of Health and Ageing in its National Mental Health Strategy publication *What Is Depression?* has defined clinical depression as describing not one illness but a group of illnesses. It sees the main types of illnesses in this group as follows:

³ Legg, Ken, *The Counsel of the Godly*, (Set Free Ministries, Gold Coast, Australia, 2001)

⁴ An excerpt from booklet *Light On The Horizon – Your Guide To Managing Depression and Anxiety*, published by Wyeth Australia Pty Ltd, a healthcare and pharmaceutical products company

⁵ Legg, Ken, *The Counsel of the Godly*, (Set Free Ministries, Gold Coast, Australia, 2001)

Adjustment Disorder With Depressed Mood. "People with this illness are reacting to distressing situations in their lives (e.g. the failure of a close relationship or loss of a job) but to a greater degree than is usual. This depression is more intense than the unhappiness experienced in daily life, it lasts longer and the symptoms often include anxiety, poor sleep and loss of appetite. The time which this form of depression lasts may vary from weeks to years. It usually goes away when the cause is removed or when the person finds a new way to cope with the stress. Many people require intensive professional help and treatment to overcome this type of depression."

Post-natal Depression. Mild depression affects around half of all new mothers but in 10 per cent of mothers this can develop into the more serious condition known as post-natal depression. Those suffering with this find it increasingly difficult to cope with life.

Depressive Episode. The publication says, "This is, in general, a more severe form of clinical depression. It can come on without apparent cause, although in some cases a distressing event might trigger the condition. The cause is not well understood but it is believed to be associated with a chemical imbalance in the central parts of the brain. A depressive episode can develop in people who have coped well with life, who are good at their work and happy in family and social relationships. They become low-spirited, lose their enjoyment of life and suffer disturbed sleep patterns...Sometimes their feelings of hopelessness and despair can lead to thoughts of suicide...The most serious form of this type of depression is called psychotic depression. During this illness, the person loses touch with reality, may stop eating and drinking and may hear voices saying they are wicked or worthless and deserve to be punished."

Bipolar Mood Disorder (Manic Depression). Those with this condition experience extreme mood swings, alternating from high elation, over confidence and even delusions of grandeur to low bouts of depression.

What Causes Depression?

The two main causes of depression are physiological and psychological. It is apparent from the foregoing that accurate diagnosis cannot always be made, even by medical experts. In fact, as previously noted a general tendency is to take a reading from symptoms (not brain chemistry).

The first question to ask then is, "Is it physical?" Physical factors may contribute towards a person's depression. Physical disorders, such as chemical and hormonal imbalances, sleep-loss, glandular dysfunction, post-natal and post-surgery conditions, diabetes, tiredness, menstrual cycle dynamics, prolonged stress, etc., are just some of the possible causes for depression. The thyroid gland, for example, controls metabolism. An underactive thyroid gland can be responsible for mood swings and depression. Also, recent tests revealed that women on the pill may suffer depression as a side-effect.

A thorough medical check up, undertaken by a general practitioner, is advisable before any counselling takes place. In fact, medical supervision should be maintained throughout the counselling process.

Neil Anderson estimates that 10% of all cases of depression are endogenous, i.e. sourced from within the body. If this is so, what about non-biological depression? If only 10% of all depression can be classified as biological depression, what about the other 90%? How do we account for non-endogenous depression? It is clear that though depression can be the result of biochemical changes in the body and brain, many cases of depression arise from external factors. In fact, a major cause of depression is self-defeating thinking patterns.

"Cognitive-behaviour therapy believes that whilst it is not possible to control one's feelings directly, our emotions are a product of our thinking process, and if these are controlled properly then feelings can be changed. Cognitive therapy focuses on changing dysfunctional cognitions (thoughts, perceptions), emotions and behaviours. It is based on the theory that individuals suffering with depression or anxiety have maladaptive patterns of thinking. By understanding and changing these patterns a person can be free of depression. Cognitive therapy is the most heavily researched form of psychotherapy and comes closest to the biblical approach to dealing with depression. Distorted, self-defeating thinking is automatic. When a person is going through negative experiences, or is recalling negative events from the past he is subject to fairly rapid autonomous thoughts that produce painful emotions. These emotions can lead to wrong behaviour that makes matters worse and sends the person on a

downward spiral. Why does a person think these negative thoughts automatically? Usually it is because of a faulty belief system or errors in reasoning. The counsellor needs to expose these distorted templates and help the counselee reprogram his thinking in a sound, biblical manner. Depression is related to what we believe, how we perceive God, self, others, circumstances, Satan, etc. Our emotions are mainly a product of our thoughts. Circumstances do not determine how I feel. My response to them does. My mind is the interpreter of life events. When I interpret events in my life in a non-biblical way, i.e. failing to believe what God has said, I will be at the mercy of my feelings. To tell people to stop feeling the way they do is not only unhelpful, it is condemning. But helping them change the way they think, will help them change the way they feel. Cognitive therapists and biblical counsellors agree in this: both believe that the primary source of depression is the way people perceive themselves, their circumstances and their future. Of course, where they go from there differs entirely. Secular therapists have the mind of the world and use an entirely different base system of belief than biblical counsellors who have the sufficiency of the wisdom of God's Word."⁶

Many counsellors seem to favour a combined approach (physiological and psychological) when dealing with counsees suffering from depression. Neil T. Anderson and Hal Baumchen say,

"It would be a tragedy for a godly pastor or Christ-centred counsellor to try helping a person who is physically sick without suggesting some medical attention. On the other hand, for a doctor to think that he or she can cure the whole person with medication is equally tragic. Taking a pill to cure the body is commendable, but taking a pill to cure the soul is deplorable. Fortunately, most doctors know that the medical model can take you only so far. Many in the medical profession acknowledge that a majority of their patients are suffering for emotional and spiritual reasons. Our perspective, however, is that in dealing with mental or emotional disorders the hardware is not the primary problem. We believe it is the software – the mental, emotional and spiritual components of the whole person."⁷

Here are some more examples of biblical truths which can help the counselee establish a basic belief system, conducive to a healthy mindset:

- ✓ God is for us. He has a plan and a purpose for us, which is for our good (Jer.29:11; Rom.8:31).
- ✓ We are no longer slaves to sin, but have been freed to walk in righteousness (Rom.6:12,14,16-18; Heb.2:18). We do have the power to walk free from patterns that have been entrenched in our lives over a long period of time.
- ✓ Grace, i.e. God's ability in the place of our inability, is there for us to draw upon. We only need to come to God in order to appropriate it (Heb.4:15-16; Jas.4:6).
- ✓ God's Word will guide us and counsel us in all matters relating to life (Psa.19:7-11; 119:105; Jer.10:23; Prov.14:12; 2 Tim.3:16&17).
- ✓ To walk in obedience to God's ways, including responding biblically to trials, will result in blessing (Psa.1:1-3; Josh.1:8; Matt.6:33; Jas.1:25; Psa.84:11 &12; 2 Chron.16:9).
- ✓ Disobedience to God's ways will result in coming under His chastening. Yet, even His chastening is an expression of His love to us (Heb.12:5-12). God's chastening is temporary. His favour is for a lifetime (Psa.30:5; Lam.3:19-23).

⁶ ibid.

⁷ Anderson, Neil T. and Baumchen, Hal, *Finding Hope Again* (Regal Books, Ventura, California, 1999).

- ✓ Whenever we stray from God's path, the moment we repent and confess our sin we are forgiven and brought back into fellowship with Him (1 Jn.1:9; 2:1). We never need labour under guilt or condemnation.
- ✓ The Christian life works, not by living in the power of one's own resources (the flesh), but in the resurrection life and power of the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph.1:15-21). He is our life (Col.3:4; Jn.15:4&5; Gal.2:20). Therefore, we must not live our lives reckoning on our limited resources, but on His boundless supply (Prov.3:5-7; 2 Cor.3:4-8; Phil.4:13).
- ✓ The resurrection power of Christ is made manifest in our lives as we daily deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow Him. If we try to hold on to our lives by living for self we will not experience the life Christ wants to release in us (Lk.9:23&24; Jn.12:24&25).
- ✓ The way we deny ourselves is by loving God with all our heart, soul and mind. The way we demonstrate our love to God is by loving our neighbour as ourselves (Mt.22:37-39; 1 Jn. 4:20&21).

