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INTRODUCTION

The subject of this book is counseling, and how you can help people. One of the finest things that a counselor can do for people is tell them about God's love for them. God has already set His love in motion towards us in sending Jesus, so the love of God is right there for us and with us. As you tell people of God's love, let them know you care and love them, and that God has a better plan for their lives.

Love opens the hearts of people. Most of the time when people are down and out, they think they are all alone, and that no one else has the problems they have. They tend to withdraw inside themselves, and may not even love themselves any more. People like this feel nobody loves them, that even God has forgotten them. They need to hear the words, "God loves you."

Part of counseling is encouraging one another, and getting our eyes on Jesus. He is the One who cares, the One who solves the problems and changes lives. Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith (Heb. 12:2), and He never forsakes us nor leaves us (Heb. 13:5). It is a privilege to be a counselor, to point people to the Lord Jesus Christ.

A COUNSELOR'S PERSPECTIVE

There is power in the blood of Jesus, but to have that power, one has to receive it. The benefits of the power of the blood of Jesus are beyond measure. The Bible tells us that if we are faithful to acknowledge our sins before God, He is faithful and just to forgive and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (I John 1:9). God gets the root of the problem and it is gone “as far as the east is from the west” (Psalm 103:12), just like it never happened.

When God forgives sin, He no longer holds it against the sinner. And if God forgives us, then we should forgive ourselves as well. When that happens, the freedom of God begins to flow and we have His peace, followed by His joy and strength. Jesus said to the woman caught in adultery, “Neither do I condemn you, go and sin no more” (John 8:11).

Forgiveness is not an excuse to go back into sin. The blood of Jesus is a line that God has drawn, and when we cross that blood line, we cross into the kingdom of God. We are now free through the blood of Jesus.

Each individual must receive the blood of Jesus personally. One person cannot receive it for another. This is a most important lesson in counseling. It all starts with getting a person right before God through the blood of Jesus. You cannot straighten out somebody's mind, you cannot deal with any emotional problems, and you cannot minister healing to anyone if they do not want to receive the blood of Jesus.

Christians believe that healing is provided for their spirits which made them right with God, but many do not know that God has provided healing for their minds and bodies too. An effective counselor shows people how God's Word heals spirits, minds, and bodies.

One of the first things a counselor learns is that you cannot carry the burden of peoples' problems on your shoulders. This will only drag you down with them. This can happen when people do not really want to receive the healing of the blood of Jesus. They just want someone to listen to their troubles. I do not want to discourage anyone, but on the other hand, if I go into the quicksand after them, what good is it if we are all going down together? We will all sink!

My place is to stay on the Rock which is Jesus, and from there I can extend the hand of the Lord to pull them out. Not my hand, but the Lord's. He is able to reach them wherever they are and say, “I love you. Come back. I can help you.” If they do not take His hand, they cannot be helped.

A very important role of any counselor is that of being an intercessor. Praying in advance for folk to receive what the Lord has provided for them through His blood makes everything much easier. When they are ready to receive, God does His part.

Although we care about people, we do not run out searching the highways and byways for them. There are many out there who are crippled and maimed in mind and body, but they will spit

on you when you start talking about God. Be realistic. We should always be about the Lord's business wherever we are, on the highways and byways or elsewhere, but we must discern who is open and who is not. There are people with horrendous problems who we think should be quite open to talk about God, but oftentimes it is the last thing they want to hear about.

One principle of God is that He simply makes Himself available. He gives Himself. And He is our example, to give ourselves, and make ourselves available. Jesus simply came into this world and God made Himself available in the flesh. For thirty years, nothing much was said about Him except for His birth and one incident when He was twelve years old. After He met John the Baptist, He taught in the synagogues, and out in the highways and byways. He healed the sick and mended the broken-hearted. He ministered by the Spirit of God, and then He gave His life.

On the cross, Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." That is a wonderful prayer for every counselor. Remember where it was said, and that Jesus said it for you. It does not matter how much of a rotten, dirty sinner you were, the blood of Jesus washes you clean and produces in you a tremendous love for God's people. I believe that with love, goes a tremendous thankfulness to God. An effective counselor must have that love and that thankfulness.

You must never forget how great God's forgiveness was for you because God will send you derelicts. They will be spiritual, mental, and physical derelicts. A counselor must be ready to work with any sinner that God sends you. Jesus said, "I did not come for the righteous, but for the sinners" (Matt. 9:13). The blood of Jesus makes them righteous, and they are no longer sinners. This is the heart of the ministry of counseling. It makes people righteous in thought, word, and deed. It brings life into people's situations, health to their bodies, healing in their emotions, and peace with God in their spirits. They will know they are loved, and accepted, and they will have the joy that comes only from knowing God.

When a counselor hangs on and does not grow weary in his ministry, he has the privilege of seeing God do His perfect work. Weariness is a counselor's greatest enemy. The Bible tells us "Grow not weary in well doing, for in due time we shall reap if we faint not" (Galatians 6:9). God has given us tools against weariness, and these tools are the marvelous life-giving promises in God's Word.

Your tools are the privilege to pray in the mighty name of Jesus. He said, "Whatever you ask in My name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (John 14:13). God has given us the privilege of using the name "Jesus" to heal the sick, mend the broken-hearted, to cast out devils, to set the captives free.

The counselor's marching orders are John 8:36, "He whom the son has set free is free indeed." Say it to yourself: "I am free indeed. I am free indeed. I am FREE indeed." Put the emphasis on the word, "free." Do not emphasize "I am," because the only one who is I AM is God. God is in us, but He is not us and we are not Him. The problem with people is that they keep saying, "I am sick. I am tired. I am depressed. I am fearful. I am agitated. I am confused." God reigns on His throne, and when we understand that, "I am" ceases. When I am washed in the blood of Jesus, "I am" no more.

Galatians 2:20 says, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me, and the life I now live I live by the faith in the son of God." The best thing I ever did was when I got rid of myself, and took on Jesus. He wooed me. He loved me. He accepted me. He gave me a new self. Now I can tell others that "He whom the son has set free is free indeed" (John 8:36).

A counselor is a Minister who operates by counseling. The word "minister," is a simple Bible term that means "servant." There is nothing prestigious about it. The hours are long and the pay is low. Great rewards, however! How can one measure the cost or the price of somebody being set free from mental anxiety and turmoil? One cannot. Even if God did a \$10,000.00 job on you, we cannot say you owe us \$1,000.00, or \$2,500.00. You probably could not pay it anyway. Besides that, I would not want anyone in debt to me. I want only to point people to God.

A true minister of the Lord in counseling is the servant of the Lord Jesus. He knows his life is not his own. It belongs to God. His time belongs to God. His resources belong to God. He is open to do what God wants done in His way. He does not have a right to speak his mind or give his own opinion even when he feels like strangling someone. We have no rights. There is no bondage where there are no rights.

Jesus gave up all His rights when He came down to this earth. He humbled Himself and became a man. He gave up everything He had as God, so He could give us life. A counselor gives his life also, and it takes more than just liking people and wanting to help them. There is a cost when we work for the Lord. Yes, He provided free eternal life. He provided free physical healing. He provided free mental healing. It was freely given; and therefore, we freely give. But there is a cost. On God's part, it cost the blood of Jesus. A counselor must be willing to count the cost.

An effective counselor realizes that people are limited in what they learn and receive. I doubt if there is anyone who is ready to permit God to do His one hundred per cent perfect will, in his or her life at this moment. People might say they are willing, but God knows their heart. In His mercy, God shows us glimpses of truth. We could not handle the whole truth all at once.

There are a lot of dark clouds that people are not really willing to give up. They still enjoy them. God would take them if we would let Him. The Lord showed me an example once when I was praying over a certain individual. In the Spirit, I saw an artichoke that God was peeling from the outside, leaf by leaf. He was getting down to the heart. That is how the Holy Spirit works. People have put up many protective shields over the years, and even when they are born again of God's Spirit, they find it hard to let the freedom of God come forth. Veils of self have clouded them for so long, they have to be unraveled, and it takes time.

No one is perfect, and we are all in the same boat. I know I am perfect only in Jesus, and I hang on to that every single day. We have to encourage ourselves daily because one of the greatest weapons of the enemy is discouragement.

Psalm 20 should be every counselor's prayer, or desire. Although not everybody will be a counselor, everybody at some time or other, will counsel someone else. There is a difference between counseling and busy-bodying. A counselor does not stick his nose where it does not

belong. You cannot invite yourself into someone else's life unless they want your help. Only when they want help, can you minister effectively, and they reap the benefits.

In Psalm 20 we read: "May the Lord answer you when you are in distress; may the name of the God of Jacob protect you. May He send you help from the sanctuary and grant you support from Zion. May He remember all your sacrifices and accept your burnt offerings. May He give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed. We will shout for joy when you are victorious and will lift up our banners in the name of our God. May the Lord grant all your requests. Now I know that the Lord saves His anointed; He answers him from his holy heaven with the saving power of His right hand. Some trust in chariots, and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God. They are brought to their knees and fall, but we rise up and stand firm. O Lord, save the king! Answer us when we call!" (Psalm 20:9).

A counselor's desire is for the good of the people, and his prayer is, "May the Lord answer you when you are in distress" (Psalm 20:1). There is nobody on this earth without a problem at one time or another, but the problems are not the issue. It is what we do with the problems that makes the difference between victory and defeat.

In this scripture, we see that a counselor points people to the Lord. "May the Lord answer you when you are in distress. May the name of the God of Jacob protect you. May He send you help from the sanctuary and grant you support from Zion. May HE remember all your sacrifices. May HE give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed" (Psalm 20:4). A true counselor recognizes that it is only God who can do anything in anyone's life. It is only God who can change people's circumstances, situations, attitudes, and hearts. It is God, not the counselor.

If a person calls and the counselor is not in, that person's world should not crumble. An effective counselor points people right to the source: "May the LORD answer you, may He send you help, may He remember all your sacrifices, may He give you the desires of your heart and make all your plans succeed" (Psalm 20:4). And then the counselor can say, "We will shout for joy when you are victorious! We will lift up our banners in the name of our God!" (Psalm 20:5).

Several years ago, I was sitting with the Lord before a meeting, and as the Spirit of God started ministering to me, I suddenly started to weep and sob. Out of my mouth came the words, "I thank You, Lord, that I am not You. I thank You, Lord, that I am not You," over and over. I was thanking Him for being the source, not me. I simply do my part which is pray, let God give the wisdom and insight, give scriptures, and minister through me what the person needs. It may not be what they want to hear, but it is what they need, and it is important to know when they will receive it. We cannot force the issue, but let God deal with their heart.

