Biblical Counseling

(God's Answers to Life's Problems)

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Prov 17:17

A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

Prov 27:6

Faithful are the wounds of a friend;
but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.

Prov 27:9

Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart:
so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel.

Prov 27:17

Iron sharpeneth iron;
so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.

I. A Biblical Basis for Church based counseling

A problem exists today in the world of Christian counseling. "Numerous Christians have been indoctrinated and intimidated by the world of psychotherapy. Psychological experts have convinced them that while pastors and fellow believers may be able to minister spiritually, they are not prepared to minister psychologically." (Martin and Deidre Bobgan, Against Biblical Counseling, FOR THE BIBLE, p.5) Many of God's people have been intimidated because they may feel that they lack professional training, or they don't have a degree in counseling or psychology.

A. What authority does a church have to have its members involved in counseling others?

Church based counseling, whereby Pastors and laymen may be actively involved in giving Biblical advise (admonishment) to others, has it's basis in…

1. The commands of Jesus Christ

a. The command to <u>confront a sinning brother</u>

Matt 18:15-17

Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

b. The command to fulfill the <u>great commission</u>

Matt 28:19-20

Go ye therefore, and teach (make disciples of) all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: <u>Teaching them to observe all things</u> whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

2. The believer's <u>responsibilities to one-another</u>

Every genuine believer is responsible to…

<u>ADMONISH ONE ANOTHER</u>

Rom 15:14

And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.

<u>COMFORT ONE ANOTHER</u>

1Thes 4:18

Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

EDIFY ONE ANOTHER
1Thes 5:11
Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

EXHORT ONE ANOTHER
Heb 3:13
But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

PROVOKE ONE ANOTHER
Heb 10:24
And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

RESTORE ONE ANOTHER
Gal 6:1-2
Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

TEACH ONE ANOTHER
2 Tim 2:24-26
And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

3. The Biblical Philosophy of the Ministry

The Ministers equip the saints to minister

Eph 4:11-12
And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

God uses faithful men to counsel
2 Tim 2:2
And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

God uses faithful women to counsel
Titus 2:4-5
That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

4. The Sufficiency of <u>Scripture</u>

God knows everything (no one gives Him counsel about anything - Rom.11:34). He knows everything about man and His needs (spiritual, mental, emotional, etc.) God has revealed that which He wants us to know for successful living in the Scriptures. Such knowledge is available to those who possess His Holy Spirit (I Cor.2:16)

2 Pet 1:3
According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

a. The Bible is our all sufficient <u>counseling manual</u>
2 Tim 3:16-17
All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

b. The Bible can <u>penetrate deep</u> and get to the <u>root</u> of the problem
Heb 4:12-13
For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

5. The Adequacy of the <u>Saints</u>
I Corinthians 6:2-4
Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life? If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church.

Should Christians ever go to the heathen (lost, unsaved, unregenerate) world for counsel (advice) on spiritual or interpersonal relationships? Answer: NO!
Why not? They are not qualified to give true spiritual answers.
--They don't have a relationship with God.
--They don't possess the Holy Spirit
--They don't know God's Word
--Generally they don't care about you (don't have the love of Christ)
Yet, many Christians go to the heathen for:
<u>marriage</u> counseling
<u>crisis</u> counseling
<u>family</u> counseling (child rearing)
<u>psychological</u> counseling
(For physical or medical treatment, they can be beneficial; but for spiritual, emotional, relational therapy, no one is more qualified than a Christian who knows God's Word)

B. Who qualifies to be a Christian Counselor (a Biblical Advisor)?

A Biblical advisor is…

1. A Christian who <u>KNOWS</u> God
Prov 9:10 - the knowledge of the holy is understanding.

2 Pet 1:2-3
Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

2. A Christian who <u>FEARS</u> God
Ps 111:10 a
The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom:

3. A Christian who <u>OBEYS</u> God
Ps 111:10 b
"a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever."

4. A Christian who <u>RELYS</u> on God
John 15:5
I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

5. A Christian who is filled with God's <u>WORD</u>
Ps 119:24 Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counsellors.
Ps 119:27 Make me to understand the way of thy precepts: so shall I talk of thy wondrous works.

Bible Memory and Meditation are indispensable requirements.
A Christian counselor must know how to apply Biblical principles to life.

6. A Christian who is filled with God's <u>SPIRIT</u>
Eph. 5:18
A Counselor must manifest the fruits of the Spirit:
Gal 5:22-23 - But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

7. A Christian who is filled with God's <u>LOVE</u>

I Jn 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

It is true that people don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care.

8. A Christian who is committed to the <u>LOCAL CHURCH</u>

A Biblical counselor will be an active member of his/her local church; be in agreement with the churches doctrinal convictions, and have a submissive spirit toward the church leadership

> Heb 13:17
> Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

Church attendance (in a Church committed to the Bible and people) affords a great opportunity for caring counseling. (Hebrews 10:24-25)

9. A Christian who is committed to <u>KEEPING CONFIDENCES</u>

Prov 11:13 A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter.

"Any person who can be used by the Holy Spirit to lead another to salvation or along the way of sanctification is competent to be used by God to give wise counsel" (Bobgan, p.11)

* ALL OF THE ABOVE QUALITIES ARE NEEDED FOR ONE TO BE A BIBLICAL COUNSELOR.

C. What are the Benefits of Church based counseling?

(In other words, what are the advantages of Godly Pastors and laymen performing the intensive discipleship ministry of Christian Counseling?)

1. Believers have sufficient resources:

a. The Word of God

b. The Holy Spirit

c. Prayer

d. Theological Training (Psalm 119:99-100)

e. Divine Wisdom

2. Believers have personal interest in others

a. A Family Love (I John 3:14; 4:7; 5:1)

b. A Family loyalty (Gal.6:10)

c. A Family responsibility (Heb.10:24-25)

3. Believers can counsel in a context that is advantageous:

a. The Local Church provides a setting for establishing relationships

b. Personal interest and genuine friendship

c. Close Proximity

d. No Cost (The Average Therapist charges anywhere from $75.00 to $100.00 an hour)

e. Common spiritual interests, morals, ethics, priorities, and world view

In times of trouble where do people go in America?
20% go to “professional” counselors
29% consult their family physician
42% seek help from clergymen
(Statistics from Dr. Jim Binney, Moorehead Manor, New Concord, Ohio)
People still have confidence in their Pastor.

- **Biblical Warnings regarding counseling & counselors:**

1. Beware of <u>worldly wisdom</u> from the <u>ungodly</u>.

Ps 1:1 - Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly.
(Compare I Cor.1 & 2)

2. Beware of many "<u>Professional Counseling ministries</u>"

"We are opposed to biblical counseling ministries that operate outside the church, those that function as separate entities inside churches, and all organizations that train biblical counselors for ministries that are visibly separated from the biblically ordained ministries of the church." (Bobgan, p.54).

Any Biblical counseling ministry that charges a price is unbiblical"
(Bobgan, p.83) (I Cor.9:18; I Pet.5:2)

3. Beware of prescribed "<u>Drugs</u>" as a quick fix to emotional problems

The wealthy medical industry in America is making millions off of people who are satisfied with drugs to cover the symptoms of many problems which have their roots in deeper spiritual problems.

II. A Biblical Philosophy of Counseling

A. Beware of False or Inadequate Counseling Philosophies

"Experts estimate that there are more than 200 distinct counseling approaches based on various personalities, theologies, psychological orientations, values, and personal experiences – All labeled "Christian". (Bobgan, p.49)

Here are some of the significant men and their false philosophies regarding counseling:

1. Sigmund Freud (Psychoanalysis)

a. Freud's view of man:

1) Man has a conflict between:

a) His basic primitive desires (Man's conflicts originate in his infantile years)

b) and societies taboos.

2) Man is unaware of the two selfish desires that motivate him.

Eros: Sensual, Sexual.

Thanatos: aggression, power, destruction

3) Therefore, man is not responsible for what he does

4) The result is false guilt (imposed on man through societies mores)

b. Freud's solution:

1) Remove the taboos so people won't feel guilty.

2) Promote self-gratification within the bounds of reality and social acceptability

2. Carl Rogers (Self-actualization)

a. Roger's view of man

1) Man is only positive and good.

2) Man's problems come from a failure of being yourself.

3) Any authority outside of the individual is of no value;
To give advice would violate the personality of the patient

b. Roger's solution

1) Man has the answer in himself.

2) The counselor should utilize the "verbal mirror"
The Counselor listens to the patient, and repeats the problem stating it in different terminology. The patient now sees the problem in new light. By expressing himself he now discovers that his guilt was false.

3. B. F. Skinner (Behaviorism)

a. Skinner's view of man

1) Man is totally a controlled being

2) Man is no more than a "complicated dog"

3) Man is totally controlled by his environment (circumstances)

b. Skinner's Solution:

1) Man can be manipulated by controlling his environment
Change man's circumstances and he will reform

2) Condition the individual by applying "punishment or reward" tactics.

4. O. Hobart Mowrer (Reality Therapy)

a. Mowrer's view of man:

1) Man's problem is true guilt. Man's problems stem from bad behavior.

2) Man's bad behavior is the result of him failing to fulfill two basic needs in life—
love (security) and self-worth(significance).

3) There is no spiritual connotation of right & wrong

b. Mowrer's solution:

1) The way to get answers to problems can be found in a group setting

2) You must conform with the group and have your needs met by others and the guilt will go away.

Philosopher	System	Man's Problem	Solution
Freud	Psychoanalysis	Unfulfilled Desires	Remove Societies Taboos
Rogers	Self-actualization	Failure to live up to your potential	Answer is in Self
Skinner	Behaviorism	Environmental Circumstances	Right Conditioning
Mowrer	Reality Therapy	Bad behavior toward others	Security & significance from a group

5. Eclectic Christian Counsellors

To be an eclectic counselor means to collect viewpoints from various schools of counseling and to mix those techniques with the Bible's answers.

a. Characteristics:

1) They mix Bible with secular psychology

2) They counsel with a "psychological" format
(Using the world's terms (psychological words), fees, sessions, techniques etc.)

3) They offer secular psychological answers for spiritual problems.

4) Some examples would include:
   a) Tim LaHaye (the 4 Basic Temperaments)
   b) Clyde M. Narramore (Psychology for living)
   c) Dr. James Dobson

To mix the Bible with Secular Psychology is dangerous for the following reasons:

1) It assumes that the Bible is not sufficient to answer all of life's difficulties. It implicitly assumes that the Bible either lacks the wisdom or power to handle certain issues.

2) It leads the counsellee to become dependant on the counselor (since many of the terms and methods used to help the client are no where to be found in the Bible)

3) It is a smoke screen for a pseudo "professionalism" whereby the counselor appears to have answers reserved for a select few of professionally trained psychologists.

4) It glorifies man's wisdom

5) It undermines the ministry of the local church

6) It opens up the door for error to be mixed in with God's truth; It is like a pinch of arsenic in a bowl of oatmeal or like giving candy coated poison.

Can we learn anything from the world?
Even an unsaved man can stumble across a kernel of truth, although he will warp and twist its application, because of his unregenerate presuppositions. Psychology may (in a limited and fallible) sense be descriptive, but goes beyond its bounds when it becomes prescriptive. It can tell may things about what man does, but not about what he should do. Psychologists should get out of the business of trying to change people. They may deal with symptoms but never get to the root problem.

B. Be Aware of the Foundational Principles For a Biblical Philosophy of Counseling

The **World's presuppositions** are basically these:

Regarding Man:
1) Man is an amoral evolving animal
(Since man lives in a world where there are Godly believers who have a moral awareness of right & wrong, those who believe that man is amoral are in conflict with that element of society)
2) Man is really good on the inside
(Man's problems come from conflicts imposed from societal circumstances)

Regarding God:
1) "God" is in everyone
Since God is everywhere, He lives inside of all men

Regarding Truth:
1) There are no absolutes; All truth is relative

1. Biblical Presuppositions:

a. Regarding MAN:

1) Man is created in the image and likeness of God
(He is not an animal)
Man bears God's image in the sense that…
a) He is a spiritual being;
b) He possesses the features of personality:
Intellect, Emotion, and Will
c) He has a moral awareness.

2) Man sinned against God and therefore obtained a sinful nature

- Because of man's sin, he is depraved and has a natural bent toward sin and selfishness.
- Many of man's problems stem from his rebelliousness toward God.
- All aspects of man are affected by the Fall (sin at Eden)
(All aspects of our personality are affected and distorted because of sin)

b. Regarding GOD:

1. He is our Creator (Gen. 2)
   Thus we are responsible to Him.
   Many of our problems come because we are wrongly related to Him.
2. He is our Judge (Heb.10:30-31)
   We will all give an account to Him.
3. He has revealed Himself to us in His Word, the Bible (Heb.1:1-3; II Tim.3:16)
4. He has provided for all our spiritual need
   (Therefore, there is an answer to all our needs. I John 2:2-3)

c. Regarding the BIBLE:

1. In every word the Bible is inspired of God and is entirely perfect without error as it was given by God.
2. It is to be interpreted naturally according to context and grammar.
3. It is authoritative
   (It is not merely a book of information, but a book of commands and principles that we are obligated to know, believe, apply, and obey.)

d. Regarding the COUNSELLOR:

1. You are a worker under divine authority
   (Heb.13:7, 17; I Cor.12:25)
   You are not at liberty to tell "what you think" but what God thinks.
2. You need divine wisdom (II Cor.12:10)

e. Regarding the COUNSELLEE:

1. The true source of their problem is either due to sin or a physical problem

   Physical problems have physical answers, although they may have spiritual/emotional symptoms.
   (For example: Feelings of depression can result is lack of sleep)

   Spiritual problems have spiritual answers, although they may have physical effects/symptoms
   (For example: Head aches, stress, ulcers etc. may be the symptoms of a spiritual problem)

2. The responsibility for solving their problems belongs to them. (They broke it, they must, by God's grace, fix it)

Special Thanks to Pastor Timothy Jordan, Calvary Baptist Church, Lansdale, PA for the above insights

f. Regarding COUNSELING:

Rom 15:14
And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish (nouqetein - Counsel) one another.

"Admonish" - noutheteo - lit. to put into the mind; to confront one's thinking.

The way you think and what you think affects every area of your life. Your thoughts affect your emotions and your actions. Hence, Bible teaching is essential to emotional stability and Godly conduct.

The word "admonish" is used in the sense of:

(1) To rebuke and (2) To instruct

1) To rebuke - to correct sinful thinking (II Th. 3:14-15 - "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, not that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." (Cp. Titus 3:10)

2) To instruct - to strengthen defective (weak) thinking

a. To remind about what may be forgotten (Acts 20:31 - Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.")

b. To warn about potential danger
(cp. Acts 20:31; I Cor. 4:14 - "I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you")

c. To encourage about God's will (Col. 3:16 - "Let the word of Christ dwell in your richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.")

"Admonish one another" - The admonishing is not only the pastor's responsibility and privilege but is expected of the laymen to be involved in reciprocal admonition. In the family of God we need to verbally encourage each other.

"Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of a friend" Prov. 27:17
Prov. 27:6 - "Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful."

Three prerequisites to admonishing others (three needed "fillings" that will give you a competence to Biblically instruct someone else).

In **Romans 15:13 & 14** the word **"fill"** occurs three times.
You cannot give what you do not have.
Before we can impart words of encouragement to others, our lives must be "full" of something to give.

Before you are competent to admonish others, you need to be:

1. Filled with joy and peace (stable emotions) (v. 13)

a. God is the source of joy and peace (only He can fill you with such)

b. Faith is the means of joy and peace
"In believing" = Joy and peace come to us by means of our believing or faith in God's Word.

c. Hope is the result of joy and peace

"Abound" = to overflow; God wants us to be absolutely confident of our salvation. Holy Spirit empowered "hope" comes to our hearts when we have subjective faith and objective joy and peace.

God's equation - Belief produces joy and peace which results in hope.

2. Filled with goodness (steadfast morals) (v. 14a)

The reason Barnabas was such an encourager (as his name implies - "Son of Consolation") was because "He was a good man" (Acts 11:24).
Being full of goodness is the result of being full of spiritual knowledge.
Lit. "You yourselves are full of goodness having been filled with all knowledge."
Do you want to be good? Then know God's Word! Give yourself to reading it, meditating on it, and memorizing it.

3. Filled with Bible knowledge (spiritual intellect)
(v. 14b)
"All knowledge" - know the "whole counsel of God." Have a well-rounded knowledge of Scripture.
To be able to admonish others you need a balanced understanding of Scripture, knowing more than one "pet" doctrine.
We are to be encouragers!
Every Christian is to lift up those who fall, strengthen the weak, etc.

--We are to comfort those who are distressed
(II Cor. 1:3-4 - "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.")

--We are to repair (mend) those who are broken by sin
(Gal. 6:1-2 - "Brethren if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.")

--We are to convert those who stray from the truth
(James 5:19-20 - "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.")

C. Be Aware of the ROOT CAUSE behind most Problems

1. The Problem of the HEART

*** The heart of the problem is the problem of the HEART**

Matt 15:18-20
*"But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the **heart**; and they defile the man. For out of the **heart** proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man:"*

"Heart" = kardia (Eng. cardiac, etc.) - "the chief organ of physical life ("for the life of the flesh is in the blood - Lev. 17:11), occupies the most important place in the human system. By an easy transition, the word came to stand for man's entire mental and moral activity, both the rational and the emotional elements. In other words, the heart is used figuratively for the hidden springs of the personal life." (Vine, p. 206-207).

"The heart is the center of the inner life of the person where all the spiritual forces and functions have their origin" (TDNT)

Our heart (kardia) is that inner aspect of man that **thinks** (Lk. 9:47), **reasons** (Mk. 2:6, 8), **ponders** (Lk. 2:19), **imagines** (Lk. 1:51), **remembers** (Lk. 1:66), **purposes** (II Cor. 9:7), **wonders** (Lk. 3:15), **determines** (Lk. 21:14), **questions** (Lk. 24:38), **believes** (Lk. 24:25; Acts 8:37; Ro. 10:9, 10), and **motivates** (Mk. 7:21).

The heart encompasses man's intellect (Mt. 13:15; Prov. 23:7); emotion (Jn. 16:22), and will (Ro. 6:17, Col. 3:15). It enables him to think, feel, and do.

The heart is your "hidden man" (I Pet. 3:4); the real you that lies deep beneath that part of you that everyone sees.

By nature, our hearts are depraved. Such depravity is evidenced by sin.

THE FLOW OF SIN

1)	**Your Nature** Soul/Spirit (Heart) State of being The principle of sin	⇒	**2)**	**Your Attitude** Thoughts/Motives Disposition The plot of sin	⇒	**3)**	**Your Actions** Actions/Behavior Deed The practice of sin

1. Man's evil NATURE
⇒ 2. Man's evil thoughts
⇒ 3. Man's evil Actions
⇒ 4. Man's evil Lifestyle
⇒ 5. Man's evil Character
⇒ 6. Man's evil Destiny

Because of the inner, deep-rootedness of our hearts, we often do not even know our hearts (Jer. 17:9 - The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

The problem that caused God to destroy the earth in the flood was a heart problem. (Gen. 6:5 - *"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.")*

One's fruit is an indication of one's heart (Lk. 6:45 - *"A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh").*

***God's answer to man's problem: A NEW HEART**

God purifies people's hearts by faith (Acts 15:9) after He opens their heart (Acts 16:14).

What lost sinners need is a spiritual heart transplant
(Ezek. 36:25-26 - *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.*)

Rather than patching your exterior to hide the interior, why not ask God to create in you a clean heart? (Ps. 51:10).

The Holy Spirit resides in the "heart" of the believer (II Cor. 1:22; Gal. 4:6) and makes an indelible impression on our hearts (II Cor. 3:3).

2. The ESSENTIAL NATURE of Sin

The word "essence" simply refers to the most fundamental and basic nature of something.

From what does man's sin stem? What is the common denominator for all sin? What is sin at its most basic, ultimate core?

The essence of sin is selfishness in the heart!

All forms of sin have their root in selfishness (cp. Strong, p. 569). Selfishness is the underlying factor behind all sin.

There is selfish motivation behind every sin!

a. Why is selfishness sin?

Basically: selfishness is a violation of the greatest of God's commands (a breaking of the all-encompassing requirement of the Law) -- to love God (Matt. 22:36-40; Rom. 13:8-10; Gal. 5:14).