12. Freedom From Anger

Anger is a normal human emotion. In simple terms it is the way we respond to things that we feel are not right. In that sense we cannot say that anger is wrong. But anger becomes wrong when,

Harmful anger can be expressed in two different ways:

1) _____

2) _____

Some people clam up when they get angry, others blow up. Some people hold it in, others let it all out. Either way it is harmful.

Internal anger is _____

External anger is _____

The New Testament uses two different words for anger, which may have this distinction in mind.

1) *orge*. This kind of anger is an inward indignation; a settled, lasting or abiding condition of mind. See 1 Tim.2:8. There is no outburst with *orge*, though it may result in taking revenge.

When we get angry, sometimes we hold that anger inside of us. We have different ways of describing this, such as carrying a grudge, having it in for someone, having a chip on our shoulder, getting bitter and twisted, etc. Holding on to our anger like this is harmful because it is likely to make us ill in the end. The tongue secretes a toxic chemical when a person gets angry, and this, when mixed with saliva and swallowed, may lead to sickness. For example prolonged anger, resentment and bitterness can attack and destroy the immune system. Also, according to one former president of the American Rheumatism Association anxiety and resentment are common reactions found in arthritis patients. We could say that it's not what you eat that determines your health so much as what is eating you. (Of course, we are by no means saying that all arthritis sufferers have unresolved resentment and bitterness.)

2) *thumos*. This kind of anger is explosive. It is an outburst of wrath, produced by an inward indignation. For example, in Gal.5:20 it follows the word "jealousies". Whilst *orge* is an inward feeling, *thumos* is an eruption of anger. *Thumos* can quickly flare up and just as quickly subside; whereas *orge* is less sudden in its rise than *thumos* and is more lasting.

As inward-focused anger is self-destructive, anger which is expressed outwardly is destructive towards others. When anger is aimed at others in a fit of rage, be it verbally or physically, then people are injured and relationships go into damage control. Once the outburst is over the harm has been done. It is then too late to retract those vicious words or to say sorry for that physical assault.

In Eph.4:31 and Col.3:8 both words appear together.

What Does The Bible Say About Anger?

The Bible has much to say on this subject.

First, let's look at some wisdom from the book of Proverbs. See Prov.14:17, 29; 16:32; 19:11.

James 1:19&20 gives us two important keys concerning how to counsel those struggling with anger.

1) v.20 tells us that _____

2) v.19 tells us that _____

No one can help the way they feel about things; neither can we control most of the events that trigger anger. But there are ways to manage anger or bring it under control. Since anger is a destructive form of communication, the counselee needs to learn the skills of directing their anger through legitimate channels of positive communication. This does not mean suppression, but constructive expression.

Constructive expression of anger involves the counselee learning the appropriate ways, times and places to convey to the relevant person or people that he or she is angry and why. Controlled, honest confrontation is to be preferred to both seething silence and raging abuse. This is made clear in the following passage:

Eph.4:26&27. In verse 31 we are exhorted to put away wrath and anger (*orge* and *thumos*). But how?

In 4:26 we are instructed to _____

In the previous verse (4:25) we see how this can be done _____

In 4:15 we note that this is to be _____

Note: Anger is not suppressed, but is given opportunity for legitimate expression in a godly way.

The following illustration of anger between a married couple, shows how the principle of truthful, loving communication can channel anger constructively.

Illustration # 1 – Anger is partner oriented.



Husband→

←Wife

Illustration #2 – Anger is problem/solution oriented.



Husband→

Problem

←Wife

Principle: When angry, don't attack your partner – attack the problem through open and mature communication.

13. Winning Over Worry

The Australian Government's Department of Health and Ageing in its National Mental Health Strategy publication *What Are Anxiety Disorders?* says,

"Anxiety is a term which describes a normal feeling people experience when faced with threat or danger, or when stressed. When people become anxious, they typically feel upset, uncomfortable and tense. Feelings of anxiety are caused by experiences of life, such as job loss, relationship breakdown, serious illness, major accident or the death of someone close. Feeling anxious is appropriate in these situations and usually we feel anxious only for a limited time. These feelings are not regarded as clinical anxiety, but are part of everyday life."

The publication goes on to distinguish between this kind of general anxiety or worry and 'anxiety disorders,' which it sees as a group of "illnesses".

"People are likely to be diagnosed with an anxiety disorder when their level of anxiety and feelings of panic are so extreme that they significantly interfere with daily life and stop them doing what they want to do. This is what characterizes an anxiety disorder as more than normal feelings of anxiety."

It then suggests **four** possible causes for anxiety disorder:

Personality. "People with certain characteristics are more prone to anxiety disorders. Those who are easily aroused and upset, and are very sensitive and emotional, are more likely to develop anxiety disorders. People who in childhood, were inhibited and shy may also be prone to develop certain anxiety disorders, such as social phobias."

Learnt Response. "Some people exposed to situations, people or objects that are upsetting or anxiety-arousing may develop an anxiety response when faced with the same situation, person, or object again, or become anxious when thinking about the situation, person or object."

Heredity. "The tendency to develop anxiety disorders may run in families or a person may also 'learn' anxious responses from their family or parents."

Biochemical Processes. "Although there is no clear evidence, it is possible that some anxiety disorders result from chemical processes in the brain."

What Does The Bible Say?

Matt.6:25-34. Four times in this passage Jesus exhorts us, "*Do not worry,*" (6:25,28,31,34). The English word 'worry' is from an old German word *wurgen*, meaning to strangle or to choke. Thus, worry is mental strangulation.

It is a basic emotion of life. We only worry about those things we care about. Yet God doesn't worry – but He cares. God is omnipotent. God doesn't worry because of Who He is. Yet, we are His children. We shouldn't worry because of who we are. Someone once said, "Telling a person not to worry is like telling a pig not to grunt." But we are not pigs, but sons and daughters of the most high God!

In order for us to win over worry Jesus taught us the following seven principles.

1. (v. 25) _____
Where does life come from? It is a gift from God. Life is more important than food and the body more than clothes. If God has given the greater, will He not take care of the lesser?
2. (v.26) _____

Jesus is not saying 'just pray and leave it all up to God'. Prayer is not an excuse for laziness, or to keep us from our legitimate duty. Birds are not idle. Birds do not sit on a tree with their mouths open. It doesn't rain worms! They are busy searching for insects, preparing their nests, teaching their young to fly, migrating with the seasons, etc. They work within the framework of God's design for them. Even a tree is not inactive. Its roots and leaves are incredibly active. It has been estimated that the amount of work performed by a large tree in a single day, to raise water and minerals from the soil to the leaves is equal to the amount of energy expended by a person carrying 300 buckets of water, two at a time, up a 10 foot flight of stairs. The leaves, too, are virtual factories. Birds and trees might work, but they do not worry.

Gen.3:19; 2 Thes.3:10. Through my honest effort, God will provide. You and I are of more value than many sparrows. God's relationship to them is that of Creator, but to us it is that of heavenly Father.

I can't cast my _____ upon Him, but I can cast my _____ upon Him.

3. (v.27) _____

Cubit can refer to height, but also to length of life. We do not get a longer life by worrying about it. If anything worry shortens our lives. It affects the circulation, the heart, glands, and the whole nervous system. As someone once said, "You'll die if you worry. You'll die if you don't. So why worry?"

Peace is the result of _____

External peace does not always depend on us (Rom.12:18). But internal peace does, Phil.4:6&7. We can't do away with many of the things that cause anxiety. We have to abide in Christ. The fruit of the Spirit is.... peace. In Christ we have the power to take every thought captive.

4. (vs.28-30) _____

Solomon's glory was proverbial. Colourful vestures, a palace of cedar wood overlaid with gold and precious stones, etc. Yet one lily outshines even this. The lilies mentioned here are the scarlet poppies that bloomed on the hillsides of Israel. In their lifetime they are clothed with a beauty which is breathtaking. But they didn't last long. They quickly died, and when dried were used as fuel inside the ovens to raise the temperature quickly, when a woman was baking and in a hurry. If God clothes the fields with flowers of such beauty, which one day brightens up the countryside and the next day is thrown into a fire, how much more will He look after us who have a greater purpose and destiny!