A counselor is not God, and although we must show people the right way, it is God who must deal with them. Our part is to love people, encourage them, set the Word of God in front of them, and teach them the principles of God. That is all. What they do with it is entirely up to them. The Holy Spirit must draw them, convict them, and then "we will shout for joy when they are victorious, and we will lift up our banners in the name of our God" (Psalm 20:5).

Verse 6 in Psalm 20 says, “Now I know that the Lord saves His anointed.” A counselor has to know that! The Lord WILL save His people, and, “He does answer from His holy heaven with the saving power of His right hand.” An effective counselor believes this and acts on it. Many people trust in the resources of this world. In Bible days they trusted in chariots and horses which were the most powerful kind of weaponry they had at that time. Some people put their trust in riches; some trust their own abilities, and their own wisdom. Some people put their trust in other people, or in things they own. That is all vanity, and it will pass away. There is nothing on this earth that will last, or help. This will only cause them to be brought to their knees.

Those who trust in the name of the Lord our God will rise up and stand firm. This goes on all around us, and it does not take much spiritual discernment to see it. People are standing and falling every day because of their own decisions.

A godly counselor cannot operate out of his own mind. He has to help people make godly decisions, and most of the time he will say, “Go to the Lord. May the Lord answer you when you are in distress. May He send you help from the sanctuary.” In other words, “I cannot tell you what to do, friend. You have to go to the Lord. If you do not know how, I will be happy to show you.” Each person has to make decisions. Life is loaded with decisions. We make some that are good, and some that are bad. Some are reversible, and some are not.

That is why we need to get before God, and sad to say, there are people who do not know how to do that. A counselor helps people learn how to pray. Anybody who is filled with the Holy Ghost can begin speaking in tongues. A counselor will get people filled with the Holy Spirit so they can pray in tongues. Get that perfect prayer going, and tell them, “You believe now, and God will use this prayer language. He understands it.” That is all they have to know. God will work it out.

A counselor is a worker with God, a co-laborer who brings people before the throne of God. Many people do not know how to find God. They do not know His will, nor His plan and purpose. A counselor is simply a guide to help people get before God so they can hear from Him personally. There are people who do not even know there is a God, and many Christians who know Him do not realize that He will help them. They may feel unworthy, not knowing what God has provided for them. That’s when a counselor steps in, takes them by the hand and brings them right before the presence of God. The counselor then lets go the hand and leaves them with God.

Some may wonder if a counselor is even needed. People may say, “I just need God.” I have said that myself, but I have found it is not always the whole truth. God called Himself.” The Counselor, (Isaiah 9:6), and God uses His people to do the work of the ministry. God makes you whole so you can be an extension of Him to the people; and you need the people. I need the people. God needs you and me. This is a team operation. We need God, and He needs us.

God works through people who are tuned in to His Spirit. Often, this is how He loves His people. This is how He supplies for His ministries. God works through His people.

There may be times when people become attached to a counselor, and this may be all right at first. You are a point of contact for the power of the living God. Then the counselor must point to Jesus as the answer to all their problems. We will cover this later in the book.

I often share Psalm 121 with people because I want them to get the proper perspective on the counseling ministry. When they do, they can actually help you to be freer in ministering to them by not putting the responsibility on you. The Psalm says: “I lift up my eyes to the hills. Where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, The maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip; He watches over you, He will not slumber” (Psalm 121:1-3).

God is the only One who stays up all night. He knows His counselors need sleep. When a counselor is taxed by someone and is accused of not loving him anymore because he pays less attention to him, the counselor must help him. This is wrong, and the people must get their minds off themselves. When the counselor can get the people to pray for him, it does wonderful things for all of them. Soon the people forget about their problems, the counselor gets a special blessing from God, and mighty things begin to happen.

There are times when a counselor is available to people, and times when the counselor needs to get away from the people, and go before God. That is when he can get God’s Word and His voice. One cannot instruct people in the ways of God correctly if one is not hearing His voice correctly. Unfortunately, this has been known to happen even when they spend time with Him because they have their own desires and hearts in the way.

If we can grasp the message of this Scripture, we will get our focus and attention on God. A counselor can look out for someone else, but only with God’s help. No one can take the responsibility for someone else. That is why I gave myself to God. I gave my family and my flock to God. When we allow God to carry the burden for yourself and others, He shows you things that are going on with people. This is not for the purpose of telling them, but this helps you to pray, intercede and stand in the gap for them.

Remember Peter, when Jesus came to him and said, “Simon, I have interceded for you. I prayed. Satan desires to sift you like wheat, but I interceded for you” (Luke 22:31-32). Most people do not realize that the first function of a counselor is to be an intercessor. Sometimes you tell what God has shown you, and sometimes you simply pray and do not say a word to anybody. I believe that to say nothing is the higher order.

It is interesting to note that even though Jesus prayed for Peter, he still denied Jesus three times. Seems like the intercession was of no avail. Jesus prayed that Simon Peter’s faith would not fail, that his faith would stand, and Peter denied he even knew Jesus three times! What kind of standing in faith was that? What is the difference between Peter and Judas?

The difference is that Peter repented. He asked God’s forgiveness. He rose up mighty in the faith, in the things of the Spirit of God, and led the church into victory. He blew it badly, but the prayer was not geared at the falling. That was Peter’s choice. It was his decision, and nobody can violate another’s will in such cases. The intercession went out, held on to him, and would not

let him grovel in the dirt, letting the devil take him and destroy his life. He stood, and his heart broke, and he repented.

Even though Peter blew it badly, as many of us have, Jesus does not look at the failings or the shortcomings. He looks at what He is going to accomplish through us as we hold on. Thank God for forgiveness. God's forgiveness is one of the best truths a counselor will communicate to people. It's what sets people free.

A counselor has the privilege to minister the love, the mercy, and the forgiveness of God, and sometimes you have to minister the justice of God. People do not always want to hear about God's justice, and try to blame someone else for what happened. When the person accepts his own responsibility for his actions and asks forgiveness, God is ready to forgive. It is then off the record. It is gone. It needs to be forgotten and done with.

Matthew 11:28-30 gives us a perspective on how a counselor can survive, and these scriptures should be read frequently. "Come unto me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

All a counselor does is bring people to Jesus. If people would just get to know Jesus and learn who the heavenly Father is, know the love of God, His power and wisdom, the counselor's job is well done. Unfortunately, we live in a world of raving maniacs and lunatics with all kinds of crazy things going on, but we can still have the peace of God in the midst of it. The love of God is demonstrated in this world, on this earth, with people. We cannot isolate ourselves in some cabin on a hill somewhere. Jesus gave His life for all humanity, and we must be ready and willing to minister to whoever He sends us, wherever we are.

Counselors must be aware of attitudes, not only in themselves, but in the people they are counseling. We read about an incident in Acts 3:11-12: "While the beggar held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them not the place called Solomon's colonnade. When Peter saw this, he said to them, 'Men of Israel, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power and godliness we had made this man walk?'"

I believe the apostles had a godly perspective in this miracle. They wondered why the people were so surprised, and they pointed out that they had nothing to do with it except that they released the power of God. It was not their own power, but God's.

It is interesting to note that this man who was healed had a little bit of faith. That is what makes the difference. When people come to you with only a little bit of faith, God is able to do something. It does not take a whole lot.

Not everyone who walked with Jesus received healing for their minds or their bodies. Why not? Not everybody wanted it. Not everybody came for it. We want everybody to have all that God has for them, but we cannot minister it to them if they hold back.

John 15:3 tells us: “You are already clean because of the Word I have spoken to you.” A counselor speaks the Word of God, and when he does, it cleanses people. It cleanses, helps, heals, and it delivers. This is why it is so important to use only the true Word of God. We cannot add our own opinions or thoughts. We must minister only the pure Word of God.

John 15:5 says: “I am the vine; you are the branches.” This tells us that apart from Jesus, we are nothing. Both the vine and the branches are necessary. Without branches there would be no fruit. We are extensions of the love of God in this world, and the fruit is actually produced from our lives. Jesus did His work on earth already and His part is done. Now it is our turn to produce fruit for Him.

The most important thing a counselor must realize is that apart from Jesus, not one of us can do anything. If Jesus is not in the counseling, you might as well forget it. A counselor must be selective in the people he ministers to. They must want to receive the blood of Jesus, and acknowledge Him; otherwise, all you can do is love them into the kingdom.

Verse 7-8 says: “If you remain in Me, and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given to you. This is my Father’s glory that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be My disciples.”

In a counselor’s ministry, God will confirm His Word as it is spoken and fruit will come forth. The Word of God must be very deeply rooted within the heart of the counselor in order to lead people into godliness.

THE COUNSELOR AS A GUIDE

When a counselor is the intercessor he ought to be, he will always be directing people to the Word of God. He will guide those he is counseling to see what God says about their problems. The counselor does not express his own ideas, his own thoughts, or opinions. He always guides the people to the Word of God.

In Psalm 20, it is very clear that it is the Lord who answers us when we are in distress. He protects us. He sends us help and support. We must put the entire focus on the Lord, not on any person. A counselor must not allow those he is counseling to look to him for answers and solutions. It must be made clear that all answers and solutions come from God.

In verse 4 of Psalm 20, it says, “May He give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed.” This is a counselor’s attitude. He wants to see God’s people blessed. He wants to see people rejoicing and free from the burden of their problems. When that happens, verse 5 says, “We will shout for joy when you are victorious and will lift up our banners in the name of our God.” So a counselor is a rejoicer too.

There will be times when a counselor will have to rejoice and call things that be not as though they are (Romans 4:17). There will be situations that look impossible, but the word assures us that although with men things may be quite impossible, with God, all things are possible. Rejoicing is contagious, and when people start rejoicing, that is the end of their problem.

As a counselor guides the people in God’s Word, he must emphasize that when they become new creatures in Christ, old things are passed away. All the old ways have no power over them any more. Their lives are then a walk with God, and they are daily being transformed by the Holy Spirit. That is called sanctification. It is a process of being made holy on a daily basis, thanks to God’s mercy and love.

As much as God’s love and mercy are extended toward us, however, we must also recognize God’s justice. If people are doing evil things even though they are in Jesus, they will reap what they sow. There are consequences to our actions. All the problems people have are caused by something they did to allow it. They opened a door somewhere to permit the problem to happen.