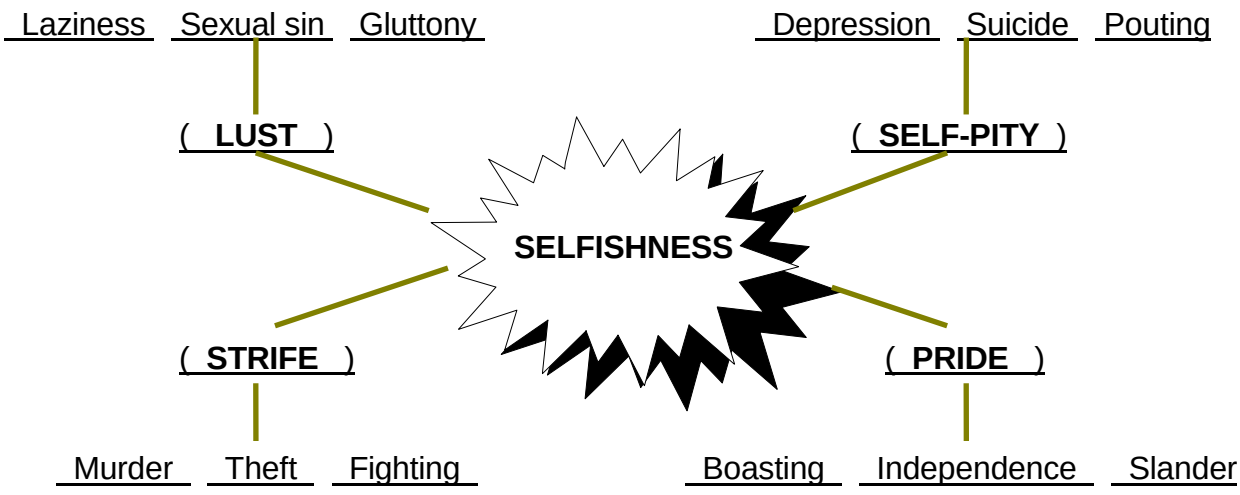
1) Selfishness places self ahead of God.

a) Selfishness says: "Me first" not "Thee first."
(Luke 9:57-62; it is actually idolatry - Col. 3:5)

b) Selfishness says: "My will be done" not "Thy will be done" (Mt. 6:10)

2) Selfishness places self ahead of others (Phil. 3:21; I Cor. 10:24)

b. Diagram of selfishness being the core, cause, or source of every other sin:



c. The manifestation of selfishness:

Selfishness basically expresses itself in four ways:

1) **Lust** (coveting for yourself)

Motive - Lust is the drive of selfishness
Attitude - Lust says, "I want it!"
Scripture - James 1:14-15; EX: David - II Sam. 11:1-5; Ahab - I Kings 21

2) **Self-pity** (feeling sorry for yourself

Motive - Self-pity is the justification of selfishness
Attitude - Self-pity says, "I deserve it!"
Scripture - EX: Elijah - I Kings 19

3) **Strife** (being wrongly ambitious for yourself)

Motive - Strife is the action of selfishness
Attitude - Strife says, "I will get it!"
Scripture - Phil. 1:15-16, 2:3; Ja. 3:14-16

4) **Pride** (showing off yourself)

Motive - Pride is the display of selfishness
Attitude - Pride says, "I have it!"
Scripture - Daniel 4:30ff

d. Illustrations of the essence and nature of sin:

1) Satan's most basic temptation: A promise of selfish independence ("You shall be as God" - Gen. 3:5)

2) The "Man of Sin" - "opposing and exalting himself against all that is called God" (II Th. 2:3-4).

*Victory over selfishness is salvation! **II Cor. 5:15; Gal. 2:20)**

3. The Heart of UNBELIEF

We have already seen that sin (all sin) comes from the heart:

Mark 7:21-22 - For from within, **out of the heart** of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness

Also included would be:

Lust	(Mt.5:28)
Greed	(Mt.6:21)
Evil speech	(Mt.12:34)
Hypocrisy	(Mk.7:6)
Divorce	(Mk.10:5)
Worry	(John 14:1; 27)
Sorrow	(John 16:6)
Lying	(Acts 5:3)

a. WHAT IS AT THE HEART OF THE PROBLEM?

Question: Are people sinfully self-centered because they don't believe God, or do they refuse to believe God because they are sinfully self-centered?

There is a sense in which both are true (there is often a vicious cycle as unbelief and selfishness influence each other); However, the Scriptures indicate that at the root of intentional unbelief is a desire for self-rule, self-pursuit, self-pleasure, self-glory.

1) People do not want to believe because of sin:

Mt 13:15 For this people's **heart is waxed gross**, and their **ears are dull of hearing**, and their **eyes they have closed**; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.
John 3:19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and **men loved darkness rather than light**, because their deeds were evil.

2) And people sin because of unbelief:

Paul, speaking of himself prior to conversion said that he "was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. " (1Timothy 1:13)

b. THE SCRIPTURES TEACH ABOUT A CONNECTION BETWEEN THE HEART AND UNBELIEF:

1) Unbelief is anchored to the heart

Luke 24:25
Then he said unto them, O fools, and **slow of heart to believe** all that the prophets have spoken:
Heb 3:12
Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil **heart of unbelief**, in departing from the living God.

2) Unbelief is often due to <u>hardness</u> of heart

Mark 16:14
Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their **unbelief and hardness of heart,** because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.
Heb 3:15
While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, **harden not your hearts**, as in the provocation.

3) The <u>condition</u> of the heart will determine whether or not a person believes God's Word:

In Matthew 13:3-23, Jesus describes 4 types of Hearts
(1) The <u>Hard</u> hearted (v.4, 19)
(2) The <u>Faint</u> hearted (v.5-6, 20-21)
(3) The <u>Half</u> hearted (v.7, 22)
(4) The <u>Whole</u> hearted (v.8, 23)

c. THE SECRET TO VICTORY OVER LIFE'S DIFFICULTIES IS FAITH

1) Faith is <u>trusting</u> (Depending on, relying on) God's promises:

Rom 4:20-21
He (Abraham) staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;
And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

2) When one trusts God with all their heart, <u>God directs their paths</u> in life:

Prov 3:5-6
Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.
In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

3) Faith is the secret to <u>victory</u> over the world's problems:

I Jn 5:4
This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

4) Learning to trust God is the <u>key</u> answer to all of Life's problems:

For example: victory over fear is faith (John 14:1; 27)

d. QUESTIONS THAT MUST BE DEALT WITH IN A COUNSELING SITUATION REGARDING THE HEART:

1) Has the person <u>hardened</u> his/her heart in respect to faith in God's Word?

Ps 95:8
Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

2) Is the person in continual <u>fellowship</u> with a church that encourages faith?

Heb 3:13
But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

3) Is the person willing to allow <u>God's Word to speak</u> to their heart about the issue they are struggling with?

Heb 4:12
For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

4. The Need of SALVATION

Before any real progress can be made when it comes to receiving victory over life's problems the counselee must be saved and sure of it. Since God's principles are for God's people, it is imperative that the counselee knows Jesus Christ as personal Savior so that he/she will have the desire (motivation) and the ability (power) to follow God's principles for successful Christian living.

Ask a diagnostic question to determine whether or not the person has assurance of salvation:

* ***"If you were to die today, do you know for sure you would go to Heaven?"***

  If they give an answer like "yes" or "I think so" then you might ask the question:

  "If you were to die today and stand in front of God, and He was to say to you: 'why should I let you into my Heaven?' what would you say?"

  (This question will reveal what that person is trusting in)

What do I say as I witness?

The Plan of Salvation:

Step # 1
You must show them that they are SINNERS.

1. Show them or else quote to them Romans 3:23 -
   "For ALL have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

   a. Stress the word *"All"*

      Other Scriptures which show that *"ALL have sinned"*
      1) Eccl.7:20 - *"For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not."*
      2) Psalm 51:5 - *"Behold I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me"*
      3) Rom. 3:10 - *"...there is none righteous, no not one"*
      4) Rom. 5:12 - *"...death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned"*
      [note: the fact that no one has perfectly kept the first & greatest commandment proves that all have sinned - Matt.22:37,38]

   b. Make sure they understand what *"sin"* means.
      This word *"sin"* means to miss the mark of God's perfect standard. We all come far *"short"* of the standard that God demands we reach in order for us to inherit His Heaven!

Step # 2
You must show them that there is a PRICE for sin.

Romans 6:23 - ***"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."***

1. Emphasize the word wages.

2. Emphasize that the payment is death.
- a. Physical death
- b. Spiritual death

Tell them that death is not cessation *("going out of existence")* but **separation**.

Physical death is separation of body from soul. Spiritual death is separation of soul from God. This may be illustrated by showing them that there is not just one death but a second death (Rev. 21:8).

God cannot forget or overlook sin. His holiness demands that it be punished.

Step # 3
Show them that Christ PAID the price for us.

Read to him Romans 5:8 - ***"But God commendeth (shows) His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."***

Emphasize that Christ:
1. **Took our place** (I Cor.15:3)
2. **Is our substitute** (Rom. 5:6-8)
3. **Suffered for us** (I Peter 3:18)
4. **Became sin for us** (II Cor. 5:21)
5. **Took our sins in his own Body** (I Peter 2:24)

Illustration: The Wise & Just Ruler - A wise and just ruler established a series of laws for his people to follow. One day his mother broke one of the laws and was brought to the ruler after being caught. The penalty was twenty lashes. How could the ruler remain just and still fulfill the demands of his love for his mother? He chose to take the lashes on his own back. Justice was satisfied, while love was revealed in full measure.

Isaiah 53:5-6 - *"the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."*
Galatians 3:13 - Christ was "*made a curse for us."*

Step # 4
Show them that God offers a GIFT of eternal life

Flip back to Romans 6:23 - ***". . . but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."***

1. Emphasize the word gift.
- a. A gift is free.
- b. A gift is unearned.

2. Emphasize the word grace

Grace is the *"unearned, undeserved, and even many times unwanted kindness and favor of God."*

You may then turn in your Bible to Ephesians 2:8-9 and read both verses: *"For by grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast."*

Then comment on the fact that no one will stand before God and boast of the works whereby they earned eternal life.

3. Emphasize Who the gift is through: Jesus Christ.

You may then turn to I John 5:11-12.

A GIFT MUST BE RECEIVED!

Step # 5
Show them that by TRUSTING in Jesus Christ they will be saved.

Turn to Revelation 3:20 and mention that this is Jesus Christ speaking:
"Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door I will come in to him..."

Turn back to Romans 10:13 - *"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."*

You ask sincerely, unashamedly, compassionately: *"Will you call upon Jesus Christ and invite Him to come into your life?"*

Review the five steps by asking:
- a. Do you know that you are a sinner?
- b. Do you realize the price, wages, or penalty you deserve to pay for your sin: Hell?
- c. Do you believe that Christ died for you and now offers you a free gift of salvation?
- d. Are you willing to turn from all known sin and from whatever is keeping you from trusting Christ 100% and personally ask Christ to come into your heart and be your Savior?
- e. Are you willing to do it now?

Show him assurance verses (John 3:16, 5:24, 10:27-29)

Assure him:

We are not saved by FEELINGS, but by the FACTS of God's Word!

The Basic, Essential Elements of the Plan of Salvation

5 Facts that any unsaved person needs to understand & believe in order to be saved.

5 VITAL CONCEPTS A LOST PERSON NEEDS TO KNOW	AN EXPLANATION OF GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION	ROMANS ROAD	JOHN'S ROAD	Revelation ROAD
Fact # 1 **SIN**	***You have <u>sinned</u> against God.***	3:10,23	3:19-20	21:8
Fact # 2 **JUDGEMENT**	***There is a <u>price</u> for sin. Your sin must be punished.***	6:23	3:36	20:11-15
Fact # 3 **CROSS**	***Christ <u>died</u> and <u>paid</u> the penalty for you.***	5:8	3:16-17 (10:11)	5:9
Fact # 4 **GIFT**	***Jesus lives, and wants to freely <u>give</u> you eternal life.***	6:23	10:28 (14:6)	22:17
Fact # 5 **BELIEVE**	***If you will <u>trust</u> (accept, rely upon; put your faith in) Christ alone, you will be saved!***	10:9-13	1:12 (5:24)	3:20

* Facts #1 & 2 point to man's <u>need</u> for salvation (the <u>necessity</u> of salvation)
* Facts #3 & 4 point to God's <u>provision</u> for salvation (the <u>arrangement</u> of salvation)
* Fact # 5 points to man's <u>reception</u> of salvation (the <u>acceptance</u> of salvation)

III. A Biblical Method (Procedure) of Counseling

The following outline on the Biblical procedure of counseling is adapted from Basic Bible Counseling; a course taught by Pastor Timothy Jordan, Calvary Baptist Church, Lansdale, PA

A. Establish proper rapport.

1. Begin the counseling with prayer (John 15:5)
   This shows your dependence on God's wisdom and power

2. Display humility (Gal.6:1)

3. Use speech common to both

   a. Use Biblical terms and explain them (sin, forgiveness, confession)

   b. Don't use psychological terms (ex. "self-esteem; dysfunctional; co-dependent)

B. Lay a solid foundation

Explain to him/her: *"Before we begin you must understand…*

1. God's answers are only for God's children (I Cor.2:14-16)
   (The counselee must be born again, and willing to change)

2. Your present condition is the result of your past choices (Gal.6:7)

3. You must seriously consider and obey the Lord in all things

4. You must be willing to take personal responsibility for your part in the problem

C. Make a mental or written Catalog of symptoms

1. Collect data by asking questions

2. Practice good listening skills

   a. Let the person speak without interruptions
   (Prov.18:13 - *He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.*
   Never form a final "verdict" or conclusion until ALL of the facts are in and BOTH sides have been heard. Be careful: First impressions are often wrong.

   b. Give the other person your undivided attention (James 1:19; Prov.4:20)

   c. Make sure you accurately understand what is meant by what is said

   d. Take a look at the situation from that person's point of view.

D. Carefully discern causes vs. effects

1. The cure for their problem is found in relationship to the cause and not to the effect. Don't just give advice to relieve the symptom.

2. Try to determine the root of the problem(s).

3. Deal with the problems one at a time.

E. Apply the Biblical Truth to the problem

1. Lovingly confront all sin

   a. Never minimize sin
   (Don't let them make excuses)

   b. Never maximize (exaggerate) sin
   (Don't heap human guilt on them without assuring them that forgiveness is available; Show them that no sin is worse than any other sin)

2. Call for true Biblical confession of sin

   a. They must see their sin for what it is; An offense against a Holy God.

   b. They must confess all sin to God.

   c. They must confess sins against man to man.

3. Call for obedience to God's Word

   a. You must teach them what they are to do.

   b. You must teach them how they are to do it.
   (You need practical wisdom here, not mere theoretical facts)

Important "homework" they must do to gain complete and consistent victory over the problem:

1) A Daily Devotional time including…
   a) Personal Prayer time
   b) Bible reading, meditation, and memory
   (especially verses related to the problem at hand)

2) A consistent Fellowship with God's people in the local church

3) Note: it is very important to regularly listen to God-honoring Christian music.

To be an effective counselor you must…

- **LOVE them** (Ask God to give you a real concern for their needs)
- **KNOW them** (Understand their problem by gathering information which will guide you to the heart of the issue; which will be a problem in the heart)
- **SPEAK the truth** (Lovingly confront them with their need and God's answer)
- **APPLY the answer** (show them God's concrete agenda for change)

Some practical Advice:

A. Expect set-backs in the counseling process

B. Be careful to avoid potentially dangerous counseling situations

As a general pattern: Never counsel the opposite sex alone

C. Be careful not to become entrapped into division and dissention
(Insist on the practice of Matthew 18:16-18)

D. Be careful not to be party to gossip.

E. Carefully consider the issue of confidentiality

1. Do not repeat to others what has been spoken to you in private.

As soon as you betray a confidence, you lose your credibility and respect. Chances are, they will never confide in you again. Trust is earned.

2. Do not promise to conceal something that must be revealed.

a. Give a conditional agreement to confidentiality
"I will not tell anything to anyone I don't have to tell"

b. Give the counsellee the opportunity to take the personal responsibility to reveal and correct that which must be made known

ex. "I will allow you 24 hours to tell your employer that you have been stealing from him, or else I will have to inform him."

IV. How to give counsel to those struggling with INTERNAL BATTLES

INTRODUCTION

1. Internal Battles Come in a <u>Wide Variety</u>

Anger (temper), stress, frustration, depression, inferiority, guilt, emotional instability, worry (fear), bitterness (unforgiveness, grudges), envy (jealousy), grief, loneliness, self-pity, and pride.

2. Internal Battles Stem from our <u>Sin Nature</u>

James 4:1
From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?

Rom. 7:18-23.
For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. (v.18-19)

3. Internal Battles are <u>Common to Everyone</u>

I Cor. 10:13 - *"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."*

4. Internal Battles are <u>Very Complex</u>

(They cannot always be diagnosed easily.)

a. Because the battles we face are internal, they are, therefore, <u>subjective</u>, <u>invisible</u>, and can be <u>deceptive</u> and elusive (hard to "put a finger on"), especially by the one who has the problem, since *"the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked."*

b. The <u>world</u> has no real answers.
These battles (because they are <u>spiritual</u> in nature) require the <u>Spirit</u> of God to use the <u>Word</u> of God to convict and bring the struggling one to repentance.

5. Internal Battles are a Result of Unbiblical Thinking

a. Internal battles as they relate to ourselves, others, and God:

1) Unbiblical thinking about ourselves is the prime cause for: depression, stress, self-pity, emotional instability, and inferiority.

2) Unbiblical thinking about others is the prime cause for: anger, fear, frustration, bitterness, and envy.

3) Unbiblical thinking about God is the prime cause for: guilt, grief, loneliness, and pride.

b. Internal battles as they relate to "feelings":

All of the struggles mentioned above surface in our consciousness in the form of "feelings" (EX: We feel angry, we feel lonely, we feel depressed, etc.).

John 13:17 If ye **know** these things, **happy** are ye if ye **do** them.

We must know God's means for us to achieve "good feelings" -

1)	Thinking right	+	2)	Doing right	=	3) Feeling right

In other words:

1) Knowing God's will
Plus +
2) Obeying God's will

Equals = Finding fulfillment (joy)

Or:

Doctrine + Duty = Delight!

c. Internal Battles as they relate to <u>counseling</u>:

The Bible prescribes "<u>nouthetic</u>" counseling
The verb noutheteo simply means to confront the thinking (mind) with the Word of God.

The word "noutheteo" means to give gentle <u>admonition</u>
(This implies <u>compassionate</u> counseling)

Rom 15:14
And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.
Col 3:16
Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.
1Thes 5:12
And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;
II Th 3:15
Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

The word "noutheteo" also means to give a gentle <u>warning</u>:
(This implies <u>courageous</u> counseling)

Acts 20:31
Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.
1 Cor 4:14
I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you.
Col 1:28
Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:
1Thes 5:14
Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.

Pr 27:6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.
Ps 141:5 Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head: for yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities.

6. Internal Battles Can be Solved

The Word of God has the answers!
SEE II Tim. 3:15-16.
The Word of God is profitable to show you:
1) What is right ("doctrine")
2) What is not right ("reproof")
3) How to make it right ("correction")
4) How to keep it right ("instruction in righteousness")

The following steps must be taken before any battle can be won:

1) You must clearly see your problem.
⇒(The principle of realization)
- Many people avoid the problem.
- Its often easier for others to sense a problem in you
- Sin is deceitful.

2) You must call it what it is - Sin.
⇒(The principle of recognition)
Until a problem is called what it really is there can be no correct cure. A proper diagnosis must occur before the correct "medicine" can be applied.

3) You must confess it to God.
⇒(The principle of repentance)

Note: David's Repentance in Psalm 51.
I John 1:9 -
"Confess" - to say the same thing about your sin that God says about it.
"Repentance" - a change of mind about the sin, and a willingness to turn from it. Prov.28:13 -

4) You must claim God's cleansing.
⇒(The principle of restoration)

Many still live with hearts filled with guilt because they doubt God's ability and desire to forgive.
See: Psalm 32:1-8 - The Blessedness of Forgiveness

5) You must counter the sin with God's solution.
⇒(The principle of replacement)

Note: The "put off - put on" principle of Ephesians 4:22-32

See: Matthew 12:43-45 - One cannot clean a house out without substituting what you took out with something better.

A. *Winning the internal battle of…* ANGER

1. Introduction:

Anger is an emotion. Emotion in itself is not sinful. God created emotion in man. God is emotional (has feelings). However, man's emotions can either be constructive or destructive.

An emotion is basically just a motivating force. Anger is one such force.

2. Definition of Anger:

The Bible uses 2 basic Greek words to describe anger:

a. "Orge" - a settled or abiding agitation (disturbance) of the mind that gradually builds (grows).

b. "Thumos" - hot feelings which rise up suddenly inside someone.

3. Explanation of Anger:

a. Anger can be good (Biblical). (Anger is not necessarily sinful)

1) God is angry -
(His anger is against ungodliness - Psalm 7:11; Rom. 1:18)

2) Jesus Christ was angry -
EX: when He cleansed the Temple (John 2:13-17; Mt. 21:12-16).

3) The heroes of the faith were angry -
Moses (Ex. 32:19); Jeremiah (Jer. 6:11);
Nehemiah (Neh.5:6,13:17, 25); Paul (Acts 17:16).

4) Believers should have a holy anger
(a righteous indignation)
(Eph. 4:26; Prov. 16:32; 19:11; 14:29; 29:11).

BIBLICAL ANGER…

--Never uses sinful or vain words
--Never strikes out at an individual
--Must be motivated by a love for God and righteousness
(Biblical anger hates sin; Note: Biblically motivated anger can become sin if it is not controlled by the Spirit)
--Must be controlled by the Holy Spirit (it does not sin)
--Must be used to seek and implement a solution to the problem
(it seeks a correction for sin)

Anger is a motivating force which God can use to move us into Biblical action.

"Any man of character and determination who is seeking to promote the cause of Christ is going to be angered when he sees sin and corruption and injustice." (Marshall Neal)

Channel your emotional energy into doing something positive (constructive) about the problem. Make the situation an earnest matter of prayer and take steps to counter it.
[examples of sins you must respond rightly to: Laziness in your life; unfaithfulness etc. of your spouse; disobedience in your children; wrong situation on the job.]
"Anger like a good horse must be bridled" (Adams) (also steered and directed)

b. Anger can be bad (unBiblical). (Anger can become sinful; Eph. 4:26-27)

Examples of sinful anger:
Cain (Gen. 4:6-8)
Simeon & Levi (Gen. 49:5-7)
Balaam toward his donkey (Num. 22:27, 29)
Saul toward Jonathan (I Sam. 20:30-34)
Ahab toward Naboth (I Ki. 21:4)
Naaman (II Ki. 5:12)
Haman toward Mordacai (Esther 3:5)
Nebuchadnezzar toward the 3 Hebrew youths (Dan. 3:13, 19)
Jonah because of a gourd withering (Jon. 4:1,2,4,9)
Jews toward Stephen (Acts 7:54-58)

Anger is sin when:

1) It is motivated by wrong reasons
(EX: pride, selfishness, etc.)