5. (vs.31&32) _____

Clinically, one is classed as having an obsessive anxiety disorder if they worry more days than not over a six month period. Why do people worry? It is a defense mechanism that has been acquired to enable us to cope, survive or succeed.

Worry is _____

The root of this word is the verb *merizo* = to draw in different directions. To be anxious is to be double-minded. Why, then, do we worry when we are in Christ? We have been programmed that way. Walking according to the flesh. In a sense Christians have more anxiety than non-Christians because they are constantly being torn between trusting in God and trusting in our resources. (Casting the care on Him, then take it all back again!) Non-Christians pour all their energy into trusting in their own efforts.

It is actually saying: "God, I know you mean well by what you say, but I can't trust you!" Thus, worry is a sin. (Do your children worry about their next meal?) Worry is understandable in an unbeliever, but not a child of God.

The unbeliever lives without _____

Jesus often referred to His disciples as "O ye of little faith". What is little faith? It is faith that believes God for salvation of our souls, but doesn't trust God to meet our daily needs.

6. (v 33) _____

We have one focus – the kingdom of God. When we worry, we become distracted from that focus. Food and clothing is not the focus in life. They are a means to an end. Martha was distracted about many things – Mary was focused. She had a single vision.

7. (v 34) _____

Worrying always concerns the future. "Worry is interest paid on trouble, before it's due." We make assumptions about tomorrow, which is wrong. Assumption is arrogance. It is trespassing upon God's territory. Tomorrow belongs to God. Stockpiling demonstrates distrust. It is estimated that 80% of all the things we worry about never usually happen.

Jesus' answer is:

The problem with worry is that because it concerns the future there is nothing we can do about what we are worrying over. No one knows what a day may bring forth. When we worry about the future, chemical and electrical energy is released into the body, but is not used. Thus, all this emotional energy makes us sick. It eats away at the lining of the stomach, etc. Ulcers are not caused by what you eat, but what's eating you. Making provision for the future is one thing – worrying about it is another. It is sin.

Answer: _____

We are called to take up our today's cross today. Emotions cannot be turned off, but they can be channeled. Heb.13:8 says that Jesus will be the same tomorrow as He was yesterday. If you have any doubt about the future, look at the past.

14. Fear & Phobias

Man is more afraid now than ever before. In fact, anxiety disorders have now become the number one mental health problem in the USA. Fear and phobia are problems we are very likely to encounter in the counselling room. People fear just about anything. The *USA Weekend* magazine did an article on fear in which they reported on the results of a scientific poll, researching what Americans fear most. Of over 1000 adults who were surveyed here is what they feared most:

✓ Being in a car crash	54%
✓ Having cancer	53%
✓ Inadequate social security	50%
✓ Inadequate funds for retirement	49%
✓ Food poisoning from meat	36%
✓ Getting Alzheimer's disease	35%
✓ Pesticides from food	34%
✓ Being a victim of violence	33%
✓ Inability to pay debts	32%
✓ Exposure to foreign viruses	30%
✓ Contracting AIDS	28%
✓ Natural disasters	25%
✓ Unsafe/'sick' building	24%
✓ Losing job	23%
✓ Being in a plane crash	22%
✓ Work-related injury	21%
✓ Stock market crash	20%

The majority of these fears relate to death, and most of the rest are financial fears.

Phobias are irrational, excessive fears. The list of phobias in our society increases every year. Here are some:

<u>Phobia</u>	<u>Fear Of</u>
aerophobia	airplanes
zoophobia	animals
apiophobia	bees
gephyrophobia	crossing bridges
claustrophobia	confined spaces
phobophobia	fear/being alarmed
acrophobia	heights
monophobia	being alone
maniaphobia	madness
androphobia	men or boys
gynophobia	women or girls
toxicophobia	poisoning
gerascophobia	old age

These are only a fraction of the number of phobias. Another, not mentioned here, is *sociophobia*, i.e. the fear of people. A current affair program in Australia reported that this is the number one phobia in this country. People with sociophobia fear that others will judge all their actions negatively. They cope by either attempting to do everything perfectly, or else withdrawing from others.

Fear and the Word of God

Fear is _____

It is an emotion that is basic to life. Fear is an alarm system built into our lives to warn us of impending dangers. Without fear we would probably walk in front of a truck, or jump off a high building. Thanks to fear we are still alive today! Fear is important to the survival instinct. When we are aware of danger our mind alerts the adrenaline gland that pumps adrenaline into the system, supplying us with temporary super-human strength to cope with the emergency. So why is fear bad?

Fear is a _____ but a _____

1 Jn.4:18. When it controls us, fear is _____

Ironically, the healthy fear of danger that God has given to us has been taken by Satan to destroy us. Fear is one of the most destructive forces known to man. It is estimated that 70% of all medication prescribed is to treat fear-based sicknesses. Psychosomatic illnesses, where the state of the mind affects the condition of the body, are becoming more and more common. Whilst adrenaline aids us in the midst of sudden danger, the continuous release of adrenaline over a sustained period of time can cause a chemical imbalance in the bloodstream resulting in weakness and sickness.

People who are afraid to face the responsibilities and challenges of life eventually _____

Fear And Faith

As counsellors, to understand the fundamental workings of fear, we must go back to its beginning. The first mention of fear in the Bible was the result of man becoming disconnected from God. As soon as man's relationship was restored with God fear subsided.

Fear may be an indication that the counselee _____

Fear is to focus on _____, but faith focuses on _____

Fear is _____

Just as faith in God's Word renders those things He has promised to us, so fear tends to deliver those things we dread, because we continuously focus upon them.

Those who have phobias, or irrational fears, need help understanding the nature of their fear. In their book *Freedom From Fear*, Neil Anderson and Rich Miller⁸ point out that for fear to be legitimate the danger in question must fulfil two requirements:

It must be _____ and it must be _____

The Antidote to Fear

But what about when both these things exist? What if a danger was both potent *and* present with me? Once again we must emphasise that the antidote to fear is faith.

If danger is potent, then God is _____ If danger is present, then God is _____

Jesus came to set us free from fear. The angels heralded His coming with the words, "Fear not!" In many places throughout the gospels Jesus said to people, "Fear not!" He is always with us (omnipresent) and always more powerful than anything that threatens or endangers us (omnipotent).

Case Study - Timid Timothy

"Timothy was called into the pastoral ministry. He was an average kind of person. He had some things going for him and some things against him. In his favour he had a good spiritual heritage, with a godly mother and grandmother (2 Tim.1:5). He was a gifted teacher, and had the best possible mentor in Paul. His disadvantages were frequent bouts of sickness (1 Tim.5:23), his youthfulness (1 Tim.4:12), and a natural tendency towards timidity (1 Cor.16:10).

⁸ Anderson, Neil & Miller, Rich, *Freedom From Fear*, (Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, Oregon, 97402, 1999)

He had received the laying on of hands and had ministered well for a time...But then something went wrong. Timothy began to back off from his ministry responsibilities. Paul noticed this when he wrote his first epistle to him. He cautioned him, "Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery" (1 Tim.4:14).

What was happening to Timothy? Why was he going off the boil? He was beginning to fear. Things were happening that Timothy allowed intimidate him. There were problems in the church he had to find the courage to address. At the same time he was being undermined because of his youth. Heresies were creeping into the church that needed to be boldly refuted. In addition to all of these internal problems there was fierce persecution from outside the church. In fact Paul, his father in the faith, was currently imprisoned awaiting certain execution. Maybe he would be next. His old problem of fear began to get the better of him.

When Paul wrote his second letter to Timothy from prison, the situation had deteriorated from that of his first epistle. Timothy was not only neglecting his gift and ministry - he had just about laid it down. Paul had to urge him to stir that gift up once again (2 Tim.1:6). That which was once a blazing fire had degenerated into no more than burning embers. It needed to be stirred up into fresh flame once again.