The enemy, of course, will put pressure on the people because he certainly does not play fair. This is when emotional problems may creep in through doors that were opened up many years in the past.

If we could see ourselves as God sees us, we would never have another problem. That is something we should all be working towards. In the meantime, if we have attitudes that are out of line with God, His Word will show us.

In John 15:3, we see that we are cleaned, or pruned, by the Word of God. It is like a light that illuminates an area that needs some work. A counselor's responsibility is to put the Word of God before the people so they can see their attitudes. We are not to convict anybody of anything. That is the work of the Word of God. All we do is simply enforce what God is doing. The Word of God is the authority, and all we do is present it.

Although a counselor can do nothing without Jesus, the Word tells us, "If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will and it will be done for you" (John 15:7). A counselor must spend time in the Word of God. He must know the Word of God in order to use it effectively. Verse 8 tells us that the Father God is glorified throughout the fruit that comes forth through our lives as the Word abides in us.

One of the first things a counselor finds out is that there are people who just do not care to hear the Word of God; even Christians. It shows the thoughts and intentions of their own hearts, and they like being in the snare of the devil. This means they are deceived, thinking they are right and everybody else is wrong. Well, there is nothing hidden that will not be soon disclosed.

The truth will come forth at some time. That is why the Spirit of God would encourage us to understand. We must not get discouraged, or give up. If the people will not receive the Word, you have done your part in sowing it, and you must go on. If they will not respond, it will then be between them and God. You go back to interceding, and be joyful, calling things that be not as though they are. You must thank and praise God for those people, using your faith on their behalf. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Romans 10:17). The seed of God's Word that you planted will bring forth fruit.

A counselor's job is not to take on the burdens and problems of the people he is counseling. There is a very important principle of God in Galatians, chapter 6 which sets the counselor free. Once the people acknowledge their need for help, they will be open to receive guidance in the Word of God. However, if they do not express their desire for help, do not offer it. Learn this lesson early. And if they do not respond to the counseling, they really do not want help, and it is time to stop the counseling.

When you stop the counseling, they may try to put a guilt trip on you by saying you do not care, you do not love them. That is when you assure them you love them enough to want God's best for them, but they must open their eyes and recognize their need for His direction. They must recover themselves out of the snare of the devil (II Timothy 2:22-23).

You make yourself available and let people know that God is there to help. You are more than willing to be a guide to lead them to the Lord Jesus and to the promises in the Word of God, but they must make the decision to follow His direction. Philippians 2:12 tells us to work out our own salvation. That means that nobody else can do it for us. We must line up our attitudes with the Lord Jesus Christ.

As a counselor, you may cry for your people, pray for your people, share the Word of God with them and try to help them, but they, themselves, must line up their will with the Word of God.

This will free you as a counselor to understand that all you can do is guide them in the Word of Jesus.

In Galatians 6:1 we read: “Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently.” People have different concepts of the word, “gentle.” There are times when people need a good swift kick, and the Spirit of God would say “that is gentle.” If a person is heading for destruction in his life, a good swift kick would be gentle in comparison.

People will come to you with pre-conceived notions as to how they want to be counseled, and how they want to be treated. Many will express themselves verbally when you do not measure up to their expectations. These people usually do not want to hear the truth, and may go elsewhere, but the Spirit of God will be consistent wherever they go. People like this will not be helped until their attitudes change. Most of them want attention, and will go from one person to another, but they will never find it from people. Only God can give that love that they so desperately need.

It is a sad thing to see Christians who willfully, knowingly continue to purpose in their hearts to go against God. This is rebellion, and we will see how God deals with it. Proverbs 17:10 says, “A rebuke impresses a man of discernment more than a hundred lashes a fool.” In other words, regardless of how much a fool is lashed or disciplined, he will not learn anything. They will not change. People like this are bent on their own ways, on their own self-conceit, thinking they are right and everyone else is wrong. They will not listen to anyone who may try to help them. On the other hand, the wise man of discernment is impressed by a rebuke. He will become wiser as his attitudes change and get in line with God.

Verse 11 says, “An evil man is bent only on rebellion; a merciless official will be sent against him.” These people are not in rebellion against people, or against themselves. They are in rebellion against God. How could a Christian be in a willful, knowing, continued state of rebellion and call himself a Christian? How is God going to deal with that?

A Christian who is bent on rebellion allows evil in his life. He is deceived, and God will not let it slide. The Word says that God will send a merciless official against him so he will repent (Prov. 17:11). A counselor who shows mercy to a rebellious person in a state of willful, knowing sin, and says it is all right and he continues in the rebellion, will have to account to God for his wrong attitude. The Lord will deal with that counselor because he has been called to show the rebellious one how to line up with God’s Word. The person may not want to hear it, but it is the counselor’s responsibility to do all he can to direct him to the Lord Jesus in total surrender. Hebrews 12 tells us that God loves those whom He chastens, or disciplines.

In Galatians 6:2 we read: “Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” This may sound like a contradiction, but it is not. We do not carry the burdens in the physical, but through intercessory prayer. Isaiah 53:4-5 tells us how Jesus bore our griefs, sickness, disease, maladies, and carried our sorrows (all the emotional realm problems). The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. He already bore it all, so we have no business bearing it for ourselves or for anybody else. This is important to remember because it is a trap the devil often uses on counselors. As we intercede for the people, we are fulfilling the law of Christ, which is the law of love.

The person coming to you for help is deceived and is not operating by the Spirit of God, or they would not need any help. Who is working through them? None other than the devil. People like this will put you into their snare if you are not on guard. They will hand over their problems if you let them. The counselor must remind them that is not what the Bible teaches. Jesus already bore those burdens for them. It is the counselor's responsibility to help them understand that. It must be done in love, and you must be available to them if they respond.

People suffer with sickness, fears, worries, and weaknesses; they feel unloved and lonely. The counselor however cannot fulfill their emotional desires. This can become a dangerous situation because these people are often drawn to the counselor, they may fall in love with him or her even if married. The counselor must care about these people enough to share the Word of God and spend the time needed to guide them lovingly and kindly to find their answers in Jesus.

Spending the time needed is determined by you, through the Spirit of God, not the people. If they have a need for attention, you will find yourself on call twenty-four hours a day.

Verses 3 and 4: "If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. Each one should test his own actions." In counseling, we need to help people examine their own actions. Unfortunately, most people will tell you that someone else is the problem in their lives. They do not see themselves. The counselor does not deal with the other person, and as time goes on in the counseling, it becomes obvious who is the problem. People deceive themselves, and as the Scripture instructs us, each one should test his own actions. A counselor will help people examine their own actions, and to prove their own attitudes and thoughts. Many times people are not consciously aware of what their attitudes are in relation to situations and people. It is buried under the surface.

Proverbs 16:2 says: "A man's ways appear right to a man but God searches the intention or the motivation of the heart." A counselor, led by the Spirit of God, will get down to the heart of the matter, to find the true motivation. Most of the time what people say on the surface is not what is actually in their hearts. Their motivations may not necessarily be the same.

"Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else" (Galatians 6:4). Part of the goal of a counselor is getting the people to examine their own attitudes. This is when the counselor simply guides them to look at themselves, at their attitudes, their actions, their responses, and to measure them on the basis of what the Word of God says.

People must recover themselves out of the snare of the devil. I cannot recover anybody out of the snare of the devil, and neither can you. All we can do is loose the power of Jesus, and Jesus then releases them from the snare. It is important for counselors to remember that we are just tools used by the Lord, anointed of God, to do the work He called us to do. We do nothing by ourselves. As we guide these people to the throne room of God and they acknowledge their sin before Him, all we do is speak the name of Jesus. His name loosens the ministry of the Holy Spirit of God, and then God ministers to the people.

When the work of the Holy Spirit is done, “Then he can take pride in himself.” As we help the people test their own actions, they begin to see with new understanding and recognize what is really going on. This form of counseling is called “deliverance counseling.” The counselor puts his hand on a person, and prays; and God shows that person everything. When he asks God’s forgiveness, he begins to see the whole picture and the pieces start falling into place. He is delivered, and “he can take pride in himself without comparing himself to somebody else.”

Getting out of the snare of the devil calls for a time of rejoicing, a time to be proud. Proud of God, proud of His love and mercy, and the work of the Holy Spirit. It is not a fleshly pride which leads to the pit. This is an exciting time of rejoicing and being “proud” to know that God is doing a wonderful work in that person. He does not have to look at anyone else to measure up to because his worthiness is not dependent on how others respond. He begins to see himself as God sees him, and he can be proud of what God is doing in his life (Philip. 2:12-13). This is the greatest joy a counselor can experience, and the excitement of the rejoicing is a shared reward.

There is a relief in not having to compare ourselves with somebody else. This is one of the major problems with people, and that is why they look for help in counseling. They have tried to meet somebody else’s expectations, and when they could not, they believed they were failures. They were probably told repeatedly that they were failures, and over the years it was reinforced to such a degree that they became a total mess. Thank God He can free total messes! He gives us a sound mind. We become well balanced, disciplined, healthy sons and daughters of the living God.

When people get a glimpse of God’s great love, they begin to understand that Jesus bore our grief, our sickness, disease, maladies, our sorrows, guilt, pain, hurt, fears, doubts, confusion, depression, unworthiness, loneliness, and despair. They are all gone, and we are new creatures in Christ Jesus, free from the snares of the devil.

Verse 5 tells us, “For each one should carry his own load.” A counselor is like a tug boat which comes up beside a ship in the harbor and guides it in. If that boat decides to get all the burners blasting and go back out to sea, the counselor must cut the tie. Otherwise he will be pulled out to sea as well. The counselor’s job is in the harbor, not out in the sea. He must stay on the Rock, the Lord Jesus Christ, and throw a life-line to try and pull them back in.

The counselor intercedes, and bridges the gap for the people. He guides them in the way to go according to the Word of God. But the people must do it themselves. The counselor cannot do it for them. Each one must carry his own load. God has given every person a free will, and each one of us is accountable and responsible to Him.

God gave us a free will as a blessing, but after the fall of man, the free will got distorted. That is why our will has to be renewed to line up with the Word of God. It is the responsibility of the counselee to respond to God’s Word, and no devil can violate a Christian’s will to the point where they cannot make a choice. An unbeliever is at the beck and call of the devil, but a child of God, born of the Spirit of God, has the freedom to make his choice.