Most anger is sinful. Why? It is not motivated by a love for God but a selfish love for ourselves. It is not spurred on by a hatred for sin, but by a selfish love for yourself.

Example: If we would honestly examine our hearts we often feel this way: I am not angry that so & so did wrong, I am angry that so & so did me wrong (emphasis on "me")

Example: Many times the only reason we are angry at someone else...the reason we put others down is so as to lift ourselves up.

Our pride is often hurt. I do not deserve to be treated this way. I am right and he/she is wrong.

Sometimes we get angry when someone does not take our Biblical advice. Ask yourself "Why are you angry?" Is it because they did not take Godly advice, or is it because they did not take your Godly advice? Are you angry because God's word goes unheeded, and He is offended, and His cause hurt, or are you angry because you feelings got hurt when they did not accept what you had to say?

Anger is <u>sin</u> when:

2) It is expressed in a <u>wrong manner</u> (bottling up or blowing up)

<u>BOTTLING UP</u> - destroys one's <u>own self</u>. Harmful to one's physical health. Makes a person irritable, miserable, and tense (Eph. 4:26).
Note: We are to hold back anger. Remember however that "holding back" anger does not mean <u>holding it in</u>.

Anger when turned inward can lead to <u>depression</u>. Internal anger is <u>paralyzing</u>. It zaps you of strength; It eats out your insides like cancer. It is a cause for illnesses - such as ulcers, migraine head aches etc. It may keep you from work, sleep, relating to others.

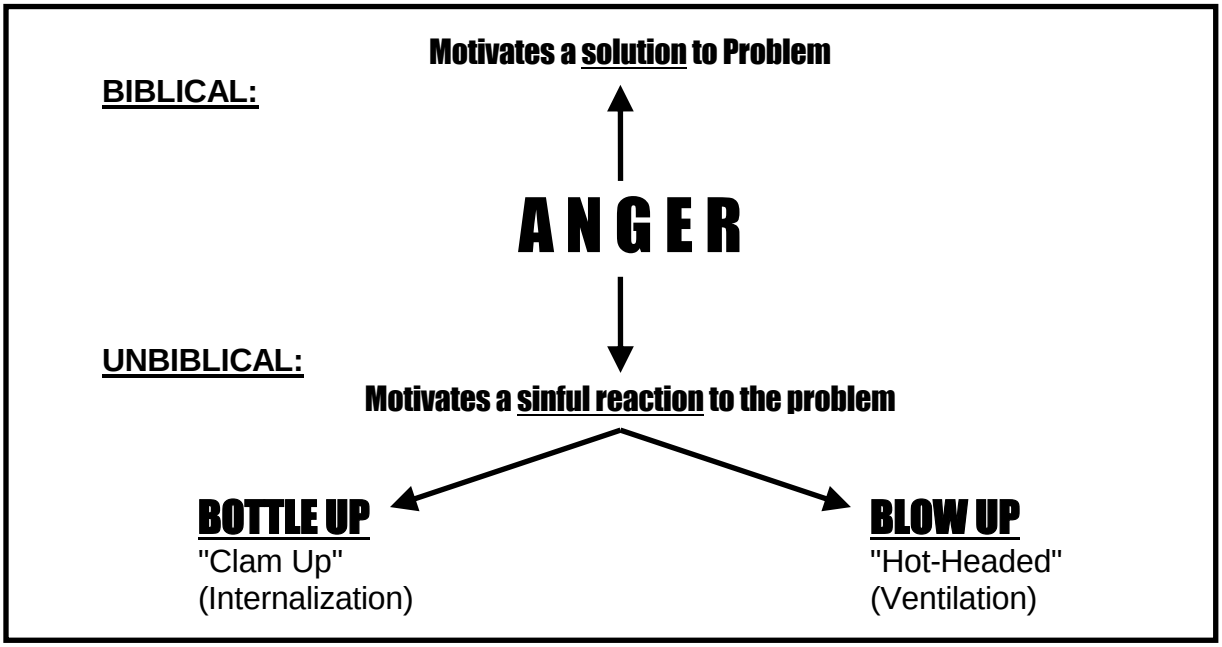
As long as anger is inside a person the Holy Spirit cannot control. Therefore the <u>flesh</u> is in control. Some people thrive on being angry. If you feed the flesh (anger) enough and you increase your appetite for it like anything else.

Remember: Anger turned inward will build up pressure and eventually blow outward! Internal anger is like a tank filled with oxygen or a flammable gas just waiting for a spark to ignite it.

<u>BLOWING UP</u> - aims to <u>hurt others</u>.
It also hurts the one who blew up. Results in loss of <u>friendships</u>. Destroys significant <u>relationships</u>.

EX: It is wrong to "let out frustrations." (Many secular psychologists often recommend letting out your frustrations; To vent it on a punching bag or a pillow etc.) This is wrong. The person is learning that it is OK to vent anger in an uncontrolled violent manner.)

Anger is unbiblical when it is not <u>controlled</u> (out of the Spirit's control) When anger is an emotional condition that bypasses a Spirit controlled <u>mind</u>, it is violent and destructive. (It is irrational. One cannot see the real picture. One sees a distorted view of things when angry.



Two warnings about anger:

1) Don't go to bed angry (Eph. 4:26)
Bitterness will result. (See Col.3:19)
(Unresolved anger has kept many family members from speaking; being close etc. Sinful anger is a bad as murder - Matthew 5:22)

2) Don't give Satan a foothold (Eph. 4:27)
All it takes is a "root of bitterness" to give Satan an open door (Heb. 12:15)
(Most church splits, divorces, etc. are caused by unresolved anger)

Anyone who says, "I can't control my anger" either:

* Is not saved
* Is not Spirit-controlled

Many have learned to control their anger at work, at school, at church, or in other public places. The reason we control our anger on the job is because we are fearful we might lose the job.
However, anger goes uncontrolled in many homes because of a "security" that this relationship will not end so easily.
One can become angry with their spouse or with God because of being deceived into thinking he/she can get away with it because they love us.
The Spirit must control you so that you can control your anger at home and it your private life with God also! After all, what are your priorities? Where should it be controlled the most?

Ex. Husbands and wives put up with anger and a revengeful spirit on the one hand, and yet want their marriage to work out. "Go ahead and keep stabbing your mate in the back; turn the blade until they cringe with pain; get your "pound of flesh". But remember, you will never have a wonderful marriage. You can have a loving relationship or you can get your "pound of flesh" but you cannot have both" (Pastor Tim Jordan)

4. Steps to Overcome Anger:

a. You must clearly see your anger.
How do I know when I am guilty of sinful anger?

You have sinned if you express anger for wrong reasons:

1) Stupid reasons
EX: "Who ate my donut?" "Why did you throw out the newspaper?" "Who changed the channel!?" (NOTE: These responses are generally signs of deeper problems)
2) Re-occurring annoyances
EX: "You are late again!" "How could you forget again?" "When will you ever learn!?"
3) Pressures from other sources
EX: You have had a bad day at work, and you take it out on your wife and children.
EX: Someone else gets you mad, so you vent it on the first human being that crosses your path.
4) Proud, self-righteousness (Luke 15:28ff)
EX: "I can't believe he/she did that!" "I would never do that!"

You have sinned if you express anger in a wrong <u>manner</u>
(even if what you said was right):
Watch the <u>tone</u> of your voice
Watch the <u>decibel level</u> of your voice
Watch the color of your <u>face</u>
(These are all tell-tale signs of unrighteous anger)

b. You must <u>call</u> your anger what it is - sin.
As long as you:
<u>Re-define</u> your sinful anger, God can't help you ("I'm just a little aggravated").
<u>Justify</u> your sinful anger, God can't help you
("Well, so & so deserves it"; "I can't talk to him in a calm manner")

c. You must <u>confess</u> your anger to God
"Confess" = say the same thing about your sinful anger as God says about it. "It's <u>murder</u>!" (Mt. 5:22)
"Wrath" is in the same list as adultery, idolatry, witchcraft, murder, drunkenness, etc. (Ga. 5:20).
"Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous..." (Prov. 27:4).
"Let not the sun go down upon your wrath" - Never go to sleep with anger toward anyone.
Like taking off filthy clothes, God wants us to "put off" anger!
--Col. 3:8 - "But now ye also put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth."
--Eph. 4:31 - "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice."

d. You must <u>claim</u> God's cleansing
As often as this emotion swells up inside of you, confess it immediately and sincerely, and then you can claim God's forgiveness.

e. You must <u>counter</u> your sinful anger with God's solution.
SEE Col. 3:12, 13
Like putting on a new clothing, God commands us to replace anger (cp. 3:8) with:

1) <u>Tender mercy</u> - "mercy" = Don't give others what they may deserve. Withhold venting your anger and leave the vengeance to God (Heb. 10:30).
2) <u>Kindness</u> - Rather than "getting even," do good for the person (Mt. 5:44) (this will deeply convict him - "heap coals of fire on his head" - Rom. 12:20).
3) <u>Humility</u> - Remember how much God "puts up with" in your life! When you are quick to get angry at someone else for something, ask yourself: "Have I also ever been guilty of this?"
4) <u>Meekness</u> (gentleness) - Deal with all situations with a calm manner. Let the Holy Spirit control you.
5) <u>Patience</u> (long-suffering) - long-fused. Don't blow up! Count to 10 . . . be praying for God's way to deal with the problem.
6) <u>Endurance</u> - Bear with one another.
7) <u>Forgiveness</u> - This is the key !
   The <u>measure</u> of forgiveness - "anyone."
   The <u>manner</u> of forgiveness - "<u>As Christ</u> forgave you."
   The <u>motive</u> for forgiveness - "As Christ <u>forgave you</u>."

B. *Winning the battle of…*DEPRESSION

INTRODUCTION:
Psychiatrists treat cases of depression more than any other emotional disturbance. It is estimated that 20 million Americans suffer from this problem, and it cuts across all social boundaries. Though it occurs in women twice as often, it effects men also. It reaches both rich and poor, and while frequently seen in middle age, it can occur anytime between infancy and old age ("Rapha reflections" Box 580355, Houston, Texas 77258, p.1).

An article in the Journal of the American Medical Association stated that more human suffering has resulted from depression than from any other single "disease" affecting mankind.

1. Definition of Depression:

a. To become discouraged to the point where one gives up all hope ("despair" - exaporeo [ex=out; a-neg., no; poreo=way; lit.- "no way out"; To come to a point where you see no way out - II Cor. 4:8)

b. To become discouraged to the point where one feels too weak to do anything ("faint" - egkakomai - to give into badness; to be discouraged. - Lk. 18:1; II Cor. 4:1, 16; Eph. 3:13)

c. To become discouraged to the point where one sees no use to go on ("faint" - ekluo - to give up; Gal. 6:9; Heb. 12:3)
LXX - Is.29:19 - apelpidzo = to be away from hope; apart from hope.

"Depression" is discouragement that hits rock bottom. Sometimes what we view as depression is only discouragement; But beware, discouragement leads to depression.

2. Symptoms of Depression:

a. **A sad appearance** - a person looks tired, discouraged, rejected.
Note: Quite frequently, a person may mask depression by displaying opposite signs - "hyper-friendliness" or loud hilariousness.

b. **Physical symptoms** - such as slow body movement, restless sleep, headaches, and increased gastric problems.
Medical research shows that people who are prone to depression have more heart attacks and higher rate of cancer and arthritis (Dehaan)

c. **Painful thinking** - pessimism, introspection, and self-derogatory thoughts occur often; often suicidal thinking.

d. **Anxiety** - tension and restlessness, often from an unknown or inappropriate source, are built up without release.

e. **Delusional thinking** -
In advanced stages of depression, people often feel that someone is out to get them or that they are of supreme importance to the world. Hearing voices and seeing visions may accompany this.
(Rapha reflections, p.1)

f. **Social symptoms** -
Progressive withdrawal; inferior grades in school; teenagers running away from home; drugs & alcoholism.

3. Causes of Depression:

a. **Disobedience** - When a person gives up fulfilling his/her God-given responsibilities (They have the attitude of: "I can't").

> A depressed person will often think that the problem is: "I can't fulfill my God-given obligations because I am depressed." But in actuality, you are depressed because of a failure to fulfill your God-given obligations.

It becomes a vicious cycle, but the problem began simply because of a failure to obey God in some area of your life.

b. **Trials** - When a person fails to handle a trial (a "down period") Biblically.
Beware, because after a high point usually will come a low point
(See Elijah's depression - I Kings 19:1-4, 10).

c. **Selfishness** - A person is all wrapped up in themselves, their problems, their misery, etc., with no concern for others
(See Jonah's depression - Jonah 4:1-4).

d. **Emotions** - Letting emotions dictate your obedience.
People put off responsibilities because they don't "feel" like doing them. Also Note: the influence of hormones, and other physical causes can lead to depression.
"People who give in to their feelings will give up on their responsibilities (Jay Adams, Ready to Restore, p. 82).
Since women tend to do things based on their emotions, perhaps that is why statistics show that twice as many get depressed as men.

e. **Pressure** - Feeling overwhelmed
("I have so much to do, I don't feel like even beginning")
(See Moses' depression - Numbers 11:10-15 - Moses was "displeased"; Literally: depressed)
Note: Beware, Have you been getting enough rest?

f. **Satan** - We give in to the lies of our adversary.
Are you believing such words as "You're no good, You're ugly, undesirable, a misfit, a failure, untalented, weak, a mess, hopeless, not really saved"?

Most of what we get discouraged about is not real; Circumstances are often blown out of proportion by Satanic lies.

Some encouragement regarding discouragement:

Remember . . . You are not alone.

1) Others have the same problem (I Cor. 10:13)

2) God knows what you are experiencing.
It is comforting to know that we have a God who is acquainted with our sorrows and grief - Jesus knows this emotion - Heb. 4:15.
--Is. 53:3 - "A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief"
--Mt. 26:38 - "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death"

3) God is with you.
He will never leave you nor forsake you (Heb. 13:5)
"If God be for us who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31).

4. The Cure for Depression

Principles to Follow to Overcome Depression

***For the Unbeliever:**
Trust Jesus Christ to be your personal Savior
(Acts 16:27-34).
Jesus Christ can bring a person from attempted suicide (v. 27) to rejoicing (v. 34).

***For the Believer:**

a. **Identify and confess the sins** that may have led to your depression (Psalm 38; I Jn. 1:9).
EX: Disobedience, selfishness, lack of faith.
Remember: Depression is not sin; it's usually a symptom of sin.
You must get to the root of the problem.
Due to his disobedience to God (I Sam.15:22-23,26), King Saul became deeply emotionally tormented (I Sam.16:14-16).
Note: God-honoring music has a soothing effect on someone tormented with depression (I Sam.16:16; 18:10).

b. **Begin doing what God wants you to do** (obey His will).
1) Obedience brings happiness (John 13:17)
2) Obedience brings blessing (James 1:25; cp. Lk. 11:28).

c. **Keep serving others** (II Cor. 4:1-7; *v. 1).
V. 1 - "Faint" = to lose heart or give in to bad feelings.
Selfishness causes depression; Serving others is the best way to conquer selfishness.
Constant introspection leads to discouragement; You must focus your life outside of yourself; How you can serve the Lord, by serving others.
When you focus on meeting the needs of others, it is amazing how your needs fade away.
Fulfillment for the Christian comes from giving. This is agape love.

d. Don't allow bad <u>circumstances</u> to discourage you (II Cor. 4:8-18).

1) Turn your eyes upon <u>Jesus</u> (v. 8-15)
(cp. Luke 24:17-21).

2) Focus your eyes on the <u>eternal</u> (v. 16-18).

e. Count your <u>blessings</u>
<u>Deliberately</u> praise and thank God for who He is and what He has done.

Human nature tends toward the negative. We tend to dwell on what God "has not done" rather than on what He had done. Human nature is quick to spot defects in people, things, situations while taking no thought about all that is praiseworthy.

Adding up your blessings takes a <u>conscious & planned</u> effort.

1) "Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises"
- Acts 16:25.

2) "Rejoice in the Lord always" - Phil. 4:4.

3) "Think on these things" - Phil. 4:8.

In John Bunyon's classic "Pilgrims Progress", Christian (Pilgrim) and a man named Hopeful fall into the hands of the "Giant of Despair" and are brought to "Doubting Castle." They remain there in deep misery and depression until they discover that they had the key to getting out all the time but had not yet used it; and that key was the "Key of <u>Promise</u>"

Lean on God's promises! This is the key to victory over the "blahs" of life.

C. *Winning the Battle of*…ENVY

"A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones" (Prov. 14:30).

1. What is envy?

"Envy" = "pythanos" - a strong displeasure over the advantages or prosperity of others (the negative aspect of envy) (Phil. 1:15; I Tim. 6:4; Titus 3:3; I Pet. 2:1; James 4:5).

"Zalos" - a strong desire (zeal) to promote yourself in order to "out do" or be superior over others (the positive aspect of envy)

2. What is the cause of envy?

Basically, selfishness.

a. Envy stems from coveteousness
Coveting prosperity (Ps. 73:3, 17-20)
Beware of envying sinners - Prov. 23:17; 24:1)
"Zalos" is often tied to "eritheia," which describes a selfish ambition and a spirit of proud rivalry (James 3:14).

b. Envy stems from the old nature
It's a work of the flesh (Gal. 5:21, 26).
Envy is in a list of despicable sins (v. 19-20).
Envy is a serious sin (v. 21).

c. Envy stems from hatred
(Ezek. 35:11) (Titus 3:3)
Envy is the opposite of love (I Cor. 13:4)
Envy is the cause for division (I Cor. 3:3)

3. Examples of envy:

a. Cain of Abel (Gen. 4:5-8)
b. Sarah of Hagar (Gen. 16:5)
c. Joseph's brothers (Gen. 37:4-11)
d. Saul of David (I Sam. 18:8-30; 19:8-24)
e. Miriam and Aaron of Moses (Numbers 12)
f. Korah, Dathom, and Abiram of Moses (Numbers 16-17)
g. Haman of Mordecai (Esther 5:13)
h. The Jews of Jesus (Matthew 27:18)
i. The Jews of Paul (Acts 17:5)
j. The brother of the Prodigal Son (Lk. 15:25-32)

4. What is the Cure for Envy?

a. Determine areas of envy (jealousy) in your life.
(A need to examine)

This is one area of our lives that we don't like examining.
It's painful to root out selfishness because it is the center core to man's fleshly appetites and worldly desires (it's fun for the flesh to fantasize).

Remember, however, that envy is "internal rottenness" -Proverbs 14:30.

You are envious whenever you think this way:
"Oh, if only I had so & so's wife"
"Oh, if only I had so & so's husband"
"Oh, if only I had so & so's abilities (talents)"
"Oh, if only I had so & so's good looks"
"Oh, if only I had so & so's position (job)"
"Why does so & so get all the breaks in life?"
"Why should so & so have that privilege?" (leadership position, etc.)
"Why does so & so deserve to be treated so well?"
"Why is so & so blessed by God while I'm not?"

Do you enjoy it when others fall or experience set-backs?
Do you belittle others so as to lift yourself up?

b. View envy (jealousy) as a dreadful, horrible sin, and repent of it (Gal. 5:19-21).
(A need to empty)

"Envy" describes the desires of someone who is all wrapped up with themselves.
Envy is selfishness as opposed to God-centeredness.

c. Replace envy with God's solution
(A need to be filled)

1) Be filled with God's Spirit (Eph. 5:18; Gal. 5:22-26)

2) Be filled with God's love (I Cor. 13:4)

a) Rejoice in the blessings bestowed upon others (Luke 15:32)

b) Seek the welfare of others (I Cor. 10:24)

Why are others blessed the way they are? (Why is their marriage working so well? Why is their life as blessed as it is?)

Did you ever think that maybe they are reaping for past obedience to God's Word?

Rather than wasting time and energy thinking negatively about others and swimming in self-pity, why not try concentrating your energies and attention on more productive ends.

Use what God has given you (II Cor. 8:12). Seek to encourage others to use what God has given them.

Make it your life's ambition to pray for and work for the benefit of others.

It is good to be jealous for God and righteousness (this jealousy is not selfish).

Example:
--zeal for God's house (Jn. 2:17);
--jealous for God's people (II Cor. 11:2);
--Paul said, "I seek not yours, but you!" (II Cor. 12:14)

3) Be filled with Godly contentment (Heb. 13:5; I Cor. 7:20, 24, 27)
Beware: The TV commercials, billboards, and other types of advertisements are all geared to make you dissatisfied with your present condition, so you will buy their product and "find the answer to your problem."

4) Be filled with Godly humility (Phil. 2:3-8)
The attitude of: "If I don't have it, neither should anyone else" reflects pride.
The attitude of: "If you have it, so should I" also reflects pride.

5) Be filled with a Godly perspective of life

a) All that matters is eternal things (Col. 3:1)
(Remember the vanity of earthly things)

b) All that matters is that God be glorified

Keep in mind the ultimate goal of all things:
--to glorify God, not self
--to further His cause and kingdom and not our own

Praise God for the talents and abilities of others (Num. 11:29)

Realize the value of varying gifts in the body of Christ (Ro. 15:2, 3; I Cor. 12) rather than being jealous over others' gifts.

Refuse to allow a jealous spirit to be the motivation for anything you do!