Counselees need to see the paralysing effect of fear. Fear renders us inactive. We see this in the parable of the talents. The man who buried his talent in the ground did so because, in his own words, 'I was afraid' (Matt.25:25)."⁹

Fear had sidelined Timothy, but Paul's counsel to him was aimed at setting him free from fear. Let's look at the way Paul admonished timid Timothy in **2 Tim.1:7**. We can learn some biblical keys that will equip us in our counsel of those troubled by fear.

Paul's Counsel

First, Paul made it clear _____ (2 Tim.1:7).

There are two kinds of fear. There is first a _____ This is from the Hebrew word *yare*, or *yirah*. This word means to stand in awe of, or give reverence to. It is used towards a person in an exalted position, recognising the position and dignity of the one honoured and feared. Reverential fear renders due respect.

The second kind of fear is a _____ This fear drives people away from God, not towards Him. The first fear leads to love, respect and obedience and the second leads to bondage and despair. Paul acknowledged that whilst God is the author of the fear of the Lord, which is clean, He is not the originator of the psychological, carnal fear which had gripped, paralysed and tormented Timothy.

So where did this fear come from? It was from Satan. Paul instructed Timothy how to break free from that fear. There were three important things Timothy needed to be reminded of. Once grasped, he could overcome fear on this occasion and was equipped to do so in every future encounter with it.

It is important to note, in Paul's counsel, that he did not challenge Timothy to _____ He reminded him of what he already had in Christ. He did not exhort his son in the faith to seek some mystical experience or to go looking for a new blessing. What he counselled him to do was to discover afresh what he was already in possession of, what God had already given to him.

⁹ Legg, Ken, *The Counsel of the Godly*, (Set Free Ministries, Gold Coast, Australia, 2001)

This is a major key to victory throughout our entire Christian lives. We do not need some new impartation or "touch" of God at the altar each week. We need, instead, to:

So what resources, already in Timothy's possession (and ours), did Paul remind him of?

1) _____ As Christians we need to be constantly reminded that we are no longer the people we used to be. We are a new creation. Furthermore, we no longer live from the limited resources we had prior to salvation. We have the power of God's grace. Furthermore, the power at our disposal is the same power that raised Jesus from the dead (see Eph.1:17-20)! This power is now in us.

So often Christians pray for their situation to change. We don't find much of that kind of prayer in the New Testament. What we find instead is prayer that believers themselves would change - through a revelation of the power that is already in them.

2) _____

The problem of fear is _____

Fear moves us _____. Love moves us _____

Fear asks _____ Love asks _____

Fear is _____ Love is _____

Fear and love are both emotions. But love is the stronger. See 1 Jn.4:18.

3) _____

Victory over fear is not only possible - it is what God has promised us. Peace is our inheritance as saints. Yet peace is not automatic. It is the result of right thinking. We have been given a sound mind, i.e. the faculty to determine what we will dwell upon. See **Phil.4:8**.

We cannot determine which thoughts enter our minds, but we can control

It is not automatic, neither is it easy, but it is wonderfully possible by the indwelling Spirit to take authority over fear through power, love and a sound mind.

"It is as we give attention in our minds to the promises of God's Word that every stronghold of fear is pulled down, every self-defeating argument is cast down and every negative thought is brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor.10:4&5). Fear is an emotion, but God has granted us the gift of securing our minds in His peace through disciplined thinking, which is an act of our will. Yes, God has given us a sound mind."¹⁰

¹⁰ *ibid.*

15. Stressed Or Blessed?

Stress is a fact of life. All living involves some stress. Stress is simply the response your body makes to any demand you place upon it. In that sense stress is unavoidable. Not all stress is bad. In fact, a certain amount of stress is necessary for renewal and growth. Efficiency often increases as stress increases. Many of us work best under stress.

Stress is when the physical system feels pressure because of the external demands placed upon the body. Our physical system responds to stress by automatically fighting any external pressure by means of the adrenal glands secreting cortisone-like hormones into the body. But if the external pressure continues too long the adrenal glands can't keep up and the stress becomes_____

The result can be sickness or a negative emotional response.

Many things cause stress. But there are three factors considered major contributors to stress:

1)_____ Whenever we experience a crisis and have to adjust to change physically and emotionally as a result of the crisis, this brings stress. It is reckoned that the death of a partner causes the greatest stress of all, followed by divorce and separation, the death of a close family member, personal injury and the adjustments that need to be made when couples have just got married.

2)_____ Many of us spend more time working our jobs than any other single activity. Work-related stress factors include:

- ✓ Work overload – this is when unreasonable expectations are imposed on us by others, or are self-imposed. Your body can't keep up any longer with your pace of life
- ✓ Role ambiguity – this is when we are not given a job description, or it is unclear
- ✓ Role conflict – this is when our work demands clash with our family responsibilities
- ✓ Career uncertainty – this is when we feel insecure about our work future

3)_____ These include things such as problems with our neighbours, spending long periods of time caught in traffic, air pollution, noise pollution, tension with others and family problems. Also if some important person in your social circle dies or moves away, your social network may disintegrate and you would most probably be affected by this negative change.

When stress is prolonged it becomes harmful. The same adrenaline that prepares the body for action is also toxin and may lead to sickness, insomnia, hypertension and even premature ageing. So to exist involves stress. We cannot avoid stress, but we must learn to_____ Stress can be positive, if managed positively. Sometimes we need to deal with stress by eliminating some of the stress factors. But this is not always possible. So what do we do then?

Stress and the Word of God - Matt.11:28-30

A) The Yoke – Passing the Strain. The Bible likens the masses of those who have left God to the roaring sea of restless waves. The ungodly are like the chaff driven before the wind. The problem is that we too, His children, can live independently from Him and experience all the stress that the ungodly have to experience because of their disconnectedness from God.

It is fitting that Christ's means of providing rest for our souls was to offer us_____ A yoke makes an animal's load easier by distributing the weight. A young bullock may be yoked to an ox in order to be trained, but in reality it is the ox that bears the load. The yoke of Christ is easy (*chrestos*) i.e. kindly, easy, well-fitted, serviceable, good, pleasant, well adjusted to the shoulders.

We were meant to live _____

Twice in this passage Jesus promised rest.

First, He said, "I will give you rest..." This is the rest of _____

Then He said, "You shall find rest..." This is the rest of _____

B) The Burden – Casting the Care.

Christ's burden is light. If we are stressed out because of the load we are carrying we must ask

Self-imposed burdens are not light. Self-imposed burdens are _____

They are usually unrealistic because they depend on conditions outside of ourselves for their fulfillment. For example:

1) _____

When this is the case, in order to fulfill our goals we have to manipulate or control people. When others do not comply with our plans and block our goals we get angry or become depressed. God's goal for your success does not depend on anyone else.

What we need is not new methods of control and manipulation to ensure our goals are fulfilled, but

When we replace our goals with God's purposes stress is manageable. No one and nothing can block a godly goal for my life except me. Who is responsible for your joy?

2) _____

My circumstances are not what determine my joy; therefore they have no control over me. God's goal is not that you be trial-free, but that you grow to maturity. This may involve trials.

3) _____

The deception of covetousness is that if we can have what we want it will make us happy. We can't have happiness until we get what we want. In Lk.12:15 Jesus said:

The world's concept of happiness is _____

God's concept of happiness is _____

In work and in ministry we sometimes push ourselves to reach unrealistic and unscriptural goals. His burden is light. If our burden is overwhelming us it is not His. In 1 Pet.5:7 we are exhorted to:

16. Addiction

God has created us with the power of habit. This is so that we can practice important, though mundane, functions without too much conscious thought. This way we can focus on the greater issues in our lives. Satan, however, has hijacked the power of habit and used it to get people to become addicted to sinful behaviour.

People are addicted to different things. There are obvious addictions, such as:

- ✓ Chemical Dependence, i.e. alcohol, drugs, etc.
- ✓ Pornography
- ✓ Relationship addiction, i.e. co-dependency
- ✓ Gambling

But there are also 'respectable addictions', such as work, achievement, ministry, etc.

To be under the control of any power, other than the Holy Spirit, is _____

Addiction is distinguished from the power of habit in that it leads to:

We will only be able to help those caught in the grip of addiction when

People become addicted to anything that gives pleasure at the time, in order to compensate for

Those who deny their emotional pain by suppression, or have never learned skills in dealing with their negative emotions, are prone to addiction in one form or another. Emotional pain often stems from not being able to express our feelings in our family of origin.