Ephesians 4:26-27 says, “Be angry but do not sin. Do not let the sun go down upon your wrath. Neither give a place or an opportunity.” (In Greek it means a “home” for the devil.) In

other words, our attitudes must line up with the Word of God, and the sooner the better so the devil does not get a toe-hold in our lives. With God's life and power flowing through us, there is nothing in hell that can stop us from making a proper, godly decision on the basis of God's Word if we want help.

When people let the devil run rough-shod over them by refusing to do what God says, they are not only destroying themselves, but it will destroy others around them unless they protect themselves by the Spirit of God. That is why a counselor must keep himself constantly in the Spirit of God, refusing to allow his attitudes towards the people get out of line with God. Whatever is influencing them is sure to work on the counselor to try and get him out of line with the Word of God.

A counselor's responsibility is to intercede, to guide and help people work through their problems. It is very important that the counselor does not get emotionally involved and try to carry them along on his shoulders. A counselor cannot help them by carrying them, making excuses for them, or by taking the responsibility for them. This will not help them. It will only make the problem worse. I have seen families where the children were covered by their parents, excused by their parents, and not taught to take responsibility. They grow up to be leeches on society, claiming that society owes them.

Where there is no repentance, there is no forgiveness. Where there is no humility, there is no mercy. Nobody can carry your load. You cannot carry anybody else's load unless you want to break down.

Verses 7-10: "Do not be deceived; God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."

The Scripture tells us that people get what is coming to them. This is a principle of God. In Proverbs it says that if a man returns evil for good, that the rest of his life he is going to receive evil in his house. What he did will be done to him. That is why it is so important to make people see that it is not the other guy who is out of line. If they are having problems, they are the ones who are out of line.

If I am walking in the Spirit of God, by the Spirit of God, I would not have a problem. Even if the rest of the world was caving in around me, I would have peace. I would still have my joy. That is one measure I know when I am walking with God. I have my peace and I have my joy. When I do not have my peace and joy, I am not in the right place with God, and something is out of line in my life.

A counselor must be bold enough to speak the truth in love so the people can grow up. Tell them to quit being babies. God's plan for babies is for them to grow up and mature, not stay babies. God wants His people to grow up into maturity both physically as well as spiritually, mentally, and emotionally. Everyone loves babies, but we cannot carry on a communication with

them until they grow up. It is God's desire that in the Spirit, we grow up into full maturity in the Lord Jesus Christ so we can communicate with our Father, and He with us. We were created for fellowship with God. Part of the counselor's job is to help people to grow.

In Hebrews 12 we see that discipline is a part of God's plan in caring for His people. A part of guiding people is showing them the blessings that go with obedience, and the cursings that go with disobedience. When they see they have a choice, they will either receive it or reject it. A counselor is not responsible for the way the people respond to the counsel. He is responsible only for the counsel they share.

People with a chip on their shoulder will invariably take things the wrong way, or twist your words around to suit them. This can be frustrating unless a counselor understands why they react in this way. But if they will not respond and line up with God's Word, you cannot make excuses for them, and you cannot make decisions for them. They must make their own.

Hebrews 12:12-15 says: "Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. Make level paths for your feet so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed. Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord."

Jesus told us in God's Word that not everybody who calls to Him, "Lord, Lord," is going to enter into the kingdom of heaven. It will be those who do the will of Him who sent Jesus. If we do not follow Jesus, but continue in a willful state of knowing, continued sin, according to Hebrews 10:26, "There remains no more sacrifice for sin for us and we are to point this out to people, those who are stubborn and rebellious." Rebellion is equated with witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry.

As a counselor, you are instructed to strengthen the feeble arms and weak knees. You are to be available to help people, but you cannot walk for them. Although you give your support and help, they do not keep hanging onto you. The people must give their loads to God; He's the one who carries them.

You may want to be a counselor because you love God, you love His people, and you want to help them. You do not have to be a professional counselor to help people. But it is important that you do not allow yourself to get depleted of your strength and energy, and start carrying their burdens. There is such a thing as transference of spirits, and this must be avoided.

God loved us so much He got involved with us. He sent His son, our Lord Jesus, to give His life for us. He got involved. The Word tells us to love one another, give our lives for one another. When Jesus laid down His life, He did it on His own terms, not on any man's terms. We counselors are to give our lives too, and on our terms, based upon our love for God. When we do, God's perfect love is able to flow. God reached down to us right where we are, but He did not become sinful like we were. He was like us in every way except that He did not give in to our shortcomings. He went through everything we go through, but He did not give in to any of it. The reason? So we could be strong. Thank you, Jesus. That is what being a counselor is all about.

THE COUNSELOR AS A TEACHER

The third aspect of a counselor is that of a teacher, and in order to help people, he must know the Word of God. He can teach only what he knows. So a counselor must know the Word well enough to put it into words easy enough for an unbeliever to understand. The power is in the Spirit behind the Word of God, and that is what convicts people's hearts. That is what changes lives, that is what heals people, emotionally and physically.

Many people can quote the Bible, but unless the Spirit of God is flowing through them as they speak, there is no life in their words. That is the difference. It is not having a form. The key is having the source.

A counselor may be assured that all his needs are met by the Lord Jesus. Knowing that, he is free to help other people. One of the greatest ways to be helped yourself is to start ministering to others. It is amazing how God will speak through you as you minister to somebody else, something that is exactly what you need to hear yourself. As we are about God's business helping others, He takes care of us. As we are blessing other people, God is blessing us.

There is an important lesson that a counselor must communicate to the people. The Spirit of God draws. He never knocks anybody over the head and commands them. He woos us. He loves us. He has told us that, "I have come that you might have life and have it abundantly." He warned us about the enemy who is trying to steal from us, but if we want the love of God, and the life of God, there is nothing that can stop it from coming to us. It is provided through Jesus, and we are drawn to the Lord by His Spirit. Nobody can come to God on their own. That is why God came for us, and He now draws us to Himself. He has provided health, joy, and peace, all of these good things if we will go to Him as a son or daughter.

A counselor must share what God has for His people. It does not matter what the problem is. God has a promise to meet that need. It doesn't matter what the situation is. God has a promise to meet that need. It all begins with accepting Jesus as Lord and Savior. At this point, a person becomes a son or daughter of the living God, and He makes provision for us.

When the love of God flows through your heart, it will be communicated to other people, and they will be drawn to you. Many times they may not know why, and may actually wonder about it. As God's love goes out to them, the Spirit of God begins to minister to their hearts, and freedom comes as they receive the Lord. That is how God works. He draws people. Remember, however, that God's love will not violate anyone's free will, and the freedom to choose. A counselor simply lays out before the people what the decisions are, and what the consequences of those decisions would be.

Luke 4:18-19 says: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

In reading this scripture, we see that one of the prime requirements for a counselor is that the Spirit of the Lord be upon him, on him, and in him. When you are filled with the Holy Spirit, and God gives you a new tongue to speak to Him in perfect prayer, the Spirit of God resides within you. Sometimes the anointing will come down as you minister the Word, or you are praying for someone, and everyone feels it. Without the anointing, those words are just plain words. Anyone who is filled with the Holy Spirit has the capability to be anointed of God, to speak the Word of God. That anointing will come down to touch people and change their lives.

In this scripture, we note there is anointing to preach good news to the poor. There is another anointing for healing. There are different types of anointings, and whatever we are doing will be blessed with the right anointing. It is the Holy Spirit of God that does the work, but He uses us with His anointing to minister to those who need help.

A counselor tells the people about freedom in Jesus. “He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners.” Most people do not even realize they are captives. Captives to the devil. People are captives to their own fears, their own doubts, to their own insecurities. They may be captive to other people who are dictating how to run their lives. These are all prisoners who need the freedom, the joy, the love and peace that God has provided for them.

A counselor will find there are a lot of people who have Jesus in their hearts, but they are still captives because they have not let go of areas in their lives to let Jesus bring freedom. Fear, worry, and insecurity all keep people captive, and need deliverance. A counselor proclaims freedom for prisoners, recovery of sight for the blind. This means both physically and spiritually. Sometimes outside pressures may cause oppression, and a counselor teaches them how to get freedom from that too.

It is not necessary for the counselor to know the Bible forward and backward in order to teach people. All you need is one promise of God in any certain given area and you can blow the devil out of the water. One promise can set a person free. If a person has loneliness problems, you can give them one promise of the Lord: “Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:20). That is all they need. If God says He is there, then He is there. If that person receives the promise, he can say, “I am not lonely any more. God is with me, and I will not go anywhere without Him.” We know that God is not a liar, His Word is forever settled in heaven, and we can trust Him to keep His promises.

Numbers 23:19 says, “God is not a man that he should lie, nor a son of man that he should repent or change his mind. Has he not said it and will he not do it? Has he not promised and will He not fulfill?” God does not repent nor change His mind. When God says something, He means just what He says. Sometimes people will tell you, “God told me this, and God told me that.” One moment He said one thing, and the next moment, He said something different regarding the same situation. God is not double-minded. He is not unstable. People who do this think they are hearing from God, when it is their own thoughts, and they should be taught that God means what He says, and He will not vary from His Word.

God will deliver exactly what He promised, but if we do not believe it, we will not receive it. Believing starts with opening one's heart and considering. That is the beginning of faith, and thank God, He is the one who opens a person's heart so they can even consider it. The next step is to simply say, "Yes, I believe it." Then God can do His part in delivering His promise.

A counselor must know and understand that God will do exactly what He says He will do. A counselor's role is to find those promises of God and then communicate them to the people who have those particular needs. If the people need physical healing, it will not do much good to get into Genesis where it goes into all the genealogies. That would help if a woman was having difficulty having a child. It would minister life to her. But if a person needs a physical healing, he needs to hear a promise like, "Surely he has borne our griefs (talking about Jesus)." The word, "grief," in the Hebrew means sickness, disease, and malady. He took it to the cross so we would not have to suffer. This is our right and privilege in Jesus Christ our Lord.

When you know deep in your heart that Jesus not only saved you from eternal death, giving you eternal life, but He also gave you health right now, you have confidence that you do not have to bear any sickness in your body. God's people "are destroyed from lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6), and if a counselor does not know this promise, he cannot walk in it; he cannot guide the people nor teach them this wonderful promise that is in God's Word.

In II Corinthians 1:18-20, we read: "But as surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not 'yes' and 'no.' For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by me and Silas and Timothy, was not 'yes' and 'no,' but in Him it has been, 'yes.' For no matter how many promises God has made, they are 'yes' in Christ." This tells us that all the promises of God are "Yes." He will not hold back anything from us because He has made provision for it all: spiritually, mentally, emotionally, physically, financially, whatever the need. In Jesus, it is all "Yes." A counselor must know this in his heart.