D. Winning the battle of…FAILURE

(Dealing with Life's Frustrations)

INTRODUCTION:
No one enjoys failure. No one likes to lose.
No one wants to not succeed.
Everyone likes the feeling of accomplishment.

Frustrations:
--the project that fails
--the nut that won't crack
--the besetting sin that comes back to haunt you
--relationships that won't be healed
EX: rebellious teens; marriage conflicts

1. WHY DOES LIFE SOMETIMES SEEM FUTILE?
(cp. the theme of Ecclesiastes)

a. Sometimes we look at life from the wrong perspective

1) Measuring success by the wrong standards

a) Beware of comparing yourself with other men or the world's standards (II Cor. 10:12).

b) Beware of expecting instant (overnight) success (Gal. 6:9)

2) Thinking we have failed when indeed we have not
Examples:
--Preaching and wondering if you were at all used by God
--Witnessing and wondering if it was worth it

"From man's standpoint, Christ might seem to have been a failure, but He was not."

b. Sometimes we live our lives for the wrong reasons

1) Living for self (James 4:3)
2) Living for the world (James 4:4)

c. Sometimes we live our lives by the wrong ability
(I Chron. 21:1ff - David's reliance on numbers rather than God)
We are doomed to fail if we strive to succeed by our own wisdom and strength.

1) "Trust. . . lean not. . . acknowledge Him" (Prov. 3:5-6)
2) "This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting" (Mt. 17:21)

Example: Hymn -
"The arm of flesh will fail you; ye dare not trust your own."

2. WHO IS REALLY THE FAILURE?

a. The fool who does not believe and obey God (Mt. 7:24ff)

b. The quitter who gives up too easily and too early.
I Cor. 16:13 - ". . . Quit you like men. . ."
Eccles. 10:18 - "By much slothfulness the building decayeth; and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through."

c. The fatalist who plans nothing and therefore accomplishes nothing

> Steps to follow in goal setting:
> 1) Know God's goals for you [know His Word (will)]
> 2) Set achievable goals ("He who aims at nothing will hit it every time")
> 3) Make plans for achieving these goals ("To fail to plan is to plan to fail")

3. HOW CAN I BE SUCCESSFUL? (a winner in God's eyes)

a. Realize the measure of success

1) Success is laying up treasure in Heaven (Lk. 12:33)
"He is no fool who gives that which he cannot keep, to gain that which he cannot lose" (Jim Elliot)

2) Success is getting God's approval (Mt. 25:21)
What appears to be success is not always success.
Example:
--the wealthy - a false insurance
--the cults - win many converts
--The Roman Catholic church - large and wealthy but devoid of spiritual truth

b. Exercise the motivation for success
**Biblical Love (I Cor. 13:8 - "Charity never faileth")
What we do is utter failure if not motivated by Biblical love (I Cor. 13:1-3).

c. Utilize the means to success

1) Faithful obedience to God (Joshua 1:8; cp. Dt. 29:9)
The wise man obeys God's Word (Mt. 7:24-25).
"Be a doer of the Word. . ." (Ja. 1:22).
". . . Observe all things . . ." (Mt. 28:20; cp. Ezek. 33:32).

2) Humble dependence upon God (Jn. 15:4-5)
"Without Me, ye can do nothing."
We must work as if everything depended upon us and we must trust Christ as if everything depended upon Him -- for indeed it does (Phil. 2:11, 12).

Though we sometimes fail God, He never fails us.
"I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" (Dt. 31:6, 8; Josh. 1:5). See: I Chron. 28:20
God's Word never fails
--It will be fulfilled
Lk. 16:17 - "And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail."
Cp. Mt. 5:18
--It will not return void
Is. 55:11
God keeps His promises - I Ki. 8:56 - "Blessed be the Lord, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that He promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which He promised by the hand of Moses His servant."

E. Winning the battle of… LONELINESS

II Timothy 4:9-18

INTRODUCTION:

Loneliness is a feeling of abandonment, or a sense of aloneness.

Loneliness is not merely solitude or aloneness. A person can be alone but not lonely.

Examples of lonely people:

--Singles --Elderly
--Divorced --Handicapped
--Widowed --Extremely talented people
--Foreigners --Affluent people & extremely impoverished people
--People in leadership ("the loneliest place is at the top")

Man has an inherent need for social relationships (Gen. 2:18 - It is not good that the man should be alone)

Man is dependent and incomplete.

The reason why man is a social being is because…

God created "man (mankind - male and female) in His own Image" (Gen. 1:27), and God is a social being. (Gen. 1:26)

[NOTE: A social relationship exists among the persons of the Trinity
Example: The love of the Father for the Son and vice versa.]

The most lonely time in history, and the only lonely time for Christ was when the Father deserted the Son and our Savior was left all alone as He bore our sins (II Cor. 5:21), became a curse for us (Gal. 3:13), and was consequently separated from the Father (Mt. 27:46).

Lonely people in the Bible:

Person	**Reason**
Cain	Sin (Gen. 4:13, 14)
Job	Physical ailment (Job 6:15-21)
Elijah	Self pity (I Kings 19:1-21 *v. 14, 18)
Jeremiah	Standing for righteousness (Jer. 20:7-9)
David	Sin (Psalm 25:16); Opposition (Psalm 143:4)
Paul	Forsaken by friends (II Tim. 4:9-11)

In **II Timothy 4:9-22**, we will find where loneliness comes from and how to deal with it.

1. REASONS for Loneliness

a. Desolate Living Conditions (4:9)

1) Paul was imprisoned (1:8)

As Paul writes to Timothy, he does not write from a plush pastor's study, or from some serene hilltop, but from a dark, dismal, damp, cold, dungeon in Rome - from the Mamertine prison (cp. Ryrie, "Especially the Parchments," Bib. Sac. - Jan. 1960, p. 243).

2) Winter was soon approaching (4:21)

"Fall had quenched the summer's sun and gloomy skies and chilly winds and winter was creeping around the corner. The light that may have filtered into his cell had gone from cheering yellow, to dim, rainy gray, dampening his spirits along with the sodden ground." (Swindoll, Problems, Study Guide, p. 65)

b. <u>Abandonment</u> (4:10, 16)

During Paul's first imprisonment, he said to the Colossians: "Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you" (Col. 4:14). Now Paul regretfully writes, "Demas hath forsaken me."

No one knows the feeling of a pastor who pours his heart and life into someone, only to see them defect and abandon you.

[For example: the abandonment of a spouse, parents, friends, etc. deeply hurts]

II Tim. 1:15 - "This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes."

c. <u>Memories</u> (1:1-5, 4:9)

Timothy was like a son to Paul (v. 2). Those you lead to Christ are special to you. Paul remembered the tears of joy and sorrow (v. 4) shed by Timothy in his presence. He remembered Timothy's faith (v. 5) and now longs to see his comrade (4:9).

d. <u>Opposition</u> (4:14-15)

No one enjoys having enemies.

Often times, when defending the truth, you may feel all alone. You may think it's you against the world (like Elijah felt- I Kings 19:14, 18).

e. Prospective <u>Future</u> (4:6-7)

The only prospect that loomed over Paul's head was his death; he was soon to be beheaded.

This letter of II Timothy would be Paul's "Swan Song" - his final epistle [NOTE: the letter is intensely personal].

"No matter how Paul may have looked forward to leave, it would have been difficult to look forward to dying. Especially dying this way, little by little, always waiting for the final execution" (Swindoll, p. 65).

2. <u>REMEDIES</u> for Loneliness

a. Good <u>Companionship</u> (4:9, 11, 21)

The cure for loneliness is <u>not</u> to isolate yourself nor to gather a great crowd of just anybody around you.

The answer is not <u>quantity</u> but <u>quality</u>.

Paul desired to be among God's people.

***Beware: Many lonely believers may go to the wrong <u>places</u> and wrong <u>people</u> when desperate for companionship!**

Beware of whom you "<u>yoke up with</u>" (II Cor. 6:14).

You cannot develop deep relationships with those who have not <u>Christ</u> and His <u>truth</u> deeply rooted in their innermost being.

NOTE: Not only should you <u>have</u> the right kinds of friends, but you must <u>be</u> the right kind of friend (Prov. 17:17; 25:19; 27:5, 6, 9, 10, 17).

1) Develop the <u>characteristics</u> for good relationships.

a) The fruit of the <u>Spirit</u> (Gal. 5:22, 23)

b) Biblical <u>love</u> (I Cor. 13:4-8)

2) Make it your business to <u>serve</u> others

(Prov. 3:27, 28; 18:24; Acts 25; Phil. 2:3, 4; II Cor. 1:3-5)

The <u>manner</u> of serving others: Col. 3:13, 14; Eph. 4:2).

- **THE <u>LOCAL CHURCH</u> IS THE BEST SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR LONELY BELIEVERS** (Heb. 10:24-25; Acts 2:42ff).

b. Good Reading Material

1) Read books that will edify *("The books")*

"The books" - Paul is evidently referring to works other than the Scripture. Paul loved to read and study.

Don't let your mind vegetate, or wander off into thoughts of despair.

Warning: Viewing "soap operas" and reading fanciful "love novels" will do nothing but feed your loneliness (often they only make you long for the unattainable).

2) Read the Scripture daily *("The parchments")*

"The parchments" were "skins of vellum (animal skins) used for more precious documents, in this case probably Paul's personal copies of portions of the Old Testament" (Ryrie Study Bible note).

No Book has ever brought more comfort than the Word of God!

c. Genuine Forgiveness (regarding those who have abandoned you) (4:16)

Don't hold grudges against those who abandoned you either literally or emotionally. Forgive them!

Beware not to blame God for allowing the rejection or the death of a loved one to cause a root of bitterness to dwell in you.

d. A Close Relationship with God (4:17-18)

1) Know Him personally

"Nobody escapes the isolating pangs of loneness. And for the non-Christian, there is no method of defense. You can surround yourself with friends and immerse yourself in activity, but when you turn out the light and put your head on your pillow, you know inside that you're alone. There is no solution to that soul-deep loneliness but the Savior" (Swindoll, p. 67).

God restores the alienated person to Himself (Col. 1:20, 22; cp. Eph. 2:13-16).

2) Know His presence (4:17a)

Many times, God may allow circumstances that bring about loneliness, so that we will draw nigh to Him

(cp. Elisabeth Elliot's book Loneliness, Oliver Nelson Pub.)

3) Know His purpose (4:17b)

Many people are lonely because they are walking a darksome path away from the will and plan of God. A remedy to loneliness is a confidence that you are in the center of God's will, no matter what circumstances you find yourself in.

4) Know His promise (4:18)

Paul had confidence in the promises of God. God's promises give real security when man proves to be untrustworthy.

Others may abandon you, but God never will!

(Mt. 28:20; Heb. 13:5; Ps. 37:23-28)

F. Winning the battle of…WORRY (Fear)

1. The Definition of Worrying:

Two basic words:

a. "Phobos" (from which we derive our "phobia" words)
1) In a negative sense, the word originally referred to that which caused one to flee (run). Then it referred to a dread, terror, or intimidation.
2) In a positive sense, a reverence or respect.

b. "Merimnao"
To be concerned for; to be anxious about, to be troubled in mind. (Matthew 6:25, 27, 28, 31, 34)

Other synonyms for worry or fear include: care, anxiety, burden, trouble, timidity, fright, cowardice.

2. The Examples of Worrying:
Examples of what people fear: People fear the dark, the city streets, heights, getting up in front of people, death, the unknown, financial and other insecurities, etc.
Various phobias -

Acrophobia	fear of high places
Agoraphobia	fear of open or public places
Aichmophobia	fear of sharp or pointed objects
Algophobia	fear of pain
Anthropophobia	fear of men or a particular man
Astraphobia	fear of thunder, lightnings, or storms
Claustrophobia	fear of closed places
Erenthophobia	fear of blushing
Gynephobia	fear of women or a particular woman
Hematophobia	fear of blood
Hydrophobia	fear of water
Monophobia	fear of solitude
Necrophobia	fear of dead bodies
Nyctophobia	fear of darkness (night)
Ochlophobia	fear of crowds
Pathophobia	fear of disease or some particular disease
Pyrophobia	fear of fire
Thanstophobia	fear of death
Toxiphobia	fear of poisons (or of being poisoned)
Zoophobia	fear of animals (or some particular animal)

3. The Symptoms of Worrying:

a. Physical symptoms - disturbed breathing, increased heart activity, inability to accomplish normal tasks, organic problems (aching back, stiff neck, headaches), perspiration.

b. Emotional Symptoms - Nervousness; withdrawal (isolation), etc.

4. The Focus of Worrying:

Worry is focusing on self rather than on God.
Worry is focusing on the unknown rather than the known.
Worry is focusing on the possible (potential) rather than the actual (real).
Worry is focusing on the negative rather than the positive.
Worry is focusing on problems rather than solutions.

5. The Foolishness of Worrying: (Matthew 6:25-34)

a. Worry keeps you from enjoying what is really important (v. 25)
Human nature tends to worry about lower priorities or at times non-essentials.

b. Worry is inconsistent with God's care for you (v. 26)

c. Worry accomplishes absolutely nothing at all (v. 27)
Worry is actually destructive to our thinking processes, so we end up making matters worse.

d. Worry fails to believe that God is in control of things (v. 28-30)

e. Worry is characteristic of the unsaved, not the child of God (v. 31-32a)
Our security should be in the Provider (God) not in the provision (material goods).

f. Worry forgets that God remembers (v. 32b-33)

g. Worry about tomorrow's troubles leads to failure in solving today's (v. 34)

6. The Cure for Worry

"God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (II Tim. 1:7).

a. Christians should not fear:
1) Man (Prov. 29:25)
Fear hinders believers from speaking about Christ (Jn. 7:13).
Fear has been the cause for "secret" believers (Jn. 19:38).
2) Physical circumstances (Mt. 8:26)
3) Death (Heb. 2:14-15)

b. Christians can overcome fear.
*Overcome fear with faith! (Prov. 29:25; Mt. 8:26)
(Faith = trust, reliance, confidence in God)
1) Faith in the love of God (I Jn. 4:16-19)
Knowing God's love for us removes all fear.

2) Faith in the companionship of God
   a) Remember, God is your Father (Rom. 8:15).
   b) Remember, God fights our battles - Psalm 27:1 - "The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"
      (1)Like He did for Israel - Deut. 20:3-5
      (2)Like He did for Joshua - Josh. 8:1; 10:8
      (3)Like He did for David - I Sam. 17:47; Ps. 23:4
      (4)Like He did for Jehosaphat - II Chron. 20:1-30

   c. Remember, God will never leave you nor forsake you.
      SEE Heb. 13:5-6
      EX: Disciples at sea (Mt. 8:26)
      Paul at Corinth (Acts 18:9-10)

Christians should fear the following:

1. Authorities:

a. God -
The fear of the Lord is:
"clean" (Ps. 119:9)
"the beginning of wisdom" (Prov. 1:7)
"to hate evil" (Prov. 8:13)
"a fountain of life" (Prov. 14:26)
"By the fear of the LORD, men depart from evil" (Prov. 16:6).
1) A fear of respect
Ps. 112:1; Mal. 1:6; Luke 12:4-5; I Pet. 2:7; Rev. 14:7
2) A fear of displeasing Him
II Cor. 7:1; Eph. 6:5; Phil. 2:12; I Pet. 1:17

b. Government officials
Rom. 13:1ff; Prov. 24:21

c. Your parents
Lev. 19:3; Mt. 15:4

d. Your husband
Eph. 5:33; I Pet. 3:6

2. Sin:
a.Fear what sin can do to your life (Acts 5:5, 11; Prov. 3:7)
b.Fear what sin can do to others (Jude 23)

3. Judgment:
II Cor. 5:10, 11; Heb. 10:30, 31

G. Winning the battle of…STRESS

DEFINITION: A build up of pressure inside a person due to his/her having too much responsibility (either real or imagined)

SYMPTOMS: Confusion; hyper-activity; nervousness; ulcers; heart attacks; irritableness; strokes
(NOTE: Stress can also lead to "burn-out" - a depletion of one's emotional, physical, and spiritual energies resulting in depression)

1. THE CAUSES OF STRESS:

a. Taking on too much - many place more responsibilities upon themselves than one person can handle in a 24 hour day.

No one forces things upon us. We can't blame others or circumstances.
It is true that outside forces can have an affect on what must be accomplished (EX: an earthquake, hurricane, death in family, etc.), but they do not dictate one person to do it all nor do they necessitate that it be all done "today."
Ask God for wisdom and strength. These times are times for Him to glorify Himself.

Reasons why we take on too much:

a. Not learning to say "No" to people
Some people try to keep everybody happy and pleased.
One person can only do so much.

b. Not learning to schedule your time

b. Misplaced priorities (Mt. 6:33)

If one does not put God first, things will not go smoothly (putting other things and people before God).
When pressures build and life seems impossible to hand, God may be trying to show you that: Because you have not made your relationship to Him and your serving for Him priority, nothing will go smoothly until you do (this is a form of chastening).

c. Procrastination (Prov. 6:6-11; Rom. 12:11)

Everything builds up until it can't wait anymore; then we get to work on it.

1) Sinful human nature is to be lazy, to put things off until the time comes that they must get done
Some people say: "I can only work under pressure"
The real truth is: "I will only work under pressure" (when I must)

2) Sinful human nature is to rationalize for the benefit of selfish pleasure (Prov. 26:16): We deceive ourselves into thinking, "I know this needs to get done, but I have plenty of time. . . So now I will use this time to do what I want to do."

d. **Living "in the flesh"** - That is, trying to live your life by your plans and power rather than seeking God for His (Prov. 3:5-6).

1) If our will is not God's will, 2 problems always occur:

a) We are either doing what He does not want us to be doing…
Some people are extreme in their rigid standards for their life. They place things upon themselves that God does not.
EX: of not doing God's will -
--working women (who have children)
--being a workaholic
OR…

b) We are not doing what He wants us to do.
Remember: Service (even for the Lord) must be balanced with spending time in His presence (Lk. 10:40-41).

2) Even if we are desiring to do God's will, God wants us to remember we can't do it in our own strength (Mt. 26:41; Phil. 3:3-4).

Pardon the expression, but Jesus did not "run around like a chicken with it's head cut off" and yet He accomplished so much that John said: "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen."

e. **Inaccurate Imagination** - thinking you have more to do than you actually do.

1) The picture may look worse than it actually is. Why do things sometimes look worse than they really are? Your attitude colors your perspective (negative attitude vs. positive [Biblical] attitude).

2) We use our energy to worry and build up more pressure rather than getting to work on finishing the job.

With God's help, and only with God's help, we can do much, much more than we think we can!

But remember, God will not help you do that which is not His will!

Remember: A certain amount of stress (pressure) is inevitable in this life. We are in a spiritual conflict. Wherever there is conflict, there will be pressure. The word "tribulation" (qliyij) literally means: "pressure." This is unavoidable for the Christian. (Acts 14:22)

ILLUS: A man came to a preacher and said, "O these problems, I wish I could go to a place with no problems." The preacher said, "Why, I just came from such a place. I conducted a funeral this afternoon, and I just came from the cemetery. People out there (in Heaven) are not under stress." (Pat Casey, Pioneer, p. 4 - Good News Pub.)

2. God's Solution to Overcoming Stress

a. How to Relieve Pressure (stress)

(How do I release the pressure that has already built up inside of me?)

1) Identify the cause!

(ILLUS: of water pipe burst)

You must clearly see the root or source of your stress.
Are you stressful because of misplaced priorities? Procrastination?
Or simply being out of God's will?

2) Turn it off!

Once you identify the source of your stress, you must turn it off (genuinely repent of it).

NOTE: Stress is not sinful - but the internal cause of your stress may be the sin. Stress (pressure) is simply a normal reaction to an abnormal cause. Whatever is causing the pressure to build must be dealt with. The inner reaction to the outward stress must be dealt with.

EXAMPLE: A person who is stressful because of overwork must get to the root of the problem. Why do you work so much? Is it a greed for money? Selfishness? Or a desire for the applause and approval of men? Pride?

b. How to Prevent Pressure (stress)

(The best way to deal with internal pressure, is not to let it build in the first place)

1) "Take My yoke upon you"
(Direction from God) (SEE Mt. 11:28-30)

"Come . . . Take . . . Learn" - Lit. "Learn from Me."

Jesus never puts more on us than we can handle (we are to take the blame ourselves for our stress)

a) We will learn what our priorities should be when we spend time yoked up with Jesus
(you may need to throw off of you some other yokes or weights that you allowed on).

b) We will experience rest for our weary souls when we spend time yoked up with Jesus.
Rest is needed by all! Even Jesus went "apart" at times for rest (Mt. 14:13, 23 *Mk. 6:31-32). We need to follow the advice Jesus gave to His disciples and "come apart" . . . or we will "come apart"!!

2) "Let your requests be made known unto God"
(Dependence on God) (SEE: Phil. 4:6-7)

The way to peace is by prayer.
God's peace will guard your heart.
God's peace will guard your mind.

3) "Do all to the glory of God"
(Dedication to God) (SEE: I Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:17; I Pet. 4:10,11)

a) Have a priority goal to glorify God (when we live for the praise of man, we often add burdens that God does not).

b) Face each task (challenge) with initiative (punctuality), enthusiasm (zeal), and optimism (faith - look at each task through eyes of faith because God is your strength!)

c) Don't wait until the last minute (to do what you know you should do).

d) Finish one job at a time (before moving on to the next) (overcome one day at a time - Mt. 6:34).