When people are not encouraged to share their feelings, or to talk about their problems, then they learn to cope in other ways. For example they may find acceptance through their accomplishments. Achievement leads to affirmation. Their motto becomes, "If I do good, I'll feel good."

Actions replace _____

This sets a person on a disastrous pathway that will inevitably lead to physical exhaustion and, more importantly, a lack of intimate relationships. The person who is emotionally disconnected lacks the ability to relate to others and even to trust others.

The pleasure the addict derives from his/her 'drug' is a refuge from his/her emotional pain. The addict has made a discovery. The discovery is:

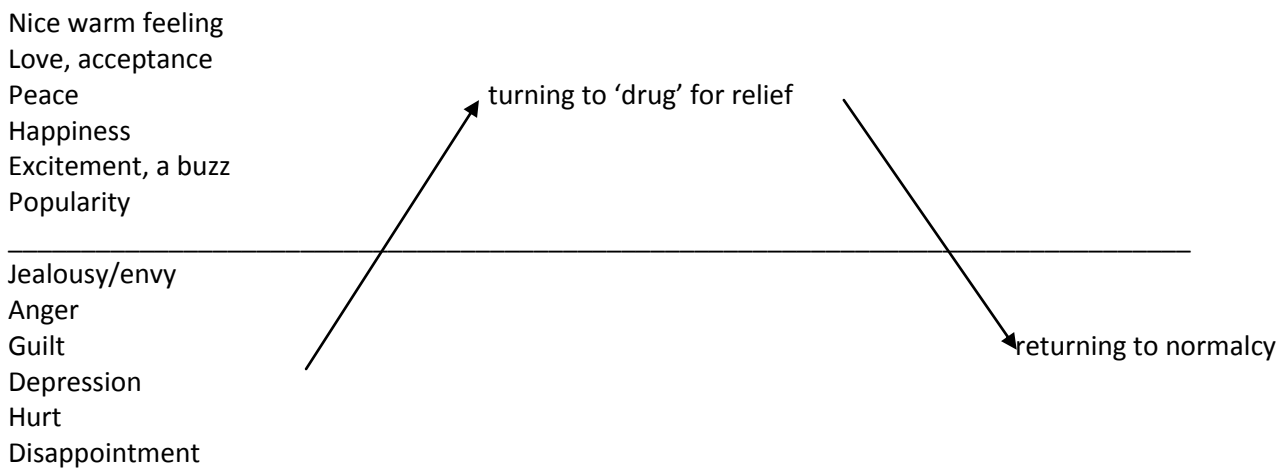
- ✓ The alcoholic has discovered that alcohol makes him feel a different person
- ✓ The porn addict has discovered a way to feel good about being a man
- ✓ The drug addict has discovered a way to replace depression with feelings of ecstasy, etc.
- ✓ The workaholic has discovered a way to self-worth and significance
- ✓ The co-dependent has found a way to cope with life
- ✓ The ministry addict has discovered the warm feeling that comes from the praise of others

Understanding the Cycle of Addiction

This defense mechanism convinces a person that he is OK, creating

Once a person has learned that he can manipulate his emotions by turning to his 'drug' (gambling, alcohol, marijuana, pornography) the foundation for addiction has been laid. But, of course, relief never lasts. When he stops using the 'drug' he returns to his previous emotional level. See the following diagram:

The Cycle of Addiction



Addicts never learn how to deal with negative emotions, such as anger, guilt, lust, hate, depression, etc. All they are able to do is to

If the addict refuses to face up to the emotional pain in his life he will keep returning to his 'drug'.

This is the cycle of addiction – relief, relapse, relief, relapse.....

The Solution to Addiction

The solution to addiction is:

God offers _____

The Woman of Samaria – A Case Study in Addiction (John 4:1-26)

It is clear from this passage that this woman's problem was not that she was immoral but

She had been drinking from the well of human relationships to find relief from her emotional pain. But, the relief was only temporary. She was now in her sixth relationship, yet was still dry. Jesus told her that if she kept drinking from this well she would always be thirsty. He offered her

Ministering to Those with Problems of Addiction

1) _____

All addicts must take responsibility for their addiction. It is not a disease or a demon, nor the result of hereditary roots. It is the way we have chosen to deal with our emotional pain.

2) _____

Our drug provided us with temporary relief but left us with an addiction. Jesus provides us with:

- ✓ Perfect love, i.e. unconditional acceptance and forgiveness.
- ✓ An incredible relationship where we are encouraged to share *all* our feelings with Him, at *all* times. He even provided us with a new family to share out feelings with.
- ✓ Self-control. Not through law but by grace.

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

17. Sexual Abuse

The Children Protection Act 1999 (Queensland) uses the word 'harm' to describe the consequence of abuse on children. The legislation defines harm as: "...any detrimental effect of a significant nature... on the child's physical, psychological, or emotional wellbeing." The Act makes it immaterial how the harm to a child is caused.

Harm or child abuse may be:

- ✓ **Physical Abuse.** This has been defined as the intentional or non-accidental inflicting of injury by one person on another, for example on a child by a parent or caregiver. It may result in bruising, welts, broken bones, burns, lacerations, or even death. It may occur through hitting, striking, beating, kicking, biting, slapping or other forms of violence. Many, if not most, parents who abuse children have been reared in an environment in which some form of maltreatment occurred. Another common feature is that many people with childhood abuse histories tend to marry individuals with remarkably similar backgrounds.
- ✓ **Verbal abuse.** This is the act of using words to tear apart the soul of another. This could involve shouting, sarcasm, name-calling, belittling, blaming or criticizing.
- ✓ **Emotional Abuse.** This implies an active rejection or persecution of the child by the parent. Emotional abuse in its more subtle form is that of parents not being emotionally available for their children. In its severe form it consists of chronic verbal abuse and excessive punishment, both of which erode the child's self-esteem. The emotional soil a child's roots are planted in has a bearing on the growth and maturing process. Children who are being maltreated in this way are not getting their developmental needs met.
- ✓ **Sexual Abuse** involves any unwanted sexual attention or contact. Examples of the types of sexual activity might include touching, kissing, fondling, manipulation of the genitals with the fingers, showing children pornographic images and actual sexual intercourse. A sexual encounter is of no benefit to a child. It has no point of contact with a child's love. It is only gratifying for the abuser and is serious exploitation. For all victims of sexual abuse, whether children who have been violated or victims of rape or relationship abuse, the wounds from such encounters are deep and the scars very traumatic.

Abuse is usually carried out by one who is stronger than his/her victim, either physically or in terms of position, or both. Abusers find satisfaction in situations they are able to control. To them, it is a game of power.

"Child abuse occurs in all socio-economic groups. In an overwhelming majority of cases (around 94%), the child knows and trusts the perpetrator. Abuse can leave a child with more than physical scars. Today's abused child may be tomorrow's homeless youth, psychiatric patient, drug addict, criminal, or worst of all, child abuser.

If left untreated the effects of abuse will impact on their entire life. The effects of child abuse are wide and varied. They include:

- ✓ physical damage
- ✓ health issues (chronic illness, substance abuse)
- ✓ developmental problems (language delay and diminished verbal skills, cognitive impairment, lower social maturity; learning difficulties, diminished life-coping skills)
- ✓ emotional problems (delinquency, adult criminality, psychiatric disorders, depression, suicide, self-destructive behaviour; sexual difficulties, low self-esteem, haunting memories)

In turn, these consequences can impact on a person's ability to function within society. Child abuse victims may find it difficult to succeed in school, attain employment, develop relationships, maintain health and wellbeing, and be good parents to their children. Put together, child abuse costs the Australian economy more than \$5 billion each year.

How many Queensland children are affected by abuse?

- ✓ 35,023 reports of suspected child abuse and neglect were made to authorities in Queensland in 2004-05.
- ✓ After investigation, the Department of Child Safety confirmed that child abuse or neglect had taken place in 17,473 of these cases, involving over 12,000 individual children.
- ✓ Over the past five years in Queensland, there has been an 83% increase in the number of children abused and neglected.
- ✓ In Queensland the rate of substantiated abuse and neglect for children under one year of age is 25.1 children in every 1000 children, a rate increase of 6.4 over the previous year.
- ✓ The rate of substantiated abuse and neglect for indigenous children is 20.8 children in every 1000 children, whereas the rate for other children is 13.6 children in every 1000 children.