What has happened in the past is past when a person repents and begins to walk with Jesus. The slate is washed clean by His precious blood. It does not matter what the sin is. If you ask God's forgiveness, it's behind you. True repentance means a changed life, but there will be times when you will make a mistake. When that happens, it should not be taken lightly because this is serious business. God will forgive us because He loves us and He never gets tired of forgiving; and Jesus ever lives before the throne interceding for His people.

I do not kill my kids because they make a mistake, but if they run out in front of a car when they are told not to, they could get killed. Sin is the same way. It will lead to death if people continue to walk in it. When they begin to realize how great the love of God is towards His people and what a precious price was paid for each one of us with the blood of Jesus, to free us from the bondage of sin, people will find it easier to willingly give up sin in their lives.

A counselor's role is to communicate this to the people and teach them that God loves them. He wants to forgive them and He wants to help them. Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you, go and sin no more" (John 8:11). This woman had the ability to stop her sin. God will never tell people something if they do not have the ability to change, but when we turn to Him, He gives us that ability. Philippians 2:13 tells us God is the one who works in us causing us both to will (or to

desire) and then gives us the ability to do what is pleasing to Him. He gives us the desire and the ability to change.

Someone gave a testimony about getting off the soap operas. Watching all that garbage pollutes the mind. As soon as this woman purposed in her heart to stop, acknowledging it as sin, God gave her the ability to do so. The ability went into effect when she turned her back on it and said, "I do not want it any more. I am going to walk away from it." The ability does not come when you are flirting with the devil, one foot in the world and one foot in heaven, wanting the best of both. The Bible says this is being double-minded, and a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.

II Corinthians 1:20 continues, "And so through him the 'Amen' is spoken by us to the glory of God." How wonderful! All we have to do day by day is say "Amen." It means, "Yea, yea, it shall be so." What God has said, shall be so. It is done. Remember the Counselor's prayer in Psalm 20? He gives the Word of God, steps back, and watches what God does, rejoicing at the changes in that person's life. He does not carry the burdens and problems. He rejoices! When Jesus was on the earth, He often quoted Old Testament scriptures, making the Word of God relevant for His day. He spoke it, and acted on it, and it will work for us today. We are born again of the Spirit of God; we have the Spirit of God, bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, spirit of His Spirit in Jesus. We speak the Word of God, and it comes alive today just like it did when Jesus was here.

Hebrews 4:12 tells us that the Word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword, cutting between the spirit, the mind and the body, and it sorts out the thoughts and intentions of the heart. It is alive! Thank you, Jesus.

Many times, speaking the truth in love causes a sorting out. A counselor must speak the truth in love even though it may cut. The truth discerns the thoughts and intentions of the heart, the motivation. And sometimes that hurts. It cuts the sin, the heart, the mind. It may be that people are told things they do not want to hear. Usually, the flesh gets in the way, and tries to deny the truth. You may hear comments like, "I don't want to hear that, I do not need that," or "That's talking about such and such. It doesn't apply to me."

Isaiah 61 tells us: "The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God."

There are two sides to this. People who do not receive the favor of the Lord in Jesus are going to receive the vengeance of the Lord. Jesus did not come to condemn people or to destroy them. He came to save them, but if people do not move towards the love of God in Jesus, they lose out. A good illustration is to picture ourselves as drowning. The Lord throws out a life preserver to us, and if we grab it, we live. If we do not grab it, we drown.

God does not want anybody to be lost. That is why He sent Jesus. He is God's life provision, His love provision. But people condemn themselves because they do not believe on the

Lord Jesus Christ. We hear, “How do you know that is true?” God’s love for people is not affected by their doubting, and He will not force anybody into anything. It is up to the individual to make up his mind to believe God’s Word and receive it. When people are right with God, they have nothing to fear.

The last part of Isaiah 61:2 says, “To comfort all who mourn.” A counselor may be called on to do a lot of comforting in times of mourning, especially when people have done something wrong. To be truly repentant of wrong doing requires a mourning for the sin. The counselor cannot tell them it is all right and they can continue in their sin. That is not comfort, and it will not help them. True comfort is to say, “It can happen to any of us, but you must ask God to forgive you right now.” And when they do so on the basis of God’s Word and promise in I John 1:9 they can know with certainty that, “If we are faithful to acknowledge our sin to God, God is faithful to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

When the sin is acknowledge, forgiveness is asked and received, and the cleansing takes place, the mourning stops, and comfort floods the heart. A counselor has the privilege of God’s promises to the people knowing that God backs His Word. He does exactly what He says.

Isaiah 61:3 says, “... and provide for those who grieve in Zion, to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.” A person in despair has lost all hope, feeling everything is lost and there is nothing to live for. But God says He will turn that around so that person will praise Him. Psalm 42 says, “Why art thou cast down, O my soul? Hope thou in God, for I will yet praise Him.” Only God can take a hopeless situation that causes great despair, and turn it around, and make it a time of praise.

Going on with Isaiah 61:3, we read, “They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of His splendor.” Is it not wonderful to be a “planting of the Lord?” When we look at ourselves as “a display of His splendor,” it will change our attitudes and our lives.

Verse 4 goes on: “They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated.” I believe this applies to people and their lives--devastated people, devastated lives. I have seen countless homes healed and restored that were devastated. People whose lives were devastated began praising God, rejoicing and going strong for the Lord when the Holy Spirit did the healing work. They did not even seem like the same people.

James 1:5-8 reads: “If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God who gives generously to all without finding fault and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.”

A counselor must understand that God will give the wisdom that is necessary for the given situation. God will also give wisdom to the person who needs counsel. One of the finest things a counselor has is the privilege of conveying to people that God will give them the wisdom needed in the particular situation they find themselves in. They can be assured that they can be overcomers,

and that God's perfect will is accomplished in their lives. God's word promises it. Lacking wisdom does not mean a person is stupid. It simply means he does not know what to do in a particular situation. Other people are quick to give their opinions, advice, etc., but only God's wisdom is perfect. God will not hold it back, but will give it generously.

God will give wisdom according to His promise, but we must wait long enough to get the answer. Daniel approached God (Daniel 10), and as he waited on God, he was diligent. He did not leave until he got the answer. As you read Daniel 10, you will see his was not a thirty second prayer. Notice that the angel came along twenty-one days later with the answer. The angel said, "I was sent the moment you diligently purposed in your heart and disciplined yourself before God to get the answer." I believe many people do not get their answers because they are not diligently seeking.

It took three weeks for that angel to get through with the answer to Daniel. There was nothing wrong with the angel. He was not an unfaithful servant. But he had to fight the spiritual warfare, with principalities in the air, spirits of the air. God had to send Michael, the archangel to do war with that principality so that Gabriel could get to Daniel. It was all because Daniel had purposed in his heart that he had the answer. It enabled the work of God to happen. If he had been wishy-washy, unstable, double-minded, he never would have received the answer. Counselors must help people see that.

You will hear people say, "God, why is it taking so long?" "Maybe it's not true." If this is their attitude, God cannot do the work. Sometimes people get their own ideas in the way, and a counselor must help them sort out what is their will, and what is God's will. We see results if we hang on, act on God's promise, continue in it, speak it, live it, breathe it. And then we will see the victory.

Another reason people do not receive their answers from God is because it is not His will. "God, I asked for that purple house on the hill, and I got the orange one at the bottom. You let me down, God. I will never believe you again." All along, it was God's will that they have the orange house at the bottom of the hill. A lot of things are just plain foolishness that people get in their heads that they think they want, and it is not God's best. They did not know that in the next year, the purple house on the hill would slide down. God sees down the road. When we ask for God's perfect will to be done, His perfect best for our lives, and we help people to do the same, then we are tuned in to God (Prov. 3:5-6).

What is God's will? We know that God's will is that everybody be saved, that everybody is filled with the Holy Spirit, and speaking in tongues. It is God's will that everybody is healed in their minds and in their bodies, and that they prosper in their finances with every need met so abundantly that they are able to give to others. It is God's will that marriages work, that people are forgiven. However, without repentance there is no forgiveness, so God gives people the ability to ask His forgiveness.

In II Timothy 2 we see that a very important quality of a counselor is his attitude. Verse 24 tells us that the Lord's servant (or counselor) must not quarrel. There are people who want to argue, but a counselor cannot get involved in a quarrel. Sometimes you will just have to say,

“Friend, I’m not going to argue with you. If you want to do it your way, go ahead.” That may sound hard, especially when you know they are driving off a cliff. But the Spirit of the Lord does not fight with anybody. God gave people a free will to make their own decisions, and they reap the consequences. All a counselor does is present the Word of God and teach the principles, but the final choice remains with each individual.

The rest of verse 24 says: “. . . instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful.” There are people who try to pound the Bible over people, but they are not doing God a service. They are not helping anybody because they are zealously wrong in their approach. That only causes people to rebel, and become more determined than ever to go their own way. When a counselor is kind, able, and willing to teach, he is not resentful when people do not like what he is telling them. If there is not mercy, and sorrow in your heart, if your heart is not breaking when people go over the cliff, there is something wrong with your attitude.

As a counselor, you do not carry the responsibility for the people’s decision, although you feel sorrow when you see them choose the wrong way. God is grieved every time somebody dies without knowing Jesus as Lord and Savior, because He does not want them to die without life in Him. But God does not go to pieces over it. He gave people a choice. He provided the life and the way, but it is still the individual’s choice.

Verse 25: “Those who oppose him he must gently instruct.” When a counselor speaks the Word of God, he will find there are people who will not like him. They will oppose the counselor, because they do not know any better. You must pray, “Father, forgive them because they do not know what they are doing.” These people are actually opposing themselves, not the counselor. They do not want to yield to what is true, so they end up hurting themselves. This is when a counselor cannot be thin-skinned, taking easy offense. I advise counselors to be like a tortoise with a thick, heavy shell on the outside, but gentle and tender on the inside. We never want to lose that gentle tender heart, and become callused; but on the other hand, we cannot get offended.

There is a difference here between people who do not want a counselor’s help even when their lives are falling down around them, and those who say they want help, but want it in the way it suits them. I have seen husband/wife fights when one or the other calls for help. People have rushed into those situations, and when the husband and wife reconciled, they ganged up on the counselor accusing him of meddling in their business. They were hollering and scratching each other’s eyes out, and they turned on the one who tried to help. Proverbs 26:17 says “He who meddles in another man’s strife takes a dog by the ears.”