H. Winning the battle of…WRONG THINKING

(Victory in our Thought Life)

INTRODUCTION:

The human brain, like the contemporary computer, can:
(1) Receive information (learning)
(2) Analyze information (examining and evaluating)
(3) Store information (memorizing)
(4) Utilize information (recalling and using)

a. The original mental capabilities of man (before the fall):

1) Man's intellect was totally free from sin.
Adam's thinking ability was quick, precise, free from error. His capability to learn, examine, memorize, and utilize information was so much superior to fallen man's ability. Adam used the full potential of his brain before the fall. It is said that even Einstein used only one-tenth of his brain's capacity at any given point in his life.

*Sin has affected the mind (Gen. 6:5; Rom. 8:7; Eph. 2:3).

The clearest demonstration of Adam's mental alertness and capability is seen in his ability to identify, differentiate, and give appropriately descriptive names to all of the animals on the sixth day of creation (Gen. 2:19-20).

2) Man's intellect involved a language system and vocabulary which enabled him to fellowship with God and fellow-man (Gen. 2:16-17; 2:20, 23; cp. 3:8).

3) Man's intellect included a "creative" ability and initiative.
God commanded Adam to dress and keep the garden, and to subdue the earth, but the ways and means of doing so were left up to Adam (Gen. 2:15; 1:28).

4) Man's intellect included an aesthetic sense (i.e. an understanding of and appreciation for that which is beautiful).
(Gen. 2:9; Gen. 3:6)

b. The mental defects of man (after the fall):
1) Inability to understand many thoughts and concepts (I Cor. 2:14).
2) Inability to retain knowledge
--He forgets (Deut. 4:9, 23; 6:12; 8:11; Ja. 1:25)
--He needs reminding (II Pet. 1:12-15, 31; Jude 5)

3) Defective reasoning power - Man's insight, perception, and discernment ability is defective (Rom. 1:21; Eph. 4:17-18).

4) Defective imaginative power - Man's abstract thinking or hypothetical thinking is twisted or perverted (Gen. 8:21; Jer. 3:17, 7:24; Rom. 1:21).

Your *"Mind"* (thought life) is not your brain (the "gray matter" in your skull), but is a function of the brain.

You are what you think: *"For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he."* (Prov. 23:7)

"The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity" (Ps. 94:11).

God destroyed the world with a flood because of man's wicked thinking (Gen. 6:5 ff).

The causes of wrong thinking:

a. The world
   --Evil friends (Ps. 1:1; I Cor. 15:33; Acts 14:2)
   --Secular education (Col. 2:8 - *"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.")*
   --Media

b. The Flesh
   (man's sinful, selfish old nature)

c. The Devil (demon world)
   (Mk. 8:33; cp. Mk. 5:15)

   1) Unbiblical thinking about ourselves is the prime cause for: depression, stress, self-pity, emotional instability, and inferiority.
   2) Unbiblical thinking about others is the prime cause for: anger, fear, frustration, bitterness, and envy.
   3) Unbiblical thinking about God is the prime cause for: guilt, grief, loneliness, and pride.

***Believers can conquer sinful thoughts!**

1. You Need a SAVED Mind
(Be saved by the Son of God)

Evil thoughts come from an evil heart (Mk. 7:21).
An unsaved man needs more than a change of heart, he needs a new heart!
Education -- Philosophy -- Positive thinking . . . cannot provide this.
(Only the Spirit of God can)

God describes the minds of the lost as being:
   a. Blinded by Satan (II Cor. 4:4)
   b. Reprobate (Rom. 1:28)
   c. Insubordinate to God (Rom. 8:5-7)
   d. Fleshly and lustful (Eph. 2:3)
   e. Defiled (seared, cauterized, insensitive) (Ti. 1:15)

When Christ saves us, He gives us a new heart!
Ezek. 36:26 and Heb. 10:14-16

With regeneration, we receive:
(1) The mind of Christ (I Cor. 2:16)
(2) The illumination of the Spirit (Heb. 6:4, 10:32)
(3) The desires of God (Phil. 2:13)

2. You Need a SCRIPTURE-FILLED Mind
(Be filled with the Word of God)

Even a believer's mind can become corrupted (II Cor. 11:3).

a. The Principle of Renewal
Rom. 12:1-2 - *"Be transformed by the renewing of your mind"*
Eph. 4:17-23 - *"Be renewed in the Spirit of your mind"*

b. The Principle of Replacement
Eph. 4:22, 24 - *"Put off. . . put on"*
Phil. 4:8

Be filled with God's Word by a discipline of:
1) Hearing Scripture (Rom. 10:17)
2) Memorizing Scripture (Ps. 119:11)
Focus your thoughts, dwell on who God is and what He can do (Is. 26:3)
3) Reviewing (meditating on) Scripture
(Josh. 1:8; Ps. 119:15, 23, 48, 78, 148; cp. II Pet. 3:1)

3. You Need a SPIRIT-CONTROLLED Mind
(Be controlled by the Spirit of God)

Eph. 5:18; II Cor. 10:4-5
Ask God to:
--Search your thoughts and reveal to you any evil (Ps. 139:23)
--Create a clean thought life in you (Ps. 51:10)
--Control your thoughts each day

How to improve your "thought life"

These truths apply only to the "born-again" Christian, because only salvation gives man the ability to think spiritually (Eph. 1:18).
1) Renew your thoughts (Rom. 12:2)
2) Discipline your thoughts (II Cor. 10:3-5)
3) Focus your thoughts (Phil. 4:8)

The phrase "Use it or lose it" definitely applies to the brain (Heb. 5:11-14).
The more you think, the better you will become at it.

An un-used mind is the most terrible stewardship of anything that God has given to man.

A Key Passage on the Thought Life:

Philippians 4:8:

"Think on these things" = continue to consider; reckon.

Reckon = an accounting term, where you deliberately count your blessings; and add up and reflect upon who God is and what He has done for you.

You must decide to intentionally think the way God commands you or you won't!

We either tend to leave our minds in neutral (because it takes work to think), or we wrongly engage the brain in reverse (and stew over what someone else has done to us, think sinful thoughts, etc.). NOTE: This is easy for the old nature to perform.

It takes real work to change your thinking pattern! And you must submit to the Holy Spirit's control if it will be accomplished.

Philippians 4:8
Before you think it -- ask yourself:

a. IS IT TRUE? (could I really trust it?)
b. IS IT HONORABLE? (is it worthy of my respect?)
c. IS IT JUST? (would God want me to practice it?)
d. IS IT PURE? (will it keep me clean?)
e. IS IT LOVELY? (is it worthy of my affection?)
f. IS IT REPORTABLE? (can I repeat it to others?)
g. IS IT MORALLY EXCELLENT?
h. IS IT PRAISEWORTHY?

NOTE: All of the things we are to think about are all positive. God does not tell us what not to think about, but what to think about.

We need to meditate on God and his Word.

1. Meditate on God (what He has done for you, etc.)
   All of the virtues mentioned are characteristics of God. Jesus is called the truth (Jn. 14:6). God is honorable, just, pure (Acts 3:14), lovely, well spoken of . .
   David said: "I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches" (Ps. 63:6).
2. Meditate on God's Word (what he has said to you)
   "Thou shalt meditate therein day and night" (Josh. 1:8)
   The blessed man - "In His Law doth he meditate day and night" (Ps. 1:2).
   "I will meditate in thy precepts" (Ps. 119:15).
   "I will meditate in thy statutes" (Ps. 119:48)
   David said, I can't sleep at night, "that I might meditate in thy Word" (Ps. 119:148)
   Paul admonished Timothy in regards to the Word of God and Godly characteristics - "Meditate upon these things, give thyself wholly to them" (I Tim. 4:15).

"The Christian who fills his heart and mind with God's Word will have a "built-in radar" for detecting wrong thoughts" (Wiersbe, p. 117)

H. Winning the battle of…SELFISHNESS

Man is born with a selfish nature. Illustration: Children and their innate tendency toward greed and jealousy.
Selfishness is the essence (root and motivating force) of all sin.
All sin, when boiled down, reveals selfishness as the underlying factor.

The world's philosophy fosters mankind's natural tendency toward self-gratification:
"Man is the measure of all things."…"It's about time I lived for myself."…"You deserve it!"…"Treat yourself!"…"If it feels good, do it."

How can we overcome selfishness?

1. Step #1 - We must <u>UNMASK</u> selfishness
(to see what it really is)

…Because selfishness is the <u>underlying</u> factor behind all sin
…Because it is an <u>internal motivation</u> which cannot be seen (although its fruits can be seen)
…And because "the <u>heart is deceitful</u> above all things and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9), selfishness often goes overlooked. It hides from our view. It conceals its identity.

Why is selfishness sin?

Basically: It is a violation of the greatest of God's commands (Mt. 22:36-40).

a. Selfishness places self ahead of <u>God</u>.
   1) Selfishness says: "<u>Me first</u>," not "Thee first" (SEE: Luke 9:57-62)
      It is actually <u>idolatry</u>! (Col. 3:5)
      (the worship and service of self)

   2) Selfishness says: "<u>My will be done</u>," not "Thy will be done" (Mt. 6:10).
      We are selfish when our interests come before God's interests (the will of man is put ahead of the will of God).

      Selfishness motivates people to rebel against God's will.
      Note the following sins and their connection to selfishness:
      --Fornication ("I want it now" rather than after marriage)
      --Abortion ("I can't have a child to interfere with my pursuits")
      --Divorce ("I want my freedom")
      --Theft ("What's mine is mine, and what's yours is mine")

b. Selfishness places self ahead of <u>others</u>.
   "For all men seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's" (Phil. 3:21).
   "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth" (I Cor. 10:24).
   Note: The context - We should make it our goal to avoid being a stumbling block. Be conscious of someone else's conscience (cp. Rom. 14; 15:1-6).

Selfishness basically expresses (manifests) itself in four ways:
(1) Lust (covetousness) ["I want it"]
(2) Self-Pity (feeling sorry for self) ["I deserve it"]
(3) Strife (selfish ambition) ["I will get it"]
(4) Pride (boastful arrogance) ["I have it!"]

1) Lust - The drive of selfishness

Simply defined: "Lust" is a desire to have that which is not yours to have. The word basically describes an appetite or desire. These things are not wrong in themselves. They become sin when satisfied outside of God's will.
SEE: James 1:14-15
The source of temptation is not God (nor Satan) but man's own selfish lust.
Example: David - II Samuel 11:1-5
Ahab - I Kings 21

2) Self-pity - The justification of selfishness
Example: Elijah - I Kings 19
What is self-pity? Selfishness in disguise. Self-pity is feeling sorry for yourself; putting yourself down; a "woe is me" attitude
Words that come out of the mouth of the self - pitied:
(1) "I can't take it any longer!" (I Kings 19:4a)
(2) "I'm worthless!" (v.4b)
"I'm the black sheep of the family...the runt of the litter"
(3) "Nothing ever turns out right for me" (v.10)
(I do what is right and look what happens)
(4) "I'm the only one who does what is right" (v.10b;18)
(5) "No one ever does anything for me!"
(6) "Everyone else gets the breaks in life" (Implying: "I never do!")
(7) "I always end up with he bad end of the deal."
Note: God often has to replace the self-pitied (As He did to Elijah). He cannot use them in this condition. Why? Because they are selfish.

3) Strife - The Action of Selfishness

In the New Testament, the word often translated "strife" means "selfish ambition." There is nothing wrong with ambition as long as it is not motivated by selfish motives.

To strive is not wrong if it is for the glory of God and the well-being of others.

a. Strife is sin because it seeks to out-do others (Phil. 1:15, 16).
[Note the connection between "strife" and "envy"]
Beware of doing "good things" with bad (selfish) motives.
Beware of the desire to see others fall so as to lift up yourself.

b. Strife is sin because it seeks to elevate self
(Phil. 2:3)
[Note the connection between "strife" and "vain glory" (pride)]

c. Strife is sin because it results in devilish behavior (James 3:14-16).

4) **Pride** - The display of selfishness (Dan. 4:30ff)

How does pride differ from selfishness?
--It stems from selfishness
(the middle letter in pride is "I")
--It is selfishness manifested or shown off

a. What are the marks of pride? (v. 30)

Pride will boast of the following:
1) Self-Achievement (v. 30a)
("This is what I did!")
2) Self-Strength (v. 30b)
("This is how I did it!")
3) Self-Glory (v. 30c)
("This is why I did it!")

b. What is the penalty for pride? (v. 31-33)
(The proud person always loses in the end.)

c. What is the victory over pride? (v. 34-37)
1) Looking up to God in dependence (v. 34)
(a sense of dependence is necessary before restoration can be granted)
2) Lifting up God in praise (v. 35-37)

*The proud person has a wrong view of God.
(When you really see God as He is, then you will see yourself as you really are)
*The proud person has a wrong view of self.
(Remember, all that we are and have has come from God - I Cor. 4:7)
If you want to boast, boast in this: Jeremiah 9:23-24.

How Can We Overcome Selfishness?

2. Step # 2 - We must "mortify" selfishness (Col. 3:1-5)

(Selfishness must be put to death in our lives)

How can selfishness be mortified? By: 1) Birth 2) Death

a. BIRTH (I John 4)
Victory over selfishness is impossible without the "new birth."
1) To conquer self you need a new motive for living
– This motive is God's love (I Jn. 4:7, 8, 19).
2) To conquer self you need a new motivating power for living
– This power is God's Spirit (I Jn. 4:13).
The Spirit will produce in the life of the yielded believer new fruits (opposite of selfishness - Gal.5:22).

b. DEATH (Mark 8:34-35)
1) You must "lose your life" (find it in Christ)
(". . . let him deny himself")
2) You must "die to self" (live for Christ)
(". . . and take up his cross")
See Galatians 2:20

I. Winning the battle of…BITTERNESS & UNFORGIVENESS

Most counselors deal with bitterness and unforgiveness more often than any other problem.
Bitterness and unforgiveness is the prime cause of most relational problems.
Such poison has been a major contributor to divorce; teenage rebellion; church splits; lost friendships etc.

1. Overcoming BITTERNESS (Hebrews 12:14-15)

a. The CAUSE of Bitterness

1) Resentment

a) Feeling of unfairness regarding God.
Examples:
(1) Hannah - Reason: childlessness (I Sam. 1:10)
(2) Naomi - Reason: death in the family (Ruth 1:20-22)
(3) Job - Reason: physical affliction (Job 7:11; 10:1)

b) Hurt feelings toward others.
(1) Bitterness against spouse (Col. 3:19)
(2) Bitterness against parents (Eph. 6:4)
(3) Feelings of jealousy toward others (James 3:14)

2) Unforgiveness
(holding grudges)

b. The COURSE of Bitterness (Heb.12:15b)

1) Bitterness starts off small
(***"root"***)
Cp. Deut. 29:18-19
Hurt feelings; wounded pride (usually not over life-threatening situations; little annoyances etc.

2) Bitterness rapidly grows
("springing up")
Unresolved Bitterness opens the door for Satan;
Hence the warning: *"let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil." (Eph.4:26-27).*

Bitterness will then grow into external manifestations of:
coldness, gossip, slander, a complaining spirit (Phil.2:14);
judging motives (I Cor.4:5);
vengeful spirit (Rom.12:17,19);
critical attitude (Mt.7:4-5).

c. The CURSE of Bitterness (v. 15c)

1) Bitterness causes trouble personally
("trouble you")
   a) Bitterness is as poison (Acts 8:23)
   b) Bitterness affects your behavior
      (1) One's speech (Rom. 3:14)
      (2) One's actions
      (Example: Joseph's brothers-Gen.37) (James 3:14-16)

2) Bitterness spreads to others
("many be defiled")
No bitter person is content to be bitter alone; They love to share "how they feel" to others, so they can join them in their poisonous attitude. "Misery likes company"
"defiled" = stained or polluted. Bitterness is a sin which spreads its infectious bacteria, its loathsome venom to others and influences their perspective of God and others.
Your attitude will influence the perspective of others; Attitudes are catchy. What kind of influence have you been?

d. The CURE for Bitterness

Diligently be on the look-out for bitterness in your life (v. 15a)
1) Seek restoration with an offending brother (Mt. 18:15-17)
2) Don't allow bitterness to take root in your life (Eph. 4:31)
3) Practice Biblical forgiveness (Eph. 4:32)

2. Overcoming UNFORGIVENESS (Matthew 18:21-35)

King Louis XII of France articulated man's fleshly abhorrence toward forgiving others when he said: "Nothing smells so sweet as the dead body of your enemy." (MacArthur, Matthew p. 142)

Most often, how people treat others is a reflection of how they perceive they have been treated in life. When one truly believes how much God has given them, they will respond in like manner to others.

> Eph. 4:32 - *"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."*
> Col. 3:13 - *"Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."*

"Seventy times seven" (Mt.18:22) - By this phrase Jesus is not really putting a cap on forgiveness at 490 times, but He is making the point that we should always be willing to forgive. As a matter of fact, on this same occasion Luke records that Jesus also said this: *"Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn against to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him."*

***Shouldn't you forgive others, the same way God has forgiven you? (v. 33)**

How can I forgive what he/she did to me?

a. Compare the <u>QUANTITY</u> of sins you are asked to forgive with the great legion of sins God forgave you (v. 21-22)
"Seventy times seven"

The Counselee must realize these truths:
You have been <u>forgiven</u> far more than you will ever <u>forgive</u>!
Do you realize how many times the average person sins in a day? How many selfish or lustful thoughts he entertains? How many covetous, envious, jealous or angry desires he has?
If you sinned just seven times a day (either in thought, word, or action), you have committed 2,555 sins in one year; 76,650 sins if you are 30 years old; 178,850 sins if you are 70.
If one sin separated Adam from God, and one sin violates God's whole law (Ja. 2:10), how great is our sin in God's eyes!
The psalmist recognized that if God held our iniquities against us no one would stand a chance (Ps. 130:3-4 - *"If thou, LORD, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared")*
Record keeping is not the occupation of a loving Christian. *"Love keeps no records of wrongs"* (I Cor. 13:5)

b. Compare the <u>MAGNITUDE</u> of sin God forgave you with the trivial sins you are asked to forgive others (v. 23-28)
"Ten thousand talents (v. 24) *. . . a hundred pence"* (v. 28)

"Ten thousand talents" - Amounted to anywhere from 580,000 lbs. to 800,000 lbs. of precious metals. In terms of cash, this is a mammoth debt! A multi-million dollar debt!

> The practice of selling a servant, his family, and every possession he owned to pay off a debt was a common in the ancient world (Lev. 25:39; II Ki. 4:1). Today, for example, if you own a house and you don't pay your mortgage the banks will take it away from you (same goes for a car, etc.).

V. 24
10,000 talents (figured at $960.00 per talent) would equal 9.6 million dollars.
V. 28
A ***"pence"*** (denari) - a day's wage for a common laborer ($16.00 in metal value) 100 pence would equal 100 days wages or $1,600.00 in monetary value.
$1,600 is a trivial sum compared to the $9,600.000 dollars this servant had owed the king.
10,000 talents is the equivalent of 600,000 denarii (*"pence")*. Hence, Jesus when comparing the 600,000 denarii to the 100 denarii is using the ratio 6000:1
(Blumberg, <u>Interpreting the Parables</u>, p. 242).

It's easy to understand how someone could refuse to forgive others who has never experienced God's forgiveness, but such unforgiveness held onto by a blood-washed saint is unjustifiable and unfair.

One reason why some find it extremely irritating and difficult to forgive the sin of others is because they themselves do not see the <u>enormity of their sin against a holy God</u>.

When we see God and His perfect standard, we see how far short we fall (Isaiah 6:5; Rev.1:17; Rom. 7:13; Job 42:6; Ezra 9:6).

c. Compare the COST of God's forgiveness with the cost of your own forgiveness (v. 27)

"God gave up His Son for your forgiveness (John 3:16); all you give up is your sin of anger and resentment" (Dr. Jim Binney)

It costs to forgive (when you forgive, you take upon yourself the effects of that person's sin and free him/her from their obligation of personally paying you for it)

What do Stephen (Acts 7:60) and Jesus (Lk. 23:34) have in common?
Answer: The ability to forgive at great cost.

d. Compare the CONSEQUENCES of unforgiveness with the blessings of forgiveness (v. 34-35)

"Perhaps he had the legal right to thrown the man in prison, but he (having been forgiven) did not have the moral right. . . The servant exercised justice and cast his friend into prison. 'So you want to live by justice?' asked the king. 'Then you shall have justice! Throw the wicked servant in prison and torment him! I will do to him as he has done to others'." (Wiersbe, Matthew p. 67).

Justice is now executed. This man now reaps (v. 34) exactly what he sowed (v. 34) (Gal. 6:7). The punishment he exacted on his fellow-servant now comes back (like a boomerang). He gets hit with the same penalty which he required of the other man. The Bible teaches that God shall have judgment without mercy on those who showed no mercy (James 2:13).

Lord Herbert once said, "He who cannot forgive others breaks the bridge over which he himself must pass" (MacArthur, p. 155).

Compare the consequences of unforgiveness with the blessings of forgiveness:

1. Unanswered prayer (Mt. 6:4)
   vs. answered prayer (I Pet. 3:7)

2. Give place to the devil (Eph. 4:26; cp. II Cor. 2:10-11)
   vs. freedom from Satan (Ja. 4:7)

3. Grieve the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30)
   vs. receiving the comfort of the Holy Spirit

4. Hurting others (Heb. 12:15)
   vs. being a blessing (Eph. 4:29)

5. Broken fellowship with God (I Jn. 1:5)
   vs. intimate fellowship

6. Physical ailments
   vs. health and good days (I Pet. 3:10)
   (It has been estimated that 90% of physical ailments are psychosomatic - the mind effected by guilt and anger effects you physically. Unforgiveness is like a cancer in the bones; it cripples and destroys relationships and you)

(Special thanks to Dr. Jim Binney for the insights in the above outline)

Forgiveness is not "forgetting" (although when you truly forgive, the memory of the evil committed against you will fade away).