What is the most common form of abuse?

In Queensland during 2003-04, the types of substantiated abuse were:

- ✓ 23% physical abuse
- ✓ 32% emotional abuse
- ✓ 39% neglect
- ✓ 6% sexual abuse

Who perpetrates child abuse?

- ✓ 94% of abused children in Queensland are harmed by someone they know and trust.
- ✓ 85% of abused children in Queensland are harmed by their natural parent.

Family types involved in substantiated abuse and neglect

- ✓ 27% two parent (natural families)
- ✓ 23% two parent (other families)
- ✓ 37% single female parent families
- ✓ 5% single male parent families¹¹

The next session will look at ministering to youth and adults who have suffered emotional abuse (rejection) in childhood.

This session will focus on counseling those who have been sexually abused.

Sexual Abuse

A sexual encounter is of no benefit to a child. It has no point of contact with a child's love. It is only gratifying for the exploiter. But for all victims of sexual abuse, whether children who have been violated or victims of rape, the wounds from such encounters are deep and the scars very traumatic.

What happens to victims of sexual sin?

The Bible uses a word to describe both the victims *and* the culprits of sexual sin. See Gen.34:2,5,13,27; Lev.18:6-18,24 _____ This word means "to render unclean". Some of the symptoms of defilement are:

- i) _____
- ii) _____
- iii) _____
- iv) _____
- v) _____

¹¹ Information taken from The Abused Child Trust website, www.abusedchildtrust.com.au

Even after conversion victims of sexual sin_____

The victims of these acts carry a tremendous sense of guilt, betrayal, shame and despair. In fact, one single traumatic incident of child abuse can wreck a person's life. The formative years of a person's life are the crucial years - for better or for worse.

Victims of abuse eventually give way to_____. They see sexual abuse as a game of power. The abuser finds satisfaction in situations they are able to control. The victim is always weaker, either physically or in terms of position, or both. They are unable to resist until they find a greater power. That's why it is often years later that offences are reported.

The victims of sexual abuse also try to gain as much power over their lives as possible. Unfortunately this can come out in sinful ways, such as becoming abusive of their own children, or others children (in a Queensland study, 55% of males convicted of paedophilia report being sexually abused as a child), suicide or murder (the ultimate form of power over the abuser).

Ministering to victims of sexual abuse

The sexual dignity of one who has been abused has been violated, and the trauma that follows this is such that, without God's help they may never feel clean again. But, where sin abounds God's grace abounds much more! There are important steps of ministry to those who have been thus violated.

Step #1_____

For one who has been abused it is a major step to find courage to tell of their experience; but in doing so they have made themselves totally vulnerable (and naked) once again. (There have been some isolated stories that have been fabricated, and also a highly suspect form of counselling related to this realm called 'suppressed memory syndrome'. These aside, however, one of the greatest thing a counselor can do for an abused person is to believe their story.)

All those who have been abused have the disadvantage of being_____

Sadly, the victims themselves are the only witnesses. But just as much damage, if not more, can be caused by failure to listen to and follow through on all reported incidents of abuse in counselling sessions. This can be as damaging to the victim as the abuse itself. A child molested by its father and disbelieved by its mother is 'psychologically orphaned'. Furthermore, that child is rendered powerless in any future encounters of sexual abuse. A mother who believes her child's report and stands up for that child does more to bring healing than anything else can.

Remember, as a counsellor you have an obligation to

Step #2_____

The counsellee has suffered abuse, but is not an "abused person". To wear this label is to accept the identity that goes with it. Whatever we see ourselves as will control and impact every area of our lives. The counsellee must be shown that, as devastating as their experience has been they are not perpetual victims of their abuse. Every Christian is a new creation with a new identity.

We are not_____ but_____

We are not_____ but_____

Any counsellor, whether secular or Christian, who uses psycho-labels to describe their counsees will enslave them to the very past from which Christ has set them free. The message they send is that the counsellee must bear the psychological scars of their past forever. They can never be whole because they have been permanently damaged. The best they can hope for is to learn how to cope.

This is not true. Whilst those who have suffered abuse cannot be responsible for what has happened to them in the past yet, in Christ, they do have power to choose how they see themselves today. This in no way minimizes the traumatic experiences of the past, but offers hope for a new beginning which is consistent with the good news of the gospel. God has provided total healing and complete wholeness, leading to growth into full maturity in Christ. This is not only for those brought up in loving, secure, stable homes, but for all.

Step #3

There is a distinct contrast between secular counsellors and Biblical counsellors. It is this:

Secular counsellors _____

Biblical counsellors _____

Nowhere is this more evident than when dealing with those who have been abused. This does not mean that God is unconcerned about the past. On the contrary, He has dealt with it in a decisive and total way. The New Testament teaches the following:

1) Gal.2:20 _____

2) Phil.3:13 _____

3) Matt.16:24&25 _____

An important key to leaving the past is _____

Step #4

2 Cor.5:17. There are two main Greek words translated as 'new' in the New Testament.

- ✓ The first is *neos*, which means new in respect of time; another of the same kind.
- ✓ The second is *kainos*, which means new in kind.

God has not given us a new start at the old life but a new kind of life, His life.

This involves the following:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) The counselee must be encouraged to see that their body is now,

i) _____ (1 Cor.6:15)

ii) _____ (1 Cor.6:19)

iii) _____ (Rom.6:12-13)

5) _____

6) _____

7) The counselee must be encouraged to see that their body is now,

i) _____ (1 Cor.6:15)

ii) _____ (1 Cor.6:19)

iii) _____ (Rom.6:12-13)

18. Rejecting Rejection

Rejection can be the cause *and* the outcome of many of the social ills we encounter today.

_____ has caused rejection to be a major problem in our society. God has designed that we should receive love, protection and care in the family. Every child born into a family is totally defenceless and dependable on the family that surrounds it for love and protection.

When there is a breakdown in the human family there are _____

A child that is brought up in a loving atmosphere and home _____

A child that has felt rejection during childhood will grow up to be _____

Rejection can come in different ways. It is not always deliberate. But where there is a failure to communicate acceptance, rejection takes place.

Psychologists tell us that there are three parental attitudes that are absolutely necessary for a secure and wholesome personality. These are:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

A lack of any of these will be interpreted by a child as rejection.

Rejection can result in different consequences. Examples:

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

Ministering to the rejected

Only God can minister effectively to the rejected. See Psa.27:10.

If a person has been rejected, God knows all about it. In fact Jesus suffered rejection more than any other person. Isa.53:3&4. He was rejected for us. He bore our rejection.

He was rejected:

- i) _____
- ii) _____
- iii) _____
- iv) _____

The Bible says that Jesus was made perfect through sufferings. This is not a reference to moral perfection, but to being perfected or completed as our High Priest. He passed through every kind of suffering known to man, and this equipped Him in the role of a sympathetic high priest who is able to identify with us and minister to us in our sufferings.

The Bible says:

- i) _____
- ii) _____
- iii) _____

The way to freedom from rejection

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

19. Toxic Relationships

"Man was not created for isolation, but as a social being. God is a relational being. He has created a universe that functions on the basis of inter-relating. Man, who has been created in the image and likeness of God, is designed in such a way as to be incomplete without relationships. Human relationships, then, are an indispensable part of life. A person will never realise his full potential until he establishes meaningful relationships with others.

To be alone means to be on your own. This is not necessarily a negative experience. All of us need times when we are on our own. We need moments to reflect, to be replenished and to reaffirm our own individual identity. It is unhealthy to have a co-dependent relationship with others. Often Jesus withdrew from the crowds to be alone (e.g. Matt.14:23; Mk.6:47; Jn.6:15; 8:9). In fact the Bible records more incidents of Jesus being alone than any other person being alone. His strength in His aloneness, however, is that He was not really alone. He always had His Father with Him (Jn.8:29; 16:32)."¹²

Loneliness, however, is different from being alone.