There is a line between sticking your nose into somebody else’s business, and coming to their aid with the Word when it is really wanted and followed. It takes the wisdom of God to know when to step in and when to stay out.

Verse 25 goes on, “. . . in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth.” Verse 26: “And that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.”

A counselor's responsibility is to lead the people to Jesus through God's Word, praying that the love of God will melt their hearts. I have seen people hardened in unforgiveness, bitterness, and resentment whose hearts melted like butter when they stood before Jesus. However, this is a choice that can be made only by the people themselves. You cannot do it for them. You can show them the blessings and the cursings, and tell them to choose life, but if they choose death, you must let them go. This is where your faith goes into action as you pray, "God, grant them repentance."

Psalm 18:25-27 tells us that "To the faithful you show yourself faithful, to the blameless you show yourself blameless, to the pure you show yourself pure, but to the crooked you show yourself shrewd. You save the humble but bring low those whose eyes are haughty. The Lord has rewarded me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in His sight." When a person is faithful to God, He will be faithful in turn. But God goes one step further. He is faithful to us even when we are not. He is always waiting for us to come back to Him, and He is always ready to forgive when we repent. He forgives and cleanses, and it is gone forever.

Galatians 6 tells us that we reap what we sow. If you sow love to people, you will be loved in return. If you sow hatred towards people, you will be hated. The devil knows that if he can get somebody into a state of unforgiveness, it opens the door to hatred, and misery. The Bible tells us this is the reason prayers are not answered. God cannot move when there is unforgiveness in the hearts of people.

God wants the best for His people, and He never asks us to do something we are not able to do. He gives us the ability to do that which is pleasing to Him (Philippians 2:13) and if we believe otherwise, we are deceived. Philippians 4:13 says we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. There are people who may believe they cannot do what God requires of them, and if that should come up, there are three reasons which should be checked:

1. The people are operating out of themselves.
2. They are operating out of what somebody else has told them about themselves.
3. They are listening to the devil.

Deuteronomy 30:11 says: "Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach." With men, things may be impossible, but with God all things are possible. When people rely on their own ability, their own wisdom, their own strength, they will fail. They have that for so many years, they begin to believe they are failures. They believe they cannot stop carousing, drinking, smoking, etc. They cannot stop seeing themselves as failures, and that is why they keep failing. But this scripture says that with Jesus, they can do it. It is not beyond their reach.

Verse 12: "It is not up in heaven, so that you have to ask, Who will ascend into heaven to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?"

Verse 13: "Nor is it beyond the sea, so that you have to ask, Who will cross the sea to get it and proclaim it to us so that we may obey it?"

Verse 14: “No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so that you may obey it.”

Romans 10 says the exact same thing. When we know the Word, it is in our mouth, in our hearts, and we obey it. If we confess with our mouths that Jesus Christ is Lord, and we believe in our hearts that He is risen from the dead, we will be saved. It is just that simple, and it has been provided by God for us. Believe it!

Verse 15: “See, I set before you today life and prosperity.” My definition for prosperity is knowing God. If you know God, you have everything. There are over seven thousand promises in the Bible, and they are all there for us. There is a promise for every need.

God is the Master counselor, and He presents the alternatives in His Word. He provides life and prosperity, with blessings which follow that choice. A counselor simply presents the promise for the need of the people: life and prosperity on the one hand; death and destruction on the other.

Verse 16: “For I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep his commands, decrees, and laws; then you will live and increase, that the Lord your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess.

Verse 17: “But if your heart turns away and you are not obedient, and if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed.”

People who do not choose God destroy themselves. Jesus did not come to condemn. He came to save. God does not take pleasure in anybody dying without Him. God takes no pleasure in people falling flat on their faces because of their prideful decisions. He does not rejoice in their failures, and He tells us not to rejoice when somebody fails. This is the mark between a true counselor and a false one. A false counselor delights in seeing people fail, not listening to his counsel. A true counselor is grieved when they fail, but he does not go to pieces. A false counselor gets puffed up, saying, “Well, they did not listen to me, and this is what happens.” Well, “Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall, for there is no temptation that has befallen people, but that which is common to everyone” (I Corinthians 10:12-13).

Verse 18: “I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live long in the land you are crossing.

Verse 19: “This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessings and cursings. Now choose life so that you and your children may live and that you may love the Lord your God, listen to His voice, and hold fast to Him. For the Lord is your life and He will give you many years in the land He swore to give to your fathers.”

God does not make the choice for people. He cannot. Each one must make his own choice. The devil will violate people’s wills, but God does not. When God says, “Choose life,” there is power, life-giving power in those words. He gives us the faith to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Romans 10:17). A counselor presents

the Word of God to the people, guiding and leading them towards a proper choice, so he may continue to teach them God's principles.

A person does not need to know everything that is in the Bible to be a counselor. It is important, however, to understand that there is a promise of God for every need that anybody will ever have, and all it takes is to apply that one promise for a given situation and use it. If a person needs a physical healing, for example, he must stand on the promise in Isaiah 53:5-6 that says, "Surely he (Jesus) has borne our grieves . . ." This means that Jesus took on himself the sickness, diseases, and maladies, at the cross. If He bore them for us, we do not have to bear them.

Once the people admit they have a problem, God can begin to do the work. That is the first step. The Bible tells us that when we pray, we are to believe we have received it, and we will see it. It may be soon, it may be a few weeks, a few months, or even a few years, but we will see it. I believe in agreement because God's Word says one can put a thousand to flight, and two can put ten thousand to flight (Deut. 32:30). A counselor and the people should stand in agreement on the promise they are applying to the problem.

Sometimes people give up before the answer comes, and they must learn to stick with it. They may not feel any different after the prayer and agreement on the Word, so they feel they did not receive anything. People must be taught that they cannot go by their feelings. It takes faith in God's promises. Mark 11:24 tells us, "When you pray, believe you receive, and you shall have them."

There are people who know that God can do anything, but they do not know how to tap into God to receive it. Consequently, if they do not see the results immediately, they have a tendency to think that nothing happened. This is apparent when people do not know the Word of God, so a counselor must teach them that, "When you pray, believe you have received" (Mark 11:24). When you pray over the people, tell them, "Right now, believe you have received." It is scriptural. The results are: "And you shall see it." This is a definite statement, not just a possibility that may happen.

A counselor should quote Hebrews 11:1, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." We may not see the actual results, but faith is the evidence of what we do not see. The word, "evidence," is something that is documented, something that will stand up in court. It is a sure thing. Every promise of God is a sure thing, and we can count on them.

How does a counselor function in the role of a teacher? He presents the problem, shows it clearly, helps the people to identify the problem, then proceeds to teach them from the Word of God. This is why a counselor has to know the Word of God. If you want to help people, if you want to help yourself, you must know the Word of God.

John 14:25-26 tells us: "All this I have spoken while still with you," (Jesus speaking), "but the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, who the Father will send in my name will teach you all things and will remind you of everything that I have said to you."

The work of the Holy Spirit is to teach us, and to remind us of things we have heard. A counselor cannot teach something he has not heard, and the Holy Spirit cannot remind us of something that is not there, so we must hear the Word of God first. In other words, if we do not know something, we cannot be reminded of it. There have been times when a scripture I read years ago came up at just the right time when I needed it. When you are filled with the Holy Spirit, and you are operating by the Spirit of God, He has something to work with if the Word is there.

The three functions of a counselor actually apply to the work of the Holy Spirit: He helps us as an intercessor, He is our guide, and He is a teacher.

There are Christians who are afraid to encourage, or talk to others because they are unsure of themselves in the Word. It may be better for them to keep quiet at this point, but as they continue to grow and learn, the Holy Spirit will be the teacher so that when they do speak, it will be pleasing to God, and it will help others. On the other hand, we often see Christians who quote scriptures out of context, use half verses, and match half of one with another verse from several chapters, etc., etc. This does not help anyone. It is important to remember the Bible must be presented the way it reads.

In Matthew 10, the Lord tells us that He is going to help us out. In verse 16, He says, "I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as snakes and as innocent as doves." This should be a key verse of every counselor. You will quickly learn that everything presented to you is not always the truth. A counselor must know by the Holy Spirit of God how to sort out what is true and what is not true. A wife can tell some amazing things about her husband, and a husband can tell some amazing things about his wife. A shrewd counselor knows he is getting only half the story from one of them, and there is always another half. A good counselor will eventually get the truth out of them, and both will have to repent. He may have to say some things they really do not want to hear, but it must be said in love and with concern for their welfare.

The scripture continues: "But be on your guard against men; they will hand you over to the local councils and flog you in their synagogues. On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles. But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it."

This is happening today in other countries, and even in some homes in America. There are people who do not want to hear about Jesus, or about the Spirit of God. But the Word of God tells us not to worry about what to say or how to say it. When that time comes, the Holy Spirit will tell us exactly what to do. We should take great delight that God is going to help us. He continually helps us to be more effective in the ministry of the Spirit of God, and He will give us the words to speak. The Bible says, "May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord" (Psalm 19:14). He will give us the right words to say in just the right way.

There may be times when you will speak something out in the Spirit of God, and then feel condemned for days afterward. Later, you may learn that the person was set free by the Spirit of God by what you said. The devil will try to condemn you until you start condemning yourself to make you feel defeated and discouraged. We must remember that verse 20 says, "For it will not be

you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.” It may be your voice saying the words, but it will be the Holy Spirit of God giving you the words.

A counselor must understand spiritual principles before he can convey them to somebody else. If you are afraid that what you say will not be right, then you do not understand a spiritual principle. When you pray, ask the Lord to give you right the words, you will get the right words because they are coming from God. If you are afraid to speak them, then you are not believing what the Word of God says, that the Holy Spirit of God will give you the right words to speak at just the right time to help that person. I personally get much encouragement from the statement: “For it will not be you speaking. Do not worry about what to say or how to say it.”

We have all been in situations where we try to figure out how to tell someone the right thing to do without offending them. We try to figure out how to communicate something so that it gets through to them effectively. The scripture tells us, however, “Do not even think about that. At that time, you will be given what to say. For it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.” When we ask God to give us the right words, we must trust Him to give us the right words.

In defining the word, “teacher,” I am not referring to the office of a teacher, but that of a brother or sister in the Lord simply communicating the Word of God to somebody else. Let us look at what a teacher does.