A man's *"glory is to overlook a transgression"* (Prov. 19:11).
Joseph forgave his brothers (Gen. 50:19-21); David forgave King Saul (I Sam. 24:6, 12; 26:11). They were both blessed because of it.

According to Jesus (in Matthew 18:35) forgiveness must be…

Sincere - ***"From your hearts"*** **-** God expects our forgiveness to be real, genuine, sincere. Not a "surface" forgiveness (EX: the plastic smile, the cold handshake, the distant hug, the shallow words "It's okay," the quick "I forgive you", etc.) Rather, when we forgive, it must come from within, from our innermost being.

Impartial - ***"Everyone"*** **-** Every child of God must be forgiving (no matter how high and mighty you are; no matter what your brother did against you); if he requests forgiveness, all of us must grant it.

Six "Don'ts" regarding forgiveness:

1) Don't expect the problem to "heal itself"

2) Don't have the attitude of "Why try?" ("It's not worth it")

3) Don't play the "waiting game" (i.e. "When you give in and apologize, I will")

4) Don't "fight fire with fire" (I Pet. 3:9; I Th. 5:15; Rom. 12:17-21)

5) Don't practice "character assassination" (don't attack the person rather than the problem)

6) Don't dig up "old bones" (don't bring up the past)

Test of Forgiveness

By Dr. Jim Binney

1) Can I thank God for the lesson(s) I learned through the painful experience?

2) Can I talk about it (the conflict) without angry resentment or feelings of revenge?

3) Have I accepted my part of the blame? (Prov. 13:10)

4) Can I reward them who hurt me and pray for them?

5) Can I grant forgiveness from the heart and verbalize it?

J. Winning the battle of…BAD DECISION MAKING

How to make right CHOICES

Introduction:
Everyday, we make decisions (choices)…
When we were young (still under the authority of our parents) many of our decisions were made for us. We didn't have much choice other than to obey or disobey them. However, now (as adults) there are many choices we must make.
For example:

How we will spend our time or money;
Where we will go to college
Our career choice (occupation; vocation)
Our marriage partner
Our location (where we will live)
Whether or not we will have our personal devotions today.
Etc.

God created man with an intellect (to think); emotion (to feel); and a will (to make choices).

- Every decision is <u>important</u>.
- You are <u>responsible</u> for the decisions you make in life.
- Your decisions both <u>reveal</u> your character and <u>form</u> it.
- Your <u>present</u> circumstances are (in large part) a result of your <u>past</u> choices.
- The decisions you must make today may be a result of decisions you made in your past (Our choices can result in a vicious or victorious cycle)
- God is concerned about the details of your life.
  (He cares about the choices you make - Mt 10:30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.)

Lot: an example of a man who made bad choices (Genesis 13:9-13)

a. **Lot chose based on what he <u>saw</u> with his <u>eyes</u>** (v.10a)
(He didn't think to pray first)

b. **Lot chose based on the prospect of <u>material advantage</u> (Monetary gain)**(v.10b)
(Decisions that are made primarily on the promise of monetary gain will probably always be bad decisions; Before making the move ask: "is there a good church in town?" "will my ministry be enhanced by the move")

c. **Lot chose out of <u>selfish motives</u>, seeking the best <u>for himself</u>.**(v.11)
1Co 10:24 Let no man seek his own, but every man another's *wealth*.
Php 2:4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

d. **Lot's choice made him vulnerable to making <u>other bad choices</u>.** (v.12)
Lot's bad choice was to pitch toward Sodom, then ended up in Sodom. Where is your life pitched toward? It's not so much where your are but where you are headed. Lot had a **T**ent **V**iew (TV) of Sodom.

e. **Lot's choice negatively affected not only himself, but his entire <u>family</u>**
(Gen.19:14-17;26;35-38)

Some Warnings about Decision Making:

1) Beware of making hasty decisions (Quick decisions)

2) Beware of making carnal decisions (Decisions when you are not close to God)

3) Beware of making self-serving decisions (out of selfish motives)

4) Beware of making unsure decisions (If its doubtful, its dirty)

5) Beware of making emotional decisions (without reason)

6) Beware of making faith-less decisions (throwing out "the fleece")

Some fundamental decisions you must make:

You must make a genuine, thought out, conscious decision to…

1. Trust Jesus Christ for your eternal salvation

Acts 16:31 - Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house *(implied, if they believe also)*.

2. Surrender your life completely to God's will

Romans 12:1 - I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service.

3. Obey the commands and principles that are specifically addressed by the Bible (for the N.T. believer).

Such as…

a. Keeping yourself morally pure (in thought, word & action)

Daniel 1:8 - But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself

Ps 17:3 - I am purposed *that* my mouth shall not transgress.

Job 31:1 - I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?

b. Communing with God daily

(Bible Reading, Meditation, & Memorization & Prayer)

Joshua 1:8 - This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

Lu 18:1 - And he spake a parable unto them *to this end*, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;

c. Fellowshipping with God's people regularly

Heb. 10:24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:
25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

d. Husbands loving and leading their wives and families

Col 3:19 Husbands, love *your* wives, and be not bitter against them.

e. Wives submitting to and helping their husbands

Eph.5:22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.
23 For the husband is the head of the wife…

f. Children obeying their parents

Eph. 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.
2 Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;)

g. Being Loving, truthful, sanctified, humble, a good employee etc.

There are 2 types of decisions we must make:

1) Moral Decisions - Choices related to clearly defined Biblical commands or principles.

2) A-moral Decisions - Areas of Christian Liberty where the Bible gives no specific command (Areas where we are free to make thought out, responsible & wise choices)

How do I make wise decisions?

Ask yourself the following questions before making the choice:

1. Have I <u>prayed to God</u> about this decision?

Proverbs 3:5,6 - Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

2. Do I need <u>Godly counsel (advice)</u> about this decision?

Proverbs 12:15 - The way of a fool *is* right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel *is* wise.
Pr 1:5 A wise *man* will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:
Pr 19:20 - Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end.

3. Do I have a <u>solid Bible reason</u> to justify this decision?

Psalm 119:105 - Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

4. Which of my choices should be my <u>priority</u>?

Mt 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

5. Which of my choices would most <u>please & glorify</u> God?

Eph 5:10 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.
Make your decisions based upon what is <u>right</u>, not what is popular, or feels good.

6. What would be the <u>long-term effects</u> of my choice?

Pr 14:12 - There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death.

Don't made decisions based merely upon <u>immediate</u> results.
"Never sacrifice the eternal on the altar of the immediate" (Dr. Bob Jones Sr.)

7. Do I have <u>peace</u> about my decision?

Phil. 4:7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Concluding Remarks about God's will in your decisions:

- **God's will is not a "bitter medicine"**

Psalm 16:11 Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence *is* fulness of joy; at thy right hand *there are* pleasures for evermore.

- **God never leads a person contrary to His Word**

Psalm 119:35 - Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight.

- **God only moves those who are in motion for Him; He does not steer parked cars**

Acts 13:2 - As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

- **God gives you the desire and ability to do whatever He wants you to do**

Php 2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.

"Knowing God's will is life's greatest knowledge;
Doing God's will is life's greatest privilege"
- Dr. Bob Jones Sr.

K. Winning the battle of…PORNOGRAPHY and SEXUAL IMMORALITY

"A fire is smoldering in many of our homes, cars, offices, and hearts. Those touched by its flames are left with scars of self-contempt, distance in relationships, aversion to God, and diminished ability to help others. The fire is pornography. In the past, sexually explicit material was available only in out-of-the-way places. It is now as accessible as the Internet. In the privacy of our own homes or workplaces, anyone can access not only research libraries, up-to-the-minute news, and e-mail, but everything that used to be limited by social boundaries. Why is this happening? Why are some of our best men giving in to the temptation? In part because all of us, like Elijah and Samson, are troubled by our own passions (James 5:17). We are all subject to feelings of loneliness, rejection, anger, and foolishness. We all crave intimacy in relationships and pornography provides a powerful, thoughtless illusion of that intimacy." (Mart DeHaan, Times of Discovery, Sept. 97.)

- Pornography is an $8 billion-per-year industry in the USA. 80% is produced in Los Angeles County and is shipped illegally to the rest of the country. 85% of this industry is controlled by organized crime (the Mafia). (Dobson, Focus on the Family, Aug.1986)
- More than 15,000 "adult" bookstores and video stores offer pornographic material, outnumbering McDonald's restaurants in the U.S. by a margin of at least three to one. (J. Dobson)
- Over 200 different major pornographic magazines are published monthly
- 87% of crimes against women were the results of men living out what they read or saw in porno magazines.

1. Why is pornography wrong?

a. Pornography violates the intimate "knowledge" one man is to have with only one woman. (The only person whose nakedness God permits one to look on is one's spouse – Gen.2:25; Lev.18:6-f)

b. Pornography distorts God's gift of sex which should be shared only within the bounds of marriage (Genesis 2:24; I Corinthians 7:2-5).

c. Pornography fuels sexual passions and enslaves the mind

God desires that our minds be "stayed on Him" (Is.26:3); Pornography is a satanically inspired addiction that distracts our minds and absorbs our thoughts, taking our minds off of God; His virtue; and all of the good things He has for us to dwell on in life.

Porn sets up a "god-substitute" in our heart. "It is impossible to keep a healthy focus on the Spirit of God and His Word while assuming that the rancid food of pornography is the bread we need and want." (DeHaan)

1) Pornography leads to sexual obsession

(The more an appetite is fed the stronger it grows; As pleasures wear off due to familiarity, new thrills must be found;
One word describes pornography and the filthy-rich producers of it know this is true, that word is "MORE")
Proverbs 27:20 – "the eyes of man are never satisfied."

The path of pornography often starts off with glances at Women's clothing magazines…then Lewd TV programs…then pornography (in printed form or internet)…then X rated Videos…leading into hard core porn (depicting scenes of rape; incest; sodomy; bondage; torture; pedophilia etc.)

2) Pornography leads to sexual <u>frustrations</u> and sexual <u>crime</u>
The unfortunate inevitable outcome of pornography addiction, will be an acting out of those visual images; sexual frustrations; even rape, incest, and murder. The notorious Ted Bundy identified himself as a brutal murderer and cited his addiction to pornography as the motivating force that led him to kill again and again.

d. Pornography is <u>degrading to women</u>
Pornography attacks the dignity of men and women created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27) In Pornography women are viewed as objects to gratify the sexual appetites of men, rather than people with eternal souls. (Seeing women as carnal objects of self-centered pleasure has a dehumanizing effect that blinds us to their spiritual essence and needs and worth in God's eyes)

e. Pornography breeds <u>discontentment</u>
Dissatisfaction with your <u>marital status</u> (Note: I Cor.7)
Dissatisfaction with your <u>mate</u> (Proverbs 5:18-20)

f. Pornography destroys our capacity for proper <u>intimacy</u>

"It preoccupies us in a cycle of self-absorbed pleasure, regret, shame, and concealment." (DeHaan). It has negative affects on the proper sexual relationship in marriage. Sex was designed by God to be an expression of love and oneness in the bonds of marriage; Pornography mars this purpose as it results in a self-centered pursuit of gratification.
Lust wants to get; Love gives.

g. Pornography will often destroy the moral values of your <u>children</u>.

The Kids often find the pornography in the home and it warps their minds and creates curiosities that they are too immature to handle.

- Approximately <u>70%</u> of the pornographic magazines sold eventually end up in the hands of minors (Henry Boatwright, chairman of the U.S. Advisory Board for Social Concerns; Cited by Dobson)

<u>Incestual</u> relationships are very often linked to pornography
(Fathers with daughters; Sons with sisters (ex. Tamar – II Sam.13)

h. Pornography offers the viewer a look which provokes <u>lust</u> in the heart which is the equivalent of <u>adultery</u> *according to Jesus Christ*.
Matthew 5:28 - But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

An Exposition of Scriptures which must be applied to the problem of Pornography:

Matthew 5:28 - But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

An Exposition of Matthew 5:28:

"Whosoever" - No one is exempt

"Looketh" - (present tense) - a long look, or a second look

When an immodestly dressed woman crosses your path, that first look is not sin, but it's that second look or the prolonged look that indicates a sinful heart.

"You can't keep birds from flying overhead, but you can keep them from building a nest in your hair."

The look is not a casual glance, but a planned stare "for the purpose of feeding his inner sensual appetites as a substitute for the act" (Wiersbe, p. 24)

"On a woman" - the same principle applies to women who lustfully look upon men.

The reason why Jesus singled out the male looking at the female is because He knew that men are more prone toward being aroused by the appearance of a woman than a woman is toward a man. Depraved men take notice of the external looks of a woman, whereas women tend to take notice of a man based on his intelligence, strength, wit, charm, romance, etc.

Ladies, beware of how you dress (I Tim. 2:9-10 - "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.")

If lustful looking is so grievous a sin, then those who dress to expose themselves with the desire to be looked at and lusted over are equally or more sinful.

"Looketh on a woman" - This “look” applies to anytime a man looks at the body of a woman with vain, lustful or covetous intent. This applies to:

1. TV; videos; movies
2. in printed pornography
3. in peep shows
4. walking down the street etc.

"to lust after her" - The word "to" (pros) shows the intention or purpose of the look. It is not wrong to look at women. It is wrong when your "look" has as its goal a selfish, lustful, covetous gratification.

"Lust" - (epithumeo) = to have a strong desire for something. Desire is not wrong. But misplaced desire or desire outside of the will of God is wrong.

The word "lust" in this verse refers to a vain, base, immoral selfish craving or longing for that which is not yours. "Lust" is essentially "covetousness" (the tenth commandment), which is a desire to have that which does not belong to you.

"Hath committed adultery . . . already" - At the very moment that one entertained selfish, lustful thoughts, God up in heaven registers an act of "adultery."

"Jesus is not saying that lustful desires are identical with lustful deeds and therefore a person might just as well go ahead and commit adultery. The desire and the deed are not identical, but, spiritually speaking, they are equivalent." (Wiersbe, Matthew p. 24)

"In his heart" - Sin goes deeper than an act. God weighs the thoughts and intents of the heart. He looks at the heart. One can be free of committing the act of adultery, yet be guilty of adultery 10,000 times!

What we are in our heart is what we really are - in God's sight.

True righteousness is a heart matter. "You are what you think." "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7).

Every act of adultery started out as a "heart problem" (Mk. 7:21 - "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders.")

Real sin flows from and takes place first in the heart (or thoughts) of man.

"In his heart" - Since people are not animals, we have an aspect of our nature that goes deeper than our carnal flesh. People sin against their body by committing sexual sin (I Cor. 6:18) and sin against their "spirit" when they entertain evil thoughts.

Christian, remember, both your "body" and your "spirit" are God's (I Cor. 6:20)

Satan today is placing an overemphasis on sex to cause people to become obsessed with it. Once he can obsess a person with such thoughts, he can then provide a setting at the wrong place and at the wrong time to tempt that individual to experiment and gratify that obsession that he has caused.

Immoral sexual lust is not a biological need (like the need for food and sleep), but a perverted obsession.

In a young child's life, sexual lust does not exist until fuel is supplied; books are read, pictures are seen, etc. The more fuel you feed a passion, the more it grows.

Ephesians 5:3 - But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints

"fornication" - sexual impurity

"All uncleanness" - anything that would defile or stain our heart (spirit) or body

"Coveteousness" - an illicit lust to have that which is not yours; a greed (the 10th commandment)

"Let it not be once named among you" -

"Named" - to have a reputation for any of the above is a disgrace. Our testimony is vital to uphold.

Once" - impurity is never OK. It is always wrong.

"Be ye holy (set apart) for I am holy" (Lev. 20:7; I Pet. 1:15, 16)

Colossians 3:5 - Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry

"Mortify" = put to death; the Aorist imperative points to a decisive act. A decision to once and for all execute or do away with certain sins that at one time were very much "alive" in our lives.

When you commit "fornication," you are taking the body that belongs to Christ and placing Christ's property in a domain that is abhorrent to Christ.

When you are guilty of "uncleanness" you are subjecting your mind, soul, and body to stains and defilement that is contrary to the nature of Christ.

When you are driven with "inordinate affection," you are taking your heart which should be devoted to Christ and becoming obsessed with someone or something other than Christ.

When you are overcome by "evil concupiscence" (bad lust), you are taking a mind that belongs to Christ and plunging it into the sess-pool of debauchery.

And when you allow yourself to become obsessed with "covetousness," you have taken eyes which should be kept fixed on your God and focused them on the empty, meaningless, futile, vain, vanishing dainties of the world. And in so doing, Christ's worship suffers loss, because your worship becomes limited to what you are covetous of.

The most powerful reason for being pure and free from indulging in selfish lust is because "I am one with Jesus." I dare not drag Him into the muck and mire of the Devil's playground.

2. What disciplines should be incorporated into one's life to avoid such sexual sin?

1) **<u>Turn off</u> the sexual sewage drain**
(Avoid sexually explicit TV, video, magazines, music; Don't go to certain beaches; Avoid the stores which sell pornography)
In 1988 TV averaged "at least one sensual-arousing scene for every 40 minute segment" (Ronald E. Johnson, Fund. Journal).
Job 31:1 - "I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?"
Ps. 119:37 - "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way."

2) **Don't be <u>idle</u>; be busy serving Christ**
II Tim. 2:22 - "Flee also youthful lusts; but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

3) **Realize that women are not <u>sex objects</u> but people with an <u>eternal soul</u> who need Christ**
It is vain to lust after external flesh. Ask God to help you to view people through God's eyes.

4) **<u>Read God's Word</u> every day to purify your mind**
Memorize Scripture which address the subject of sexual purity.
Ps 119:11 - "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."

5) **When you do have a wrong thought, <u>confess it to God</u> as soon as you are convicted** (I John 1:9)
Don't let sin build up in your life.

6) **When tempted to take an indiscreet "look" counter the temptation by <u>praying</u>** for your family and friends to be pure (if married, thank God for your spouse.)

7) **If married, seek to <u>satisfy your spouse's sexual desires</u> so he/she will not be driven to "look" elsewhere** (I Cor. 7:3, 5; Prov. 5:18-19)

8) **Form an accountable <u>friendship</u> with someone who will challenge you toward purity.** You also can encourage that person in a mutually accountable relationship. (II Tim. 2:22b; Heb.10:24-25; I Cor.15:33; Prov.27:6)

9) Don't put yourself in <u>situations</u> where you know temptation will be great. "If you don't plan to eat, don't set the table"
Romans 13:14 – *"But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."*

10) When tempted to look at pornography, realize it's <u>destructive</u>, <u>enslaving</u>, and <u>Anti-God</u> nature.

A Christian has no business reading material which…
1) uses <u>vulgar language</u>;

2) Ridicules <u>God's standards</u> for purity;

3) breeds on new sensations such as obscene <u>violence</u>, <u>bestiality</u>, <u>incest</u> etc.[note: Leviticus 20];

4) Dishonors the <u>love relationship</u> of marriage [Pornographers leave committed love out of sex; Love is deeper than a physical act];

5) breeds <u>discontentment</u>;

6) Leads to covetous <u>lustful passion</u>; <u>masturbation</u> etc.
Note: Masturbation is sin because it is selfish in nature; It is a manifestation of a covetous spirit. A lustful desire to have that which is not yours. Fornication or adultery is not merely committed by the act but by the thought.)

11) Don't settle for a <u>cheap substitute</u> for the real thing, which God will give in His way and in His timing.
(Beware: Pornography fills the mind with distortions about sex and unrealistic expectations)

3. General Bible principles which must be applied to the matter of Sexuality

Sex is an expression of love which God designed to be the unique experience between one man and one woman, an experience not to be shared with anyone else. It is the most personal and intimate knowledge that one human being can have of another. This is why the Bible uses the euphemism "know" to describe this most intimate of relationships (Gen.4:1; 25).

***God's people must know what the Bible teaches about sex.**

a. Principles about sex from I Corinthians 7:1-9

1) Sex prior to marriage is sin (v. 2)

"Fornication" primarily refers to premarital sexual relations, whereas adultery refers to a married person who commits intercourse with someone other than mate (cp. Gal. 5:19; I Cor. 6:9 where a distinction is made; NOTE I Cor. 6:18 - Fornication is a sin against one's own body; adultery would be sin against two: you and your mate).

"His own wife (singular) ***. . . her own husband*** (singular)" - God's will is a monogamous relationship of one woman married to one man for life.

If sex is for marriage, it follows that anything which would lead to sexual contact should also be reserved for marriage (EX: kissing, hugging, petting).

Sexual activity is not limited to intercourse. Many delude themselves into thinking that if they go just as far as to come short of intercourse, then they are still innocent of fornication (a *"lustful look"* is adultery - Mt. 5:28).

Any stimulation of sexual organs by any means (whether by thought, visual stimulus [EX: pornography], audio stimulus [EX: Dial-a-porn], masturbation, etc.) is fornication.

2) Sexual relations within marriage are clean, good, and wholesome (v.2-3).

Sex was God's invention, not Satan's (Gen. 1:27, 28, 31; 2:25; 4:1).
Sex is not sinful within the walls of marriage. Within the marriage bonds it is holy and good.

Heb. 13:4 - "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed (koite - marriage bed; sexual intercourse) undefiled: but whoremongers (fornicators) and adulterers God will judge" (i.e. "let marriage be held in honor by all (everyone); Marriage has a dignity; a value above and beyond any other human relationship.