Loneliness is _____

Loneliness occurs _____

It is possible to be in the midst of a crowd of people and yet be lonely. Some of the loneliest people live in crowded cities of hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of people. Sadly, many of those lonely people are also married!

God's answer to loneliness is _____

Relationships with family, friends, peers, associates, etc., provide the opportunity for emotional completeness. They form the basis of a stable life. They keep us from making rash decisions and, more importantly, they keep us from self-centredness. God has provided for our emotional well-being in relationships with others. Our full identity will never be realised outside of relationships.

Paradise Lost

Like every other beautiful thing that God has created, relationships have been warped and corrupted through the Fall. Before the Fall man was under the influence of divine love.

Divine love in man is characterised by _____

After the Fall, man came under the control of _____

Before the Fall he was like a flower opened up in full bloom, reaching out to God and to mankind, emitting the fragrance of God's perfect love. Since the Fall, he has become like a flower closed up in bud, tightly holding his life close to himself. Nowhere is this felt more than in the area of relationships. God's fundamental purpose in relationships is love which is established on the basis of,

In contrast, sin's distorted version of relationships is characterised by,

Love is giving; lust is getting. Love seeks the ultimate good of the other person, and will manifest itself in self-denial. Selfishness seeks its own good and advancement at the expense of the other person in a relationship. When a person enters a relationship on the basis of self-love there is bound to be conflict.

What happens when one person uses another person to meet his own needs and hurts that person in the process? How do we counsel those who are caught up in toxic relationships?

¹² Legg, Ken, *The Counsel of the Godly*, (Set Free Ministries, Gold Coast, Australia, 2001)

Toxic Relationships

We need to define what is meant by a toxic relationship. A toxic relationship is any relationship that,

A toxic relationship is when the traffic is all going one way leaving a person feeling used, violated, controlled and damaged. A toxic relationship is a relationship where one person intends to meet his own needs, but has no intention of fulfilling the needs of the other person in that relationship.

We will look at three kinds of toxic relationship.

A) _____
 Most forms of abusive relationships fall into this category. Relationships involve at least two people. Each person in a relationship has the power to choose what he will give within the relationship, and also what he will do. When that freedom of choice is taken away a person has become violated as an individual. The desire to control another person is an attempt to deny the separateness with which he has been created. That separateness includes an individual free will.

Even when a person is in a role of submission to another, his submission is _____
 No one has the right to usurp the will of another. This is control. A wife, for example, is called upon to *choose* to submit to her husband. The implication of the call to submission is that a woman is still in control of her life and that she renders that submission out of her own free will.

The principle of submission, be it children to parents, a wife to her husband, a congregation to its leaders, is not in dispute. What is important to preserve is the principle that submission is something

Whenever a person's life is involuntarily taken over, in any area, it is not biblical authority, but unrighteous authority. Note the following definitions:

Righteous authority _____

Authoritarianism _____

Righteous authority is characterised by _____ to _____
 Submission to those whom God has appointed is seen as submission to God Himself. Yet those who lead in God's name are to exercise their authority as a means of

They are not to demand mindless submission, nor to attempt to violate the conscience of others.

There is nothing more destructive to relationships than the desire to _____
 Control is the act of taking what is not ours to take. It is to rob a person of the freedom that Christ purchased for them with His own blood. To control is to be guilty of

Recognising Control

Control is the endeavour of one person to dominate another. This usually happens by either intimidation or manipulation.

Intimidation uses _____

Manipulation uses _____

“The principle of intimidation can be detected whenever a person uses authority, aggression, threats, power, blackmail, etc., to inspire fear, in order to force his will on another. Manipulation is a more subtle form of control. Manipulation appeals to a person’s emotions indirectly in order to bring control. For example, a pastor might appeal to a person’s pride through flattery, promotion or personal prophecy in order to keep that person in his church. Elitist churches manipulate their members by communicating a feeling of superiority. They play on the spiritual pride of the unsuspecting by declaring themselves to be “on the cutting edge”. Their captives swallow the bait by believing that to join any other church is to settle for second best. Again, some people enjoy being sick because it allows them to manipulate others.”¹³

Setting Someone Free From Control

In every control situation there are two parties - the controller and the person being controlled. Ideally, when counselling people involved in an abusive relationship it is best to have both parties present, because both parties have issues they need to deal with. If the controller is not willing to be involved in counselling, then the counsellor must concentrate on the person who is being controlled.

The following biblical principles are essential for understanding the dynamics of control and setting the captive free.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

6) _____

7) _____

¹³ *ibid.*

B) _____

A relationship is potentially damaging when one person attempts to change another person. There is a major difference between those mentioned in the last category, i.e. those who seek to *control* others, and those who seek to *change* others. Usually the person who controls does so selfishly, in order to achieve his own ends. But the one who attempts to change another, often, though not always,

_____ The motive might be sincere, but it is sincerely wrong. No one, be it a partner, a pastor, a counsellor or a friend, is called to change another person.

The "changer" thinks _____

He may even feel that it is his role _____

Any one who operates this way has failed to make the subtle, yet vital, distinction between

Who Does The Changing?

"When a person tries to change in his own strength he is not operating in the Spirit, but in the flesh. He is not in grace but in works. Grace is God's ability given to the believer to do what he cannot do for himself - change. When he tries to change in his own power the Bible calls this 'flesh'. Flesh is simply man's ability. So whether man tries to change himself, or another tries to change him, both are working with the same basic resources of the flesh. If the flesh is powerless to change self it is no more powerful to change others. Flesh is flesh, wherever it is directed. Putting confidence in others to change us is no different to putting confidence in ourselves."¹⁴

Anyone professing to have the best interests of others at heart should demonstrate that care by

_____ As co-dependency increases in Christian circles it is clear that Christ will be presented less and less as being the Source of all a Christian will ever need. Whenever a Christian assumes the role of a "changer" he encourages others to find their sufficiency in him, not in Christ. It is a mistake to think that by trusting in Christ's servants we are trusting in Him. True servants of the Lord will always

From Co-dependency To Christ-dependency

As long as a person sees his role as the "changer" he

_____ The biblical goal for those who desire to help others is Christ-dependency not co-dependency. Each must learn to abide in Christ in a living, trusting relationship, and to lay hold of His grace.

God's grace is _____

When one Christian tries to change another he demonstrates that _____

Likewise, when one Christian continually looks to another to meet his needs he demonstrates that

¹⁴ *ibid.*

C) _____

"If the desire to control others and to change others is the sin of taking what is not ours, then the desire to be carried is the sin of not owning what *is* ours. There are some things in life that can never be separated. Responsibility and accountability are inseparable. God has made me responsible for my life. I alone will be held accountable for it, both in this life and in the life to come. Whatever I have sown, I will reap. I am responsible for the sowing - I will partake of the reaping. Ever since the Fall, when Adam and Eve were both called to account, man has sought to pass on the responsibility for his life to someone else. Adam tried to pass his responsibility on to Eve, and Eve sought to pass on her responsibility to the serpent. God, however, faced them both with their individual responsibilities."¹⁵

The law of sowing and reaping confirms the principle of responsibility and accountability. Whatever a man sows, that shall *he* reap. Reaping the consequences of our actions is the way God purposes for us to learn to accept responsibility for our behaviour.

A "carrying" relationship is where

In doing so he _____

In a carrying relationship _____

There are, of course, times when we help others to face the crises and trials they encounter. This is different to relieving them of their responsibilities. In Gal.6:1-5 Paul helps differentiate between, on one hand, helping a person who is going through a trial too severe to successfully face it alone, and, on the other hand, refraining from accepting another person's responsibility for his life.

Summary

Whether a person is experiencing control, the attempt to be changed or is being manipulated into carrying another person, he is in a toxic relationship. But he can do something about it.

Each category is about the issue of _____ No Christian is owned by another person. Understanding this truth has the power to set captives (and captors) free.

Note: When a counselee is being encouraged to recognise a harmful relationship, and to be free from a spirit of manipulation, he must embrace his liberty in a spirit of *meekness and humility*. Freedom with attitude is just as ungodly as control or co-dependency.

¹⁵ *ibid.*

20. Helping Others Find the Will of God

One of the most common requests in counselling is for help discovering the will of God. "What should I do in this situation?" "What is God's will for me?" "I need help making the right decision." These are common requests.