In II Timothy 2:15 we read, “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.”

Another version reads: “Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

The first thing a teacher does is study. It is amazing how many of God’s dear, precious, loving people do not know the Word of God, and yet they act like teachers with authority. There is only one way to learn anything, and become a teacher, and that is to study. I studied about healing for years before I ever got to the point where I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that everybody I laid hands on had a potential to be healed. I say potential, because many times I have seen the healing anointing go in one side of people and right out the other. They did not hold it.

Jesus said, “Let them that have ears to hear, let them hear” (Matt. 13:9; etc.). If people really want to search the Word with an honest, open heart, they will take the time to study to see what God really says. It is the only way we can tell others what His Word says.

When you begin to study, it is not necessary to start in Genesis. In counseling people, you begin where their need is. If they do not know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, that is where you begin. You lead them to the Lord and help them become born again. If they are born again and have a physical problem, you start sharing God’s answer to physical problems. The same applies with fear or worry. You start with God’s promises concerning those problems and show them how to deal with them. It is important for every counselor to study and learn the spiritual principles in the Word of God. Many people know dozens of facts about the Bible, but they do not know the

principles that give life to people. It is important to study the right things in the word of God that will help in your ministry.

Most of us have had somebody come to us with a need and we did not know what to tell them. And that made us feel ashamed. It is an embarrassing situation to be in. If that happens again, do not be ashamed for long. Find out the answer. It is better to say, "I do not know, but I will find out," than to try and give them an answer that will cause more harm than good. A counselor who does this humbly and with an open heart is a growing person, one who will really help people.

A good teacher stirs up the people to get their curiosity going so they start looking. He does not always drop the answers in their laps, but encourages them to search the Word for themselves. Psalm 51:12-13 says: "Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit to sustain me." David had just committed adultery with Bathsheba, lied about the whole thing and then tried to cover it up by having her husband, Uriah, killed. After doing all this, he went before God saying, "Help me. Cleanse me." He starts out with, "Have mercy on me, O God."

When a life is out of line with God, there is no joy. If I ever lose my joy, I know there is an area in my life that is out of line with God. It happens to God's people, and when people start coming to you, you can tell immediately if they have opened up a door somewhere to let the devil run rough-shod. This is what David did. But there is hope for all of us because God forgives us.

David asked for a "willing spirit." This is an obedient spirit, one that says, "God, I am going to do what you say, no matter what." That kind of attitude will sustain you. It will give you ability to stand and overcome in the Lord regardless of what is coming against you.

David's heart had been right with God, but he lost the joy when he got out of line with God. This is what happens in just about every person who goes to a counselor. Somewhere along the line, they got their life out of line with God, and they are now suffering the consequences. The counselor's part is to pray, and guide them back to the Lord so they can get forgiveness. Then, in verse 13: "I will teach your ways, and sinners will turn back to you." In other words, "Lord, get me back in a right place, then I will teach transgressors (just like me) your ways."

When you have learned God's ways, when you have learned about His forgiveness, His mercy, and His love, then you can teach somebody else, and help them. Then they can go on and teach someone else!

I believe children should be raised in the book of Proverbs. In Proverbs 1:2, we find that the reason is, "for attaining wisdom and discipline; for understanding words of insight."

Verse 3: "For acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair;

Verse 4: "For giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young.

Verse 5: "Let the wise listen and add to their learning and let the discerning get guidance.

Verse 6: “For understanding proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise.”

Through Proverbs, God’s people can gain insight into life. We can learn what to do in various situations, and what not to do; how to spot people who are not out for your good; how to spot attitudes within yourself that are not for your good.

Verse 7: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.”

One of the finest counseling tools available to you is the Book of Proverbs. In it you can find God’s wisdom in how to deal with just about any situation. You will see that a counselor’s primary role is to put forth God’s counsel, or His Word, to show people what God says. Then leave it. They must make the decision whether they will follow it or not. We simply present the Word of God, and the people are free to respond accordingly.

People may not always like what you say because it may not be what they want to hear. In I Kings 22:4-9 you can read about an incident where this happened. False prophets gave bad advice to the king, and they did not want to listen to the true prophet of God because he did not please the people. They did not listen to him, and sure enough, his prophecy came true. The people died because they did not accept what they did not want to hear. The same thing happens today. When people ignore God’s Word, the end result is death. It may not be a physical death, but it surely will be a spiritual death.

Isaiah 11:2-3 is excellent for counselors: “And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, a spirit of wisdom and understanding. The spirit of counsel and might; the spirit of knowledge and the reverential and obedient fear of the Lord. And he shall make him of quick understanding and his delight shall be in the reverential and obedient fear of the Lord, and he shall not judge by the sight of his eye; neither decide by the hearing of his ears.” (Amplified Version).

These are the qualities of a counselor: One who is ingrained with the Word of God, one who studies it and knows what the Word of God says. When somebody comes to him with a half-truth from the Word of God, he picked it up right away and discerned what is true and what is false.

Sometimes people come forth with something from the Word of God, but is not spoken in the right spirit. Remember the devil came to Jesus with the Word of God, but it was a half-truth. Jesus immediately discerned it and said, “Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.” We do not go out to the top of a building and jump off, expecting God’s angels to catch us. That is presumption. However, if we slip while doing our job, and start to fall, we can expect angels to catch us.

A neighbor fell off his ladder and as he was crashing towards the ground, something caught him. It was a fifteen foot fall, and he did not break a bone in his body. My daughter ran right through a patio door. When she hit that door, it flew about seven or eight feet in the air straight up, and hit the ground like a feather. She did not have one bump on her. There is only one explanation for both instances. God’s angels took charge over both of them. That is what God’s Word promises us.

My daughter learned a lesson that day and she does not run through doors like that any more. Unfortunately, many people do not learn through one experience, but do the same thing over and over again. They do not listen to the Word of God, they do not want to do what He says, and they keep batting their heads against the wall, wondering why their lives are in a mess. It would be a lot easier if they just got smart.

When my daughter was little, I disciplined her for misbehaving. I got tired of it, but I loved her enough to keep disciplining her. Finally, one day she told her mother, “Mom, I must be getting really smart.” Diana loved her and said, “What do you mean?” She said, “I haven’t been spanked for a long time!” Each time I disciplined her I would say, “Pumpkin, why don’t you get smart? If you quit doing these things, I would not have to discipline you.” And she was getting smart. Discipline only comes to the disobedient. When you get smart, you do not need to be disciplined. That is God’s ideal.

When we speak God’s Word, “The spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might,” they are not just idle words. There is power behind those words. They will change people’s lives if they yield to them, and do what His Word says.

Verse 3 says, “And he shall not judge by the sight of his eyes, neither decide by the hearing of his ears.” This is something that a counselor will learn to develop. Not everything you’ll hear will be true. And you cannot judge a situation by what so and so says about it. Jesus said, “Judge righteous judgment, not by the appearance of things” (John 7:24).

Verse 4: “But with righteousness and justice shall he judge the poor and decide with fairness for the meek and the poor and the downtrodden of the earth, and he shall smite the earth and the oppressor with the rod of his mouth and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked.”

Although this is referring to Jesus, John 14:12 tells us, “To them that believe, the works I do, you will do.” Therefore, we can develop and cultivate wisdom, understanding, and discernment for various situations that we deal with as we stand upon God’s Word and His principles.

GETTING TO KNOW THE COUNSELEE

There are two ways to help people through counseling: the people's way, and God's way. The hard way is to end up carrying the problems of the people, which becomes a burden. The easy way is to allow God to take the problems, and the counselor is then free to rejoice while watching the people being set free by the Spirit of God.

Ephesians 2:10 talks about us being God's workmanship. We are created by Him for a purpose, and that is to do good works. Many people think that good works are doing nice things for people, giving a lot to charities, always being helpful to those who are needy. Actually, none of these are good works unless God directs you to do them. The only good works in the eyes of the Lord are those that proceed from faith in Jesus because we know God loves us, and we now want to love God and His people. That is when we give to people in need, to ministries, and encourage others to help.

A counselor who is working out a personal desire to help people has the wrong motive. The desire to help people should be motivated because of God's love for us. We desire to love people because God loves us. We desire to help people because of God's love for us.

In Matthew 25, Jesus said, "If you have done it to the least of these you have done it to me. You visited the people in prison, you prayed for the sick, you helped the poor. As you did it to the least of these (the people), you did it to me." Good works in God's eyes have nothing to do with ourselves, or any personal satisfaction we may enjoy because we helped someone. Many people will stand before God telling Him about all the good works they did, but unless they were motivated by their love for God, they will all be hay, wood, and stubble.

A good way to test your motives in doing good works is to check your attitude when those you helped forget to thank you. If you are more concerned about their reaction to your help, than to how the Lord sees your good works, you must ask God to forgive you. There may be times when you do something good for people and they turn around and give you the old proverbial kick in the teeth. If you get upset about it, you will know your motive was not in line with God's Word. People will be unappreciative, ungrateful, and unthankful, but if you are doing the good works because you love God, it will not matter. The Lord keeps good records, and He is the rewarded of the faithful.

Galatians 6:9 tells us to "Love them and grow not weary in well-doing, for in due time you shall reap." We will reap the pleasure of seeing the people set free by the Spirit of God. You may deal with some hard-hearted, and hard-headed people, and you may not get to see the need results, but if your motive is right before God and you do the good works because of His love for you, the Word that you sowed in the mighty name of Jesus will bring forth results (Isaiah 55). What is sown in love by the Spirit of God will produce results.

There may be times when people will come to you when you feel unprepared to deal with them. You may be going through something yourself, and feel you just cannot handle someone else's problems along with your own. This is when you pray and ask God to set His love upon you

in an ever increasing, ever flowing manner, that it rises up strong within you. You can come against those strongholds that are trying to torment you from loving those people, and the strongholds that are tormenting them from receiving your love for them. Ask God to release His divine ability in the situation.

Sometimes when you feel you just cannot cope with another person's problem, you may get a surprise when they come to you with a praise report instead of a problem. It may be one instance in a thousand, but it would be well worth it. A good report of God's blessings will make your day. That is why we must not grow weary in well doing. God put that verse in there because He knows we get weary, and we get just plain tired out. But thank God for His encouragement and strength that He gives us when we look to Him (Isaiah 40).