Sex is for procreation, but it is primarily intended for pleasure (Prov.5:19)

3) Sexual relations within marriage are to be regularly participated in (v. 3)

"Render" = This imperative means to pay or give back.
The present tense implies to pay your debt to your mate on a continual or habitual basis.

4) Sexual relations are to be <u>unselfish</u> (v. 3 & 4)

V. 3

"Due benevolence" = obligation or debt. It's not only a privilege to have relations in marriage it is a responsibility!

God is teaching us "mutual dependence." Each is the other's property.

Your goal in sexual relations is not to please yourself but your spouse.

The Purpose for sex: Your physical relationship is a reassurance of love and affection.

Technically, Sex should not be called *"making love"* but *"showing love"* This is because God intended sex to be an expression of the oneness, love, & affection you have for each other. This is why fornication & adultery are <u>lies</u>. Such sexual unions are expressing a oneness which does not truly exist.

5) There is to be no sexual bargaining (controlling or manipulating) (v. 5)

"defraud" - To deprive; keep back; to rob.

Never use sex as a means of exploitation or as a way of conniving to get something else in return.

6) A couple must seek to keep each other sexually satisfied to decrease the chances of Satan tempting in the area of lack of self-control (v. 5)

Abstinence should be temporary so that Satan will not gain foothold into their marriage and introduce alternative means of sexual fulfillment.

b. Eight reasons why you should abstain from sexual immorality (from I Corinthians 6):

1) Sexual sin is a characteristic of those headed for <u>Hell</u> (v. 9-10)

2) Sexual sin is inconsistent with your <u>new life</u> in Christ (v. 11)

3) Sexual sin is harmful to yourself and others (v. 12)

4) Sexual sin perverts the <u>true purpose</u> for your <u>body</u> (v. 13-14)

5) Sexual sin defiles the <u>oneness</u> the Lord has with you (v. 15-17)

6) Sexual sin sins against your own <u>body</u> (v. 18)

7) Sexual sin desecrates the <u>temple</u> in which God's <u>spirit</u> dwells (v.19)

8) Sexual sin denies the Lord's <u>ownership</u> and <u>rights</u> to your body (v.19b-20)

c. *Fornication is wrong because:*

1) Fornication is a perversion (twisting) of God's plan for <u>marital oneness</u>
(Gen. 2:24-25; I Cor. 6:16) (It is acting out a lie, since the ones involved really are not "one" in God's eyes)

2) Fornication is a violation of God's clear <u>commands</u> against it
(Exodus 20:14; Dt. 5:18) (Fornicators will be judged - Heb. 13:4)

3) Fornication cheapens human <u>dignity</u> and treats the body like an object to be <u>used</u> then discarded
(that which is common [profane] is cheap) (I Thes. 4:4; Prov. 11:22)

4) Fornication is not <u>God's will</u> for true sanctification
(I Thes. 4:1-3) (Defilement is a dirty feeling)

5) Fornication reveals a lack of <u>self-control</u> over one's sexual desires
(I Cor. 7:5)

6) Fornication is <u>stealing</u> what belongs to someone else (or will in the future belong to someone else) (I Thes. 4:6)

7) Fornication preoccupies and enslaves the <u>mind</u> and becomes an <u>idol</u> which may substitute for God
(II Pet. 2:14; I Cor. 6:13) (It can be more addicting than drugs)

8) Fornication violates a trust of <u>faithfulness</u> between you and your spouse (Prov. 6:29-35)

9) Fornication runs the high risk of acquiring serious <u>infection</u> and fatal <u>disease</u> (Rom.1:27)

10) Fornication results in unwanted <u>pregnancies</u>, evil <u>abortion</u>, and children who will lack a proper <u>family structure</u>
(II Sam. 11:5; Prov. 5:17)

11) Fornication is totally <u>inconsistent</u> for a <u>saint</u> to commit
(Eph. 5:3; Col. 3:3-5)

d. What the Bible teaches about HOMOSEXUALITY

Homosexuality is not due to biological or genetic cause but does stem from people's depraved sin nature which is acquired from the moment of conception. Sexual orientation is not fixed before birth. (Studies on identical twins, one who turned Gay and the other who did not, and the fact that homosexuals can and do change their sexual orientation are devastating blows to this "genetic cause" theory.)

Homosexuality is not natural, but learned behavior.

"Homosexuals are not so much the corrupters of a society, as much as they are a product of a corrupt society" Dr. David Innes

The following features of a corrupt society are contributing factors to people turning to Homosexual and Lesbian lifestyles:

a) Societies denial of God and His Authority in our lives (Evolutionary teaching);
b) The breakdown of the home (the lack of exemplary male leadership in the home; Abusive parents; Absentee Parents);
c) Sexual molestation and abuse of children;
d) A child becoming introduced to pornography;
e) Societal tolerance for sexual deviations and perversions from the Judeo-Christian Ethic;
f) Distorted views of masculinity and femininity (gender blending);
g) People looking for "love" and "acceptance" in all the wrong places;
h) Those struggling with homosexual tendencies being ostracized from people who might otherwise help them.

The Christian's attitude toward homosexuals ought to be love and pity.
You will never be able to reach anyone with the Gospel unless you deal with all people with love, compassion, patience, courage, conviction, gentleness & respect.

What does the Bible teach about Homosexuality and what Bible principles must a Christian counselor be prepared to give to one trapped in such a lifestyle? The Bible teaches that…

1) Homosexuality is contrary to GOD'S DESIGN for SEX and MARRIAGE (Gen. 2:18-25; 4:1)

2) Homosexuality led to the DESTRUCTION of an ENTIRE SOCIETY (Gen. 19:1-29)

Note: Certain attitudes and circumstances provide fertile ground for homosexual behavior to grow. Ezekiel 16:49-50 -

a) Pride (self-centeredness) (v. 50 - *"haughty"* = to exalt one's self)
b) Plenty of Goods (*"fullness of bread"*)
c) Plenty of Time (*"abundance of idleness"*)
d) Inconsideration of the helpless
* e) Lack of male leadership and example (Ex: Not ten righteous people in Sodom)

3) Homosexuality was a <u>CAPITAL OFFENCE</u> in ancient Israel and was considered an *"<u>ABOMINATION</u>"* by God (Lev. 18:22, 20:13; Deut. 23:17; cp. I Kings 14:24, 15:12, 22:46; II Kings 23:7; I Tim. 1:10)

4) Homosexuality is an <u>OBSESSIVE</u> behavior often directly associated with <u>VICIOUSNESS</u> and <u>VIOLENCE</u> toward others (Judges 19:22-30)

5) Homosexuality is the result of willfully <u>REJECTING</u> a Biblical <u>KNOWLEDGE</u> of <u>GOD</u> (Romans 1:18-25, 28)

6) Homosexuality is an <u>UNNATURAL PERVERSION</u> of sexual <u>PASSION</u> (Romans 1:26-27)

7) Homosexuality requites (rewards) its deviant participants with <u>LETHAL CONSEQUENCES</u> (guilt, bodily injury, communicable diseases and viruses, eternal condemnation) (Romans 1:27b; I Cor. 6:9-10)

8) Homosexuality is a sin that can be <u>FORGIVEN</u> and <u>FORSAKEN</u> (I Corinthians 6:9-<u>11)</u>

*"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor <u>effeminate</u>, nor <u>abusers of themselves with mankind</u>…shall inherit the kingdom of God. And **such <u>were</u> some of you**: but ye are **washed** (cleansed), but ye are **sanctified** (set apart and made holy), but ye are **justified** (declared righteous) in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."* (I Cor. 6:9-11)

The answer for the victim of Homosexuality is to receive a real, vital relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Only then will the Holy Spirit live inside the person and change the person from the inside out. After salvation, the person will never again feel a compelling need to search for love and acceptance in all the wrong ways and places; Only then will the person gladly submit to God's standards for proper sexual relations within the committed, life-long relationship of heterosexual marriage; Only then will the person be released from the lies of the Adversary, and the bondage of sin.

L. Winning the battle of… TRIALS, TEMPTATIONS & TRIBULATIONS

Part 1:
When counseling someone who is undergoing trials the counselor must convey the fact that God will often allow trials to test one's "spiritual fitness"
Key Text: James 1:1-4

"test" = Can be translated tempt or test depending on the context. From Satan's viewpoint it is a temptation, so that you fail; From God's, it is a test so that you will pass. God wants to bring out the best in us; Satan - the worst. The difference is the intent.

1. WE MUST FACE THE TEST WITH A RIGHT ATTITUDE (v.2,3)
THINK RIGHT!

This attitude involves an awareness that:

a. TESTS ARE UNAVOIDABLE

James says "when" not "if". Tests are a certainty, inescapable external tests are in view here; internal in verses 12-15.

1) Tests will come at different times
"fall into" - You don't always get advance notice of their coming. Tests often catch you by surprise.
2) Tests will come in different ways
"divers" = various, lit. many colored. Trials come in assorted "shapes & sizes"; different "styles & colors". What is a test for you may not be for me.
3) Tests may come in different amounts
"temptations" = plural

b. TESTS ARE BENEFICIAL

Our natural tendency is to wrongly think that when things are going bad it is God's judgment; and when good it is God's blessing. Do good = good things happen; do bad = bad things happen. This is not true! Not true in this present life at least. In the kingdom when things are straightened out, Satan bound etc. it will be.

1) Look at each test with optimism
"count it all joy"

- mental optimism - "count" = to reckon, or mentally consider. This is faith!
  This is not emotions! But a stable mental attitude.
  Note: James does not say trials are joy; but trials are to be reckoned as occasions for joy.
- undivided optimism - "all" joy. You are to have no "mixed emotions" about the trial.
- joyful optimism - "joy". A mental attitude of gladness that results from something beneficial (favorable) happening to you.

Jesus commanded this attitude (Mt.5:12); Apostles practice this attitude (Acts 5:41)

2) Look at each test with <u>confidence</u>.
"knowing..." Note: Joy (a right attitude) is caused by right <u>thinking</u>.

There is <u>purpose</u> for trials
God has a purpose in allowing them in your life.

a) His purpose is to <u>prove</u> the <u>genuineness</u> of your faith.
"trying" = to prove or show to be real or genuine by testing.

Testings <u>reveal</u> character, more than forming it.
Since God is loving, He does not allow testing to fail His children! And since God is omniscient He is not checking to see <u>if</u> they have faith. The test is so that we might see the true condition of our faith.

Satan tempts to make you fail, but God tests so that you will pass and He will receive the Glory. (ex. Job)
"all things work together for good..." Ro.8:28
Example: The sand that goes into the oyster and rather than being expelled it is turned into a precious, valuable pearl. "The sand speck of irritation results in the pearl of patience"
God wants to teach you; God wants to make you an experienced Christian veteran.

b) His purpose is to <u>produce</u> <u>perseverance</u> in your life.
"patience" = endurance; lit. an ability to remain under, to persevere.

2. WE MUST <u>FINISH THE TEST</u> WITH A RIGHT <u>ACTION</u> (v.4)
RESPOND RIGHT!
Don't react & run, but respond & win!
"perfect work" = completed job (Your level of patience must mature so that you can mature)

Endurance is <u>not</u> endurance if you quit (or run away) during the trial.
It must run its complete course. You must make it to the <u>end</u> of the "finish line." Patience must have a "<u>complete work out</u>." (ex. weight lifting or football practice)
"no pain, no gain"

We can (by God's grace) control the length of our endurance (patience), but not the length of the test.

GOD DESIRES YOU TO BE:

<u>SPIRITUALLY GROWN UP</u> - "perfect" = mature, complete in growth.

SPIRITUALLY <u>FIT</u> - "entire" = whole, complete in all it parts.

SPIRITUALLY <u>BALANCED</u> - "wanting nothing" = not lacking any parts. A well rounded maturity - this is why tests come in different shapes, sizes & colors.

If you keep going through the same trial over & over again maybe it is because you have not passed that test yet.

Part 2
*** You don't have to be a victim of temptations; You can be a victor over them!**
Key Text: I Corinthians 10:13

The Christian life is an abundant life, but not necessarily an easy life. It is a life with direction, but not without obstacles. It is a life of victory, but not without conflict. When you were saved, God called you to be a soldier (II Tim. 2:3-4), a wrestler (Eph. 6:12), a fighter (II Tim. 4:7) -- not for physical man-to-man combat, but for spiritual battle.

All of us have 3 opponents who seek to fight against us:

1) The Devil
(I Peter 5:8 - "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour")

2) The World
(John 16:33 - "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world") (cp. Mt. 5:10-12) ("World" - The world's system of thinking with its ungodly philosophies and attitudes)

3) The Flesh
(Gal. 5:16-17 - "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would")

"Temptation" - (peirasmos) - A solicitation to do evil; a suggestion to violate what you know to be right; an allurement to act against your conscience.
Note: Being tempted is not sin; yielding to it is (Ja. 1:15).

I Corinthians 10:13 confirms 6 truths about the temptations you face:

1. You are <u>not alone</u>; Others have had the same temptations
("There hath no temptation taken you but such as is <u>common to man</u>")

"Taken you" - To seize you; or grab you. "The words imply that there was a certain temptation which had captured the Corinthians and which had subdued them" (Grosheide).

"Common to man" - (anthropinos) -lit. human. The temptations we all face have been shared, are being experienced, and will be experienced, and will be the experience of human beings all over the world.

It's comforting to know:
--You are not alone
--You are not a special target of attack
--Therefore, you should not succumb to self-pity and a feeling of hopeless despair

Temptations come regardless of race, age, culture, time (generation you live in), skin color, etc.

The reason your temptations are the experience of others is because we all have the same appetites (basic desires and needs) and the same sin nature (Rom. 3).
Temptation, though it may appear in different packaging and come in different shapes and sizes will always appeal to one of three areas of human weakness:
lust of the flesh; lust of the eyes; pride of life (Cp. I John 2:16; Gen. 3:1ff; Mt. 4:4ff)

2. God is in <u>sovereign control</u> over the tests He allows you to face
("But God is faithful, who will not suffer you ...")

God's faithfulness to his children means He can be trusted to never allow something too great for us to handle. Satan can only go so far; he is like a dog on a leash.
God is not the source of temptation (Ja. 1:13). Temptations come from either the world, the flesh, or the devil. However, He, being sovereign, is in total control of what He allows to happen in our lives. You can be sure that the tests you face are just right for you (not too much).
If God is in control over everything, why would He allow ("suffer") you to be tempted?

Answer:

1) To <u>test</u> your faith (Ja. 1:2ff)
2) To <u>refine</u> your faith
   (purge out dross – Job 23:10: - "I shall come forth as gold")
3) To <u>build</u> your faith
   (we would never trust Him if we had no reason to)

Note: Bodily weakness may make it more difficult to obey God and do right when in the midst of a trial; and when you are ill, joy is a greater challenge; However, no one under any circumstances is excused from their responsibility to do right. God often brings pressure so that the bitterness inside of "the lemon" may come to the surface; He may heat things up so that the dross of our lives may rise to the surface; Problems do not create sin in you; they manifest it and if responded to rightly, they expel it.

3. Your trial is not <u>too great</u> for you to handle
("to be tempted above that ye are able")
God knows all about you --your strengths
--your weaknesses
--your propensities
--your assets and liabilities
He knows how much weight you can handle.
No one can say: "I couldn't help it"; "I had to give in"; "I didn't have the power to resist."

4. God will always provide a <u>way out</u> without you giving in
("...but will with the temptation also make a way to escape")

The world, flesh, or devil provide the temptation -- God provides the way out.
God can be trusted to provide a place of refuge and protection that you can flee to.
God's "way out" might not seem to be the most desirable way in the short run, but it is the best when you take the long look.
God will meet the need you feel you have in His way and in His time if you "wait upon Him" (Isaiah 40:31). But we must take God's way out when He provides it. If we linger near the temptation, wondering if we should take God's way or the temptation, we may find that later the escape is gone and we are trapped. ("He who hesitates is lost")

5. Your trials will not <u>continue forever</u>
("...a way to escape..")
Most trials come to an end in this life; some remain until death or the rapture . . . but all will disappear one day (Rom. 8:18-ff).

6. You can count on it, God will enable you to <u>stand up</u> under the <u>pressure</u> without <u>caving under</u>
("...that ye may be able to bear it")
"Bear it" - to carry under, to endure or stand up under the weight.
Why can we carry it? Answer: Because he is lifting it for us. When Jesus is in the "yoke" with you, it is easy and light (Ex: "Footprints in the Sand" poem)

CONCLUSION:

How To Keep Temptation From Ensnaring You In Its Web:

1. Feed your new nature and starve the old (Eph.4:24)

2. Don't make an occasion for the flesh (Rom. 13:14)

   "Don't set the table if you don't want to eat."
   Cut off stimuli. Don't view, read suggestive material.

3. Keep short accounts with God
   (confess your sin right away so Satan can't build a stronghold in your life - I Jn. 1:9)

4. Stay busy serving God
   "Idle hands are the devil's workshop."

5. Love God and His ways and you will have proper motivation to resist displeasing Him

6. Face any trial with the right attitude ("Joy" - Ja. 1:2)

7. Remember Who is interceding for you (Rom. 8:26-27)

8. Don't follow your heart; follow your faith (Jer. 17:9 - "The heart is deceitful above all things"; I Jn. 5:4)

9. Take the long look and ask, "Where will this decision lead me or others?"
   (The pleasures of sin are but for a season.)

10. Be dressed with God's armor (Eph. 6:10-18)

11. Be filled with God's Word (Mt. 4:1-11)
    Scripture memory and meditation is vital.
    Satan attacked Christ after a great victory (Mk. 1:12), at His weakest moment.

V. How to Win Spiritual Battles

("Be Prepared for Spiritual Warfare")

Ephesians 6:10-18

Today, we are in a battle, but we cannot see the enemy. We are in a war, but we do not fire guns or missiles. We fight on a continual basis, but often do not realize it.

I Peter 5:8
Our Adversary the Devil

Every believer is a soldier and is expected to fight (there are no spiritual pacifists).
I Tim. 1:18-19; II Tim. 2:3-4

V. 10
"Be strong" - lit. be empowered (passive). Allow yourself to be endued with divine ability. Yield to the power that God alone gives.
V. 11
"The whole armor" - the complete armor; the full armor (planoplian).
Having on every piece of armor that God commands is vitally important.
"Wiles" = schemes; crafty plots; deceitful tactics and maneuvers.
"The whole armor" - the complete, or full armor
If one piece is missing, Satan will attack that area of vulnerability; he looks for unprotected areas of our lives, for "chinks" in our armor.

V. 12
Our battle is not physical but spiritual. An unseen yet real conflict that is raging all around us.
"Principalities" - high rulers
"powers" - authorities
"rulers" - lit. world rulers of this (present) darkness (kosmos & kratoras).
"Spiritual wickedness in high places" - the spiritual armies of evil in the heavenlies; a reference to the demonic spirits that soar through the universe.

Three truths:
1. We can only be strong in the Lord (v. 10)
2. By ourselves, we are no match for Satan (v. 11)
3. Spiritual battles require spiritual weapons (v. 12).

V. 13
"Wherefore" = because of the spiritual demonic armies hovering over and about us.
"Withstand" = to stand against (antistanai); to resist; to withstand is the opposite of remaining passive or of giving in to the devil; or being defeated by Him.
The only formula for getting rid of the devil is (not magical phrases or verbal formulas) but by resisting him (I Pet. 5:8-9; Ja. 4:7).
"the evil day" - there are specific days when Satanic activity, temptation, etc. will reach each one of us. We need to be ready for those "days of evil."
"And having done all, to stand" - After accomplishing great victories, after working hard and doing all that was right and godly, there is a tendency to become complacent, to savor the past triumphs. And then, in such times, having stood, there is a tendency toward a great fall.
"Take unto you" - this imperative requires our volition; it's a choice of our will; we must make a decisive decision to take up the virtues He mentions. It's not automatic. Otherwise, the imperative would be meaningless.

"The evil day" - a particular day when Satan's fury is aimed personally at you. There may come into you life an evil day like no other. It will be too late then to put on the armor. The time to be ready for war is before the battle starts. Before the missiles fly. Before the guns fire.

V. 14

"Stand" - stand firm, maintain your ground without budging or giving up any won territory to the Devil.

In verses 14-16, God gives a series of participles which unfold how we are to stand.
God is saying, *"Stand!"* Now here's how. . .

Seven pieces of armor to overcome Satan:

A. BE TRUTHFUL (V. 14)

"Truth" -

Believe the truth
Tell the truth
Live the truth

Satan will take you down the path of deceit and hypocrisy unless you defeat him by always telling and living the truth.

B. DO RIGHT

Chest plate covers vital organs.

NOTE: Righteousness is not merely abstaining from what is wrong, but it is positively doing what is right.

Righteousness is:

1) Being just and fair (not partial)
2) Being kind and helpful (not self-centered)
3) Being holy and pure (not defiled)

How will righteousness help you defeat Satan's attacks?

1. A righteous man's prayers get answered (James 5)
2. A righteous man's life is not cluttered with obstacles to make him stumble
3. A righteous man's life is pleasing to God and God will come to his rescue (when God isn't helping a person, it is because that person is not right with God).

C. SPREAD THE GOSPEL (v.15)

Our "feet" are that which move us forward into battle.

The victorious Christian life is not a stagnant one, not a "sterile" one, not an uninvolved one. It is taking the offensive for God. It is a life of being busy for God. Busy about His work. God's work for you and me is His Great Commission -- *"To preach the gospel to every creature"* (Mk. 16:15; Mt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8).

In order to conquer Satan we need to be busy "going with the Gospel." Our feet need to be bringing us to lost sinners in need of salvation.

How does witnessing (evangelism) keep us from Satan's attacks?