"God has always guided His people. In the Old Testament His guidance was through means of the Urim and Thummim. These were probably two stones that were placed in the breastplate of judgement, worn by the high priest. Maybe they were "yes"/"no" stones. When God was consulted to know His will, only one stone was selected. It was believed that God guided the high priest to choose the correct stone, and so to provide direction for His people. *"The lot is cast into the lap (Hebrew = bosom), but its every decision is from the LORD"* (Prov.16:33). It was called a breastplate of judgement because God gave His judgement concerning the affairs of Israel by means of it. Consulting it was really an act of prayer. Interestingly, the breastplate of judgement, into which the two stones were placed, was worn close to the heart of the high priest. The twelve tribes of Israel were precious to God, and their guidance was a subject that was close to His heart. God's guidance, then, is both real and personal."¹⁶

Then, there are those who come for help in picking up the pieces of their lives because they have become victims of one or more of the deluded ideas about guidance circulating amongst Christians today. They were sure they had received divine direction, but ended up in a cul-de-sac or, worse, in catastrophe, leaving them confused and devastated.

How do we help those seeking to know God's will?

Dispelling False Ideas

The following are some of the most common misconceptions Christians have about how God leads:

Subjectivism. This is probably the most widespread idea about guidance today. The belief is that God guides a person through one's feelings. Those who operate this way usually say things such as, "I felt led", "God told me", "God said to me", etc. This highly subjective form of guidance teaches that

Eliphaz, one of Job's 'comforters', sought to validate his counsel as being from God in this way (see Job 4:12-16). Yet, God later rebuked Eliphaz for his words saying that they did not originate from God but from within himself, (Job 42:7&8).

The fundamental error with the subjective form of guidance is that of automatically assuming that one's thoughts and feelings is God speaking to us. John Wesley said: "Do not hastily ascribe all things to God. Do not easily suppose dreams, voices, impressions or revelations to be from God. They may be from Him, they may be from nature, or they may be from the Devil. Therefore, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be from God."

Feelings are changeable, unreliable and deceptive. They are no foundation for finding the will of God. When a person hands over the leadership of his life to impulse, imagination and emotion, he is likely to become a victim of delusion.

God's perfect will vs. His permissive will. The idea here is that God's perfect will for us is a predetermined path that may be forfeited through our disobedience or through our failure to follow one of the instructions in His plan. For example, taking a wrong job, moving to a wrong place or at a wrong time, etc. will take us out of His perfect will forever and leave us in His permissive will.

If we can miss God's perfect will by wrong decisions or disobedience, one wonders how many permissive wills God has for us! The fact is that God's purposes for us are far greater than our mistakes and wrong turns! We are in His all-powerful and all-loving hands. The testimony of each child of God is that He weaves and re-weaves the strands of our lives to create a beautiful tapestry which will give praise to His glorious grace throughout all eternity (Eph.1:6, 12&14). We are in His perfect will not because of us, but in spite of us.

¹⁶ *ibid.*

God's Will - A Needle in a Haystack. For some the will of God is the most difficult thing to find, reserved only for those spiritual enough or committed enough to discover it. It is basically a reward for strugglers. This concept of God teaches that He loves to keep us in the dark. Nothing could be further from the truth. God has never said that His will is a secret, shared with an elite group only. He will always direct our paths when we place our trust in Him (e.g. see Prov.3:5&6).

A 'Complete Instructions' Package. God never gives us a total summary of His will in one package, as some believe. The will of God is an unfolding revelation of His plan and purpose for our lives. If we had a complete list of instructions for the rest of our lives we would never have a relationship with Him. Also, if we knew every detail of our future we would never be able to handle it.

Guidance always comes in _____
 God never gives a full set of instructions and details for the next 10, 20 or 30 years of our lives. It is true that He will provide us with some long-range goals and a general sense of direction, such as our occupation, ministry, etc., but He leads us one day at a time.

The Will of God = Pain and Suffering. There is a commonly held idea that, because sin is doing what we want to do instead of what God wants us to do, then God's will must be the opposite to what we want to do. But this fails to take into account that we are now a new creation. God is at work in our lives writing His laws on our hearts, formulating desires to walk in His ways, and bringing our will into alignment with His (Jer.31:33; Rom.8:3&4; Phil.2:12&13). We are no longer in the flesh but in the Spirit, and as we delight ourselves in Him He will give us the desires of our hearts (Psa.37:4). It is more likely than unlikely that the desires of a Spirit-filled Christian are in accordance with God's will and the gifts He has given to us.

How God Guides Us

As counsellors we must always resist the temptation to _____
 Our role is not that of decision-maker, but of one who can help others see the issues more clearly, in the light of biblical principles.

What are the primary means God uses to guide us?

"Christian author F.B. Meyer was once sailing from Northern Ireland to England. As the ship entered the harbour it was night time and nothing could be seen but a mass of lights. Dr. Meyer wondered how the captain could possibly steer the ship safely into harbour with such a confusing multitude of lights. The captain took him to the bridge of the ship. He pointed out three big lights, a considerable distance apart from each other. He invited Dr. Meyer to watch him navigate the ship until the first two lights lined up with each other. Then the third light gradually came into line with the other two lights. 'Now,' he said, 'As long as I keep these three lights in one straight line all I have to do is to follow that line and it will lead me safely into harbour.'"¹⁷

In a similar way we have been given three lights to lead us into God's will. These are:

1) The Bible.

Most of God's will for our lives is _____

His Word is a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path (Psa.119:105). The more we know of His Word, the more we will know of His will. This is what Paul prayed for the Colossians (Col.1:9&10). So, in many things we do not even need to pray for guidance as the Bible is already clear about what God's will is. When this is the case our duty is

Not to _____, but to _____

¹⁷ ibid.

2) Prayer and the Holy Spirit.

God's will is found in His Word in broad principles; but what about the details? For example:

- ✓ We know that it is His will for a man to work (Gen.3:19; Eph.4:28; 1 Thes.4:11&12; 2 Thes.3:10-12). But where? Doing what?
- ✓ We know that, unless a person has the gift of celibacy, His will is for us to marry (Gen.2:18; Matt.19:10-12; 1 Cor.7:2). But who?
- ✓ Our gifts, to a large extent, determine *how* we will serve (Rom.12:1-8). But *where* will we serve?

The details of God's will for our lives are made known to us out of our relationship with Him. God has given us His Holy Spirit to dwell within us. We are exhorted to commit our way to Him and He, by the presence of the indwelling Spirit, will direct our paths (Prov.3:5&6).

How does this work? As we consider making a decision and stepping out in a certain direction, the Holy Spirit will confirm whether or not this is God's will for us by

_____ Phil.4:6&7. The peace of God is like an umpire that will rule, overrule, arbitrate and direct us in our decisions. When we have that peace in our hearts we can move ahead. When we do not have it we should not proceed. It has been said, "When it comes to guidance always remember that God leads, but Satan pushes."

3) Common Sense.

When God tells us not to lean upon our own understanding He does not mean that we are to discard our brains. It is amazing how common sense is not so common when people try to determine the will of God! Some Christians would much rather someone else work out God's will for them, than that they have to make decisions for themselves. Many would prefer an angel come to them, or a prophet, pastor or counsellor work out for them the decisions they are meant to be making for themselves. There are several dangers in this. For example:

a) _____

b) _____

Decision-making is a mark of maturity. We cannot afford the luxury of being free from the responsibility of making our own decisions in life. The price is too high. The New Testament tells us,

Rom.12:2 _____

Rom.12:3 _____

Rom.14:5 _____

Summary

- ✓ As we counsel others concerning these general principles of divine guidance, let us never fail to communicate the liberty God allows His people in making decisions and choices.
- ✓ The will of God is not a rigid set of rules. It is more about our sanctification than it is about location (1 Thes.4:3). God is more interested in who we are becoming than in where we are on the map.
- ✓ His ultimate will for us is that we be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom.8:29).
- ✓ Furthermore, we are free to make honest mistakes. God is more concerned with our heart than He is with our correctness. He assures us that in the end it is our integrity that will guide us (Psa.25:21; 26:1-3).