1) It keeps us from idleness (*"Idle hands are the devil's workshop")*
   "An idle life parked at a 'red light' is a green light for Satan to come and side-swipe us."
2) It keeps us fulfilled and joy-filled (*"...fruit, that your joy may be full"*)
   Depression comes when the focus of our lives is self. However, when the focus of our lives is others (when we are compassionately concerned for others and their need), depression flees.

D. BELIEVE GOD'S PROMISES

A shield is a defensive weapon; it is used to deflect the flaming arrows of the wicked one.

As Satan aims and fires his arrows of:

"Fear" - we deflect with God's promise *"Be not afraid, for I am with thee"*

"Loneliness" - we deflect with God's promise of *"I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."*

"Discouragement" - we deflect with God's promise of *"Your labor is not in vain in the Lord"*

"Trials and tribulation" - we deflect with God's promise of *"All things work together for good"*

"Persecution" - we deflect with God's promise of *"When you pass through the waters I will be with you..."*

"Sexual lust" - we deflect with God's promise of *"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man..."*

It is vital for the counselor to have the person struggling with a particular sin, to memorize Scripture dealing with the issue(s) they are battling with:

Ps 119:11 – *Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.*

E. BE CONFIDENT IN YOUR SALVATION

One of the ministries of the Holy Spirit is to assure us regarding our salvation. *"The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the sons of God"* (Rom. 8).

When we grieve Him because of sin (Eph. 4) or quench Him because of unbelief (I Th. 5), we forfeit His ministry of convincing our spirit that we belong to God.

Satan plagues the mind; he torments the spirit of the one who lives in continual doubt of his salvation.

Paul said, *"I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day."*

F. KNOW THE SCRIPTURE

V. 17

"Sword of the Spirit" - Heb. 4:12; Rev. 19:15

The weapon He uses to convict, rebuke, encourage the hearts of men is His inscripturated oracles, the Bible (Heb. 4:12 - *"For the word of God is quick, and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.")*

A sword is an offensive and defensive weapon.

The Word of God offensively brings people to their knees so that they become captives of Jesus Christ (*"He led captivity captive").*

The Word of God defensively fights off false doctrine (Satanic distortions of God's truth).

It also defensively fights off temptations (Mt. 4 - *"It is written").*

F. PRAY CONTINUALLY

In war times, one of the greatest tactics is to cut the lines of communication; to cut the telegraph wires; to jam and scramble the messages; to sabotage the phone lines.

VI. God's Secret for Believers to experience VICTORY OVER SIN

ROMANS 6:1-14

***We as believers can experience victory over sin!**

3 key truths:

A. REALIZE YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO CHRIST (v. 3-10)
(Know who you are "in Christ")

You need to know that:

1. Union with Christ is union with His death
(a look back - v. 3-4, 6-7)

"People today talk of their act of daily crucifying the "old man." It stirs up pride to try to do something by crucifying the old man -- Christ has already gotten the victory!
Gal. 2:20 - "I am crucified with Christ . . ."
V. 6b
"Not serve sin" = personification. Paul views sin ("him") as a ruling force that demands submission from its subjects.
**Don't take orders from that old master, old slave driver!
V. 7
Impossible for a "dead man to serve sin"
If we would recognize and meditate on our new relationship to Christ (our new Master), we would see that we no longer have an obligation to the old master.

Paul sees the reality of the risen Christ as being a source of power which enables believers to sustain a different motivation, orientation, and lifestyle (cp. Rom. 7:6, I Cor. 15:45, II Cor. 3:6, Col. 3:1).

2. Union with Christ's death is union with His resurrection
(a look ahead - v. 5, 8-10)

B. BELIEVE THAT CHRIST SET YOU FREE! (v. 11)
("Reckon" your new life "in faith")

1. Live as if you were "dead to sin" (v. 11a)

2. Live as if you were already resurrected (v. 11b)

Reckoning is the key to victory.
"Reckon" - to consider, evaluate, calculate, think.

*Add up the facts in v. 1-10 and reckon yourself as if you were dead to sin and alive to God.
*Look at yourself in the true light
The reality of death with Christ and the certainty of future life with Him supplies the motive for present moral purity.
NOTE: Paul does not command you to "die as Christ died" or to "live as Christ lived."

Continually, constantly remind yourself of the truth - "I am dead to sin in my position "in Christ."

Most believers either:
1) Don't know their position
or 2) Don't meditate on it
or 3) Forget to continually view themselves as God sees them, and so fall into sin.

C. OBEY ONLY YOUR NEW MASTER (v. 12-13)
("Yield" your life over to God "in action")

1. Don't yield to sin (your enemy) (v. 12-13a)

Paul pictures (personifies) "sin" as if he were a dictator - demanding obedience to military service, and providing soldiers with rations to satisfy lustful appetites.
Don't give that ruler the opportunity to use your body parts for his wicked purposes.

"Instruments" = weapons of warfare (in this battle)
"Don't take your weapons and give them to the enemy!
You would be: traitor - foolish - disloyal – treason in this spiritual war

2. Do yield to God (your ally) (v. 13b)

CONCLUSION: v. 14

Verse 14 is a positive, encouraging statement:
"Sin will (future) not have dominion over you."

The Law - commands, demands, rebukes, condemns, and restrains, but can't save or give victory over sin.

Grace - gives salvation and victory (we are dead to what Jesus died to: sin, death, and the curse of the Law).

Live with the consciousness that you belong to Christ, and let this be the motive for Godly living.

Know, Reckon, and Yield!

VII. GOD'S 3 BASICS for Successful Christian Living

Many Christians live under the delusion that complex problems demand complex answers. This simply is not true!

***We need to <u>get back to the basics</u> of the Christian life!**

When counseling believers, the counselor must expect that the Counselee be faithful in fulfilling God's 3 basics for the successful Christian life.

Three safeguards to prevent fatalities (casualties) among Christians:

1. THE BASIC ESSENTIAL OF PRAYER (Luke 18:1-8)

(Through prayer, we commune with God)

Luke 18:1 - And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;

<u>THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER</u> (why pray?)

When we pray we are not telling God or asking God for something He is not aware of already - so why pray?

Basically for 3 reasons: 1) <u>it pleases God</u>, 2) <u>it glorifies God</u>, & 3) <u>it benefits us</u>.

a. IT PLEASES GOD (He desires it)
Prov.15:8

1) IT IS THE <u>WILL OF GOD</u>
I Th.5:17,18 - *"Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."*
I Tim.2:8 - *"I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting."*

2) IT IS A <u>COMMAND OF GOD</u>
Phil.4:6; Eph.5:18; Ps.27:8; Lk.18:1;
Col.4:2 - *"Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving."*
I Pet.4:7 - *"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer."*
Rom.12:12; I Tim.2:1; Eph.6:18,19 (note: the word "*all*")

b. IT GLORIFIES GOD (He is shown (proven) to be mighty, sovereign, faithful, etc.)

1) IT REVEALS <u>GOD'S GREATNESS</u>
Jer.33:3

2) IT REVEALS <u>MAN'S DEPENDENCE</u>
In prayer (worship, praise) you are acknowledging God for who He is.
In prayer (asking forgiveness) you are acknowledging your own sinfulness and need for forgiveness.
In prayer (making personal requests known) you are acknowledging your dependence. (i.e. that you do not know all, nor do all - that is - we can't do that which is of eternal worth by ourselves)

c. IT BENEFITS US

1) PRAYER IS GOD'S APPOINTED WAY FOR HIS CHILDREN TO RECEIVE THINGS
The world expects to get things solely by work, planning, scheming or by accident. *"Ye have not because you ask not"* Ja.4:2 (not because you work not, plan not etc.)

Our needs are met by prayer:

God wants to give guidance (An ability to <u>know</u>) Prov.3:5,6; Josh.9:14.
God wants to give us an ability to <u>do</u> that which we (by ourselves) cannot. Mt.17:21.
God wants to give us gifts (blessings) to <u>have</u> that which we do not have the ability acquire for ourselves

2) PRAYER IS GOD'S WAY FOR CHRISTIANS TO HAVE FULLNESS OF JOY
Prayer is the secret to gaining real joy!
Jn.16:24 - *"that your joy may be full"*

3) PRAYER IS NEEDED TO GIVE US SPIRITUAL REVIVAL
"It is foolish and wicked to try to do God's work without God's power"
II Chron.7:14

We are always looking for better <u>methods</u> (programs), what we need is better <u>men</u> - men & women of prayer.

2. THE BASIC ESSENTIAL OF <u>THE WORD</u> (I Peter 2:2)

(Through the Word, God communes with us)

"Desire" - this word is an imperative, a command. God is calling on us to crave His Word. To long for it (like David did - Ps. 119:131 - *"I opened my mouth, and panted: for I longed for thy commandments.")*

God often refers to His Word as food:
--*Meat* (Heb. 5:14; I Cor. 3:1-3)
--*Bread* (Mt. 4:4)
--*Necessary food* (Job 23:12)

a. THE **<u>PRE-REQUISITES</u>** TO DESIRING THE WORD (v. 1, 3)

1) ***"Wherefore laying aside" -***
Sin will rob your appetite for God's Word. You must get rid of certain things that prevent the Word from benefiting you.

(cp. James 1:21 - *"Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.")*
"Malice" - <u>bad attitudes</u> toward others
"Guile" - <u>deceitful behavior</u> toward others
"Hypocrisies" - <u>phony (fake) pretense</u> in front of others
"Envies" - <u>Covetousness</u> toward others
"Evil speakings" - <u>back-biting or slandering</u> others

2) ***"If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious "*** (v. 3)
One who has not *"tasted"* the Lord's grace in salvation will not have an appetite for His Word.

b. THE **<u>PURITY</u>** OF THE WORD (v. 2)
"Sincere" - pure, no bait, traps or tricks. God's Word is unhypocritical and unadulterated.

c. THE **<u>PURPOSE</u>** OF THE WORD: ***"that ye may grow"***
"Grow" - to increase in size and strength. God's Word will nourish you, strengthen you, build you, etc. We grow spiritually as our faith grows and our faith only grows by hearing and reading God's Word (Ro. 10:17).

3. THE BASIC ESSENTIAL OF THE ASSEMBLY (Hebrews 10:24-25)

(Through the assembly, we commune with each other)

"Consider" = to pay careful attention to one another; to focus our thoughts on the needs of others; to take interest in one another; being thoughtful or considerate of others is the idea.

"To provoke" - a strong word, meaning to incite (EX; of a mob); to spur on (EX: of a horse); to stimulate a response; to stir up to action; to irritate; to push someone or practically compel them into doing something.

NOTE: The word order is not "good works and love" but "love and good works." Why? Because good works flow out of an attitude of love. Love is the motivation to good works.

"To love" - an agape love toward God and man (Mt. 22:37-39); having such love will fulfill every law! (v. 40 - cp. Rom. 13:8 ["Owe no man anything, but to love on another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law"]; and Gal. 5:14 ["For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself"]).
True love may confront and love may rebuke, but true love never neglects.

--Passive Christianity is unBiblical!
--Laissez faire ("hands off") Christianity is sin!
--Being an isolationist, or spiritual hermit or monk is a violation of Heb. 10:24
After the exhortation of V. 24, the question now is: "How can we provoke one another?" "In what setting does this mutual encouragement take place?"
Answer: In the assembly (v. 25)

When a believer becomes lax in his assembling with God's people, other believers are to speak to him about it and provoke him to do what is right.

a. We have an important WARNING to assemble (v. 25a)

"Forsake" = to leave behind; to neglect something or forget about it.
Just as Christ will never abandon His bride (Heb. 13:5), so we should never abandon our brothers.
To forsake the assembly is to be inconsiderate of others (Note: the participle *"not forsaking"* is modifying the verb consider [v. 24]).
"The assembling" = the gathering together ("episunagoge"). This word points to a specific gathering; and an organized gathering.
"As the manner of some is" - Skipping church is not merely a contemporary problem, but has been a frustration to pastors throughout church history.
"Manner" = habit or custom, a pattern of life
"Of some" = thank God not every believer has this problem; just "some"
The best habit any believer could have is to be faithful to at least each of the main services of their church.

b. We have an important REASON to assemble (v. 25b)

The main purpose of church is exhortation! That is, encouragement and comfort that comes from the public preaching of God's Word!
Such exhortation is God's way of equipping each church member to serve Him (SEE: Eph. 4:11-12) We all need exhortation! Heb. 3:13 - "But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."
There is strength in knowing we are not alone. We have the greatest support group available! We are a co-dependent and unified body!

c. We have an important TIME to assemble (v. 25c)

"And so much the more" = And all the more
The Lord is telling us that assembling will be all the more important, as ye see the day approaching. What is meant by the phrase ***"the Day?"*** ANSWER: "The Day of the Lord"
The phrase "the day" is a technical phrase when it occurs without an antecedent, pointing to a most momentous Day; a great and awesome Day; a vitally important Day - namely, The Day of Christ's return (Rapture) and the wrath of God which follows. As the end draws nearer the need to assemble will become greater than ever.

VIII.How to have the RIGHT APPROACH and RIGHT ATTITUDES in Counseling

Part 1: Counselors need: a balanced approach to ministering

Key Text: I Thessalonians 2:1-12

The best counselor is one who has a Holy Spirit produced balance in his/her personality. Some people are rough (no compassion). Some are soft like sponges (no backbone). Some are strictly business-oriented (cold & "plastic").

In the Bible Moses was meek, yet stern. David was tender-hearted, yet had firm convictions.

Jesus was perfectly balanced in His personality.

1) He was trustworthy in carrying out His Father's will. He would do His task, and nothing would interfere. (John 5:30; 6:38)
2) He was gentle when John lay on His bosom, when He dealt with the woman at the well. (John 13:23)
3) He was stern when He turned over the money changers' tables and when He rebuked the Pharisees. (Mt.21:12)

Paul said: "I will become all things to all men..." (I Cor.9:22)

2:1
Paul, Timothy, and Silas had an effective ministry not only because of what they said, but because of what they were (their sincere character) and how they said it (their balanced personality).
We all want <u>effectiveness</u> in ministry. We don't want to labor in vain.

A <u>balanced</u> approach in dealing with people is vital to effective ministry.

(To influence others for God, you need a <u>Godly balance</u> in the way you deal with people)
(To be effective in your evangelism and discipleship, you must have the qualities that Paul had)

3 Qualities (characteristics):

1. *Honest Steward (v. 2-5)*
2. *Gentle Mother (v. 6-9)*
3. *Concerned Father (v. 10-12)*

A steward is <u>duty</u> oriented. His only concern is getting the job done right (ethically and honestly)
A mother is <u>care</u> oriented. She is careful <u>how</u> she treats people (particularly her children).
A father is <u>training/discipline</u> oriented. He is concerned about <u>what</u> he does, what he does with his children.

1. TO BE EFFECTIVE IN MINISTERING GOD'S WORD, YOU NEED THE QUALITY OF AN HONEST STEWARD (v. 2-5)

(Paul's Motive)

The picture of "steward" comes from the words "put in trust" (v. 4)

A steward is one who is put in trust (in charge) with something. He owns nothing, but manages what belongs to His master (EX: Joseph, Gen. 39:1-6).

A steward is task-oriented. He has a job to do and he does it.

An Honest Steward:

a. Tells the truth with boldness (v. 2)

As stewards we have no choice but to guard and invest the Gospel for our Savior.

Our boldness (courage, liberty) to speak the Gospel does not come from ourselves. We are "bold in our God!"

An Honest Steward:

b. Tells the truth with right motives (to please God) (v. 3-4)

You can please men with externals. But you can only please God if He approves of your heart.

An Honest Steward:

c. Tells the truth with sincerity (v. 5)

When you give Biblical Advice, don't butter up the person. Don't ever lie and tell people something about themselves that you really don't mean. Be sincere! Don't stoop to use gimmicks. Be straight-forward with people. They will appreciate you for it! I don't mean to be rude and crude, but be honest in a loving way. David hated flattery (Ps. 12:2).

2. TO BE EFFECTIVE IN MINISTERING GOD'S WORD, YOU NEED THE QUALITY OF A GENTLE MOTHER (v. 6-9)

(Paul's Manner)

The picture of a "mother" comes from v. 7.

a. A gentle mother is not burdensome (v. 6)

b. A gentle mother shows warm affection (v. 7)

c. A gentle mother shows sacrificial love (v. 8-9)

3. TO BE EFFECTIVE IN MINISTERING GOD'S WORD, YOU NEED THE QUALITY OF A CONCERNED FATHER (V. 10-12)

(Paul's Method)

The picture of "father" comes from v. 11.

a. A concerned father is godly in his walk (v. 10)
(he sets the proper example)

b. A concerned father is serious in his words (v.11-12)
Be balanced with:

1. Exhortation (to affect the intellect)
2. Comfort (to affect the emotion)
3. Insistence (to affect the will)

Part 2: Counselors need: wisdom to know how to apply God's "medicine" to those who are spiritually ill.

Key text: I Thessalonians 5:14-15

We are called to be spiritual physicians and spiritual workers who must know how to handle the irritable. We must know how to deal with those who "rub us the wrong way"; those who "get under your skin."
As Christian counselors, we need to learn how to help the helpless, to direct the directionless, to encourage the discouraged, to love the unlovable.

V. 14
"Brethren" = God is addressing believers in general.
While dealing with faulty members is in special measure the responsibility of the pastor, it is not confined to him. All believers must be ready to minister! (D. Edmond Hiebert, I Thessalonians, p. 234).

The three classes of Christians in need of help may have been the 3 groups who already had their problems addressed in this letter:

1."Unruly" = idlers (4:11-12)
2."feeble minded" = worried about death and salvation (4:14-17; 5:9-11)
3."Weak" = those who were tempted to lapse into immorality (4:2-8)

Three types of people needed special attention in the Thessalonian church; and each type needed different treatment.
Different needs must be handled in different ways.

We must apply GOD'S MEDICINE to those who are spiritually ill.
(See: I Thess 5:14)

What does God prescribe?

1. God prescribes confrontation of those who go astray

(We must help straighten out the thinking of those who go astray)
"Unruly" = a military term that described a soldier who neglected his duty and was out of order, out of step, and out of rank. It also described an army that was marching and advancing toward the enemy in disarray (disorderly confusion).

One who is unruly is one who…
1) is not doing what he should do (sin of omission)
EX: not working (cp. II Thess. 3:6 - idleness)
2) is doing what he should not do (sin of commission)

How do we handle such a person?
"Warn" = is the same word as translated "admonish" in f. 12. It basically means to put into the mind, to confront the mind; to correct someone's thinking.

Thinking affects behavior.
Wrong thought patterns result in wrong patterns of behavior.
Many times we waste a lot of time trying to change someone's external actions without dealing with the cause (the root) of sinful thinking. What a person thinks reveals what he is (his character)

To confront someone who is going astray, you need:
1. To know Bible doctrine
2. To have courage and boldness (confrontation is not easy)

2. God prescribes comfort for those who are easily discouraged

(We must strengthen the hearts of those who are easily discouraged)

The word translated "feeble-minded" does not refer to someone with a mental deficiency, but to someone who has a mind and heart filled with worry, fear, and discouragement (the word literally means "little-souled).

Why do people get discouraged?

a. Adverse circumstances

(financial misfortune, physical suffering, opposition for the faith, family hardships)

b. Struggle with sin

(a deep consciousness of their own sinfulness which causes them to despair of being able to live the Christian life - Hiebert, p. 235)

Many people seem by nature (old nature, of course) to be negative. Perhaps through parental example they learned to fear the worst. They face each trial in life with apprehension and timidity.

What they don't need is for you to pound them over the head and say, "I can't understand how you can be this way! Don't you know the Bible says that `God has not given us the spirit of fear but of power and love and of a sound mind?"' (II Tim. 1:7). I'm not saying this verse is not a good one for this type of person. It's excellent! It's how you say it that matters!

Don't blast him! (he needs to be cheered up, not chopped down).

The discouraged Christian does not need to be rebuked like those who are deliberately walking disorderly. He needs to be cheered up; softly and tenderly encouraged; stimulated by caring words--well-thought-out words; to continue in the battle; to not give up; to re-focus his eyes on Christ and the promises of God!

3. God prescribes support for those who are without strength

(We must support the weak knees of those who can't stand on their own)

It is said of Job that he was a man who "strengthened the weak hands." His words had held up "him that was falling." And he had strengthened the feeble knees (Job 4:3-4).

"Weak" = lit. "without strength" The word here does not refer to physical weakness in context, but to moral and spiritual weakness.

a. Weak areas are often problems of the lust of the flesh. Examples:

1) Poor self-discipline
2) Out of control appetites
3) Sinful thought life

"Support" = lit. to "hold on firmly" or to "cling on" to someone

It means to give support to someone by putting your arms around the weak and holding him up. God is not calling on us to condone sin!

We are never to sympathize with the sin, but with the struggling sinner. We are not to smear the sin in their face, but we are to lift them up out of it!

b. How can we support (hold up) those whoa re sapped of spiritual vigor or moral muscle?

1) They must confess their weak areas to you (James 5:16)
2) You must keep the information confidential and pray for your brother or sister (James 5:16)
3) In an encouraging way, you must hold that person accountable. (Periodically check up on that person)

4. God prescribes patience in all cases

(We must suffer long with everyone we care for)

Patience is how you apply the medicine. It's your attitude in putting on the needed balm.

"Patient" = to be long-fused; long-tempered; lit. to be able to put up with "much internal heat" without "blowing your tope" or "Losing your cool" with someone.

"Patient toward all" - would specifically include those 3 types of people just mentioned.

It would be easy to lose your patience with the unruly, feeble-minded, and weak.