One of the major things a counselor does is help people see things the way God sees them. Then they can start to see themselves as God sees them. There will be times when you may feel they are doing things all wrong because they are either ungodly or stupid. A counselor is not a judge. You simply pray for wisdom for yourself and the people, and stand on I Corinthians 2 which tells us that Jesus was made our wisdom, and we have the mind of Christ verse 16.

In communicating to people how God sees them, you will find that 99.9% see themselves differently than God sees them. We must show them they are royal priests, a holy people, set apart from the world, God's workmanship, His handiwork, loved, accepted, forgiven, with the strength of God within them through Jesus our Lord and Savior. They must see themselves free from all insecurities, fears, doubts, worries, depression, anxiety, confusion, commotion.

If some of these things are still running around in their minds, it is because they have not yet acknowledged that Jesus has freed them from all that. They simply may not realize it, so a counselor must help them see what is going on. They may say they have the mind of Christ, but their lives are in shambles. And if they allow it to continue, nothing will change.

I Corinthians 2:16 says, "For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him: But we have the mind of Christ." Earlier in the chapter it says that we can know the innermost thoughts of God Himself by the revelation of the Holy Spirit of God. If you have a mind like that, what about those fears, doubts, worries, and insecurities? The cure is to renew your mind by the Word of God so that you are not conformed to this world (Romans 12:2). This is a daily renewing, and when you bring your thoughts into perfect obedience to the mind of Christ (II Cor. 10:3-5), the power of God rises up within you. You are no longer a failure; you are a success.

Psalms 1:2-3 says that as we meditate day and night on the Word of the Lord, we are like a tree planted in living waters. Our leaf is not going to fall off and our fruit is not going to fall off before its time, and everything we set our hand to do is going to prosper! One reason I love to pray over people is that the power of God goes right into them, and everything is going to prosper. They will get whatever it is that is needed in the name of Jesus, and as they get their will lined up with the Word of God, they will receive it all.

As we walk daily in the Word of God we will have everything that Jesus died for. Our spirit, mind, and body will be completely free, clean, and holy before God. We will be set apart as His workmanship for the purpose of doing good works that glorify God.

The Bible tells us that everything Jesus did was good. In other words, He did not do anything in a slipshod manner, or only half-way. He did everything well, and that glorifies God. Jesus is our example, and in everything we do, we should do it heartily as unto the Lord. Then He gets the glory, people are set free, and we do not get weary!

When our labor is in the Lord, it is never in vain. I Corinthians 15:58 says: "Therefore my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord..." That means we do the work completely, not half-way. You may have another job, and other things going on in your life; you may have a family, other responsibilities and interests. But there is only one reason why we are on the face of this earth, and that is to be a praise to the glory of God in whatever we are doing. We are to be shining lights. That is what changes people's lives. As they look at you, they will see that complete work you are doing for the Lord.

There will be times when your patience is tried with someone who is difficult to work with, and you might even sometimes feel that a person is just plain stupid. I Corinthians 10:11-13 says: "Let him who thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall." People sometimes come into our lives that can be a real pain. Have you ever stopped to wonder if you could be a pain to somebody else? It could be a case of reaping what you are sowing.

Verse 13: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man." Everybody goes through things that others have gone through. This is how we can gain wisdom. Hopefully a wise person can learn through the Word of God and other people's mistakes, so he does not have to make those same mistakes. The Bible is full of examples of both good and bad for almost every situation. We can learn what happens when we please God, and what happens when we displease Him. We do not need to make the same mistakes others made. But if we do, we have an advocate with the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ. When we ask God's forgiveness, we pick up and go on again. But this time, we have learned something, and we do not repeat the mistake. There was a heavy price paid for our forgiveness, the precious blood of Jesus, and we must not take it lightly. This is one of the most important points you must make with the people being counseled.

The first step in counseling is getting to know the people, and making them feel comfortable with you. Everyone's favorite subject is themselves, so start the conversation by asking about their families, their jobs, their interests, and their relationship with Jesus Christ. They are not interested in hearing about you, so do not interrupt with similar stories about yourself. People who need counseling are usually too wrapped up in their own situations to be interested in what others are going through.

The questions and discussions must always be handled with love. You must love those people with the love of Jesus if you are to successfully counsel them. Remember that God knows them, He loves them, and Jesus died for them. However, do not allow yourself to get to know them too well or it may distort your counsel. It is best to let the Holy Spirit have His way, and then you get God's perfect counseling.

In the process of getting acquainted with the people, it's wise to avoid discussing their dislikes. That could go on for an hour or more. It is much better to keep the conversation on the positive side. Ask them if they are filled with the Holy Spirit, and if God has given them a new tongue to speak to Him. You will find many people lack this power of the Holy Spirit and that is why their problems appear to be so big.

The counselor's role is to listen. Eyeball to eyeball. This tells the people you are really interested in them. You must have enough love and courtesy to listen. If you must leave for a short time, just say, "Excuse me for a moment. I will be right back." Or if you have another appointment, tell them, "Excuse me. I would like to continue this conversation, but I have another commitment. May we set another time?" And then set another time. Never be vague about arranging the next time to meet.

One of the initial questions I ask in this first step is: "Are you talking with another counselor?" If the person says, "No," we continue to step two. If they say "Yes," I will refer them back to the counselor or minister who has been working with them. This is very important. I would want other counselors to show the same courtesy towards me; and I also do not want the people to become confused.

Although all counsel should come through the Holy Spirit from the Lord and His Word, counselors and ministers use various methods and ways to communicate the counsel. Much depends on the counselor's personality and how he communicates with the people. This does not mean that one counselor should ever be elevated over another, but it sometimes does happen when people are not grounded in the Word and are not mature enough in spiritual matters. It is not a competition. It is merely the same Word of God being presented by human beings in different ways.

What every counselor should be most concerned about is getting results that will glorify God. We may use different ways to accomplish those results; and therefore, if someone is seeing two counselors who use different methods, it could become confusing to that person. Never allow yourself to get caught in between the people and another counselor.

People who run to two or three counselors usually do not want to hear the truth. They do not really want to change, and each time they refuse good counseling, their hearts become hardened. And their problems become worse, so they look for another counselor. A counselor with a degree or one without a degree cannot change the truth of God's Word and His instructions. A counselor's dynamic personality cannot solve a single problem, regardless of how wonderful it might be. These are carnal things and have no place in the body of Christ. Only God's counsel really works.

A successful counselor must be careful about his attitudes. As soon as God starts using you to help people through you, there comes along that trick of the devil to puff you up and get you thinking, "Oh, Lord, send me another one. I am ready for the next one. Glory to God, I am ready." You should be ready, but you had better pray before you start talking with the next person. A counselor must be in an attitude of prayer continually for wisdom.

Proverbs 3:5-6 tells us: “Trust in the Lord, lean not to your own understanding, acknowledge Him in all your ways and He will direct the path.” We are not to lean on our own abilities, but on the ability of the Holy Spirit of God. He is the Counselor, and we are to acknowledge Him. Our own advice is limited, but there is no limit to God’s wisdom and we must rely on Him for direction.

It may be difficult at times for a counselor to keep his emotions under control. You may want to flair up at times, but you must put that down quickly. When you feel this coming, simply pray, “Lord, in the name of Jesus, I thank you for wisdom and insight. I want the truth here, and I want to tell them something that will bring life to the situation.”

I know of a “Christian” counselor who told an individual it was okay to divorce a spouse. I cannot find one place in the Bible where it is okay to divorce your spouse for incompatibility, which could be for any reason. The only reason the Bible mentions is adultery, fornication, and “pornea” fraudulent marriage. I go on record to say that adultery and fornication are forgivable sins. If you look closely at the context in Matthew 19, you will find that it was only because of the hardness of the hearts of the people that Moses gave them a write of divorcement.

If a person has already divorced, he can come under God’s grace. He can be forgiven. But if a Christian is thinking of it, the message is loud and clear. Jesus died for all the sins of the people, regardless of what they are, and if a Christian cannot forgive a spouse who has been caught up in a lie of the devil and sinned against them both, something is wrong. They may feel shattered, but they have not shed any blood. Jesus gave His life. He was shattered. But He can put the pieces back together. He can heal the brokenhearted. He can set the captive free. He knows how to love.

When a counselor gets hold of that principle, he will become the most mighty counselor that he can ever be. He need not compare himself with anybody else. I believe in watching myself, guarding my heart, guarding my spirit, guarding my mind. I believe in guarding what goes in as well as what goes out. The issues of life come from the inside. That is when a counselor can truly share God’s answers to every problem.

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

A counselor must have a commitment in his heart to Jesus, and to the people he is counseling. This means we are to be ready “in season and out of season.” We must be ready to help people at any time. “In season” is when people are ready for counseling and are willing to listen. “Out of season,” I believe is when people do not want to listen. That is just like fruit. In season, it is ripe, but out of season there is no fruit on the tree.

God may bring people into your life that you have never met before, but He creates a bond between you in the spirit. This is intended so they can unload their garbage and become free. I tell people that I am a garbage man, but they are not to dump their garbage on me. A garbage man picks up the trash can and dumps it into the truck. All we do is take the garbage to Jesus and leave it there.

In your first session, as you ask questions about the people, you are getting to know them. This establishes a relationship; it builds trust, and confidence. I do not believe that people should go around pouring out their hearts to just anyone who will listen, nor do I believe that people should stand on a street corner sharing their testimony with everybody. There are things in some people’s lives that no one else needs to know.

There are times, however, when people have been through painful experiences, and are ashamed of what has been going on. They are ready to listen, and this is when you, a counselor step in to share how Jesus set you free. It will help them, and as you minister to them, sharing your heart with them, they will be encouraged by the change God made in your life. This develops into a love for one another in the Lord, and God puts a bond between you that is stronger than any flesh and blood can ever be. It is a bond in the spirit.

When I look at God’s people, I see my family. Everybody who knows Jesus as Lord is my family. And I am your family. I have found that when people are really committed to Christ, they are really committed to one another. God’s people can be trusted more than people in our own families, because of the bond in the Spirit. Not everyone is perfect, of course, but love covers a multitude of sins, love overlooks a lot of things, and love always speaks the best. Speaking the best will produce the best. God calls those things that be not as though they are, and they become (Romans 4:17).

Sometimes in counseling, you will find that people will respond only if a counselor has a degree or is licensed to counsel. In the Bible, we see the Sanhedrin, the High Council of the Jewish temple, looking at Peter and the rest of that motley crew, saying, “How can this kind of wisdom come out of these ignorant, unlearned men?” And then it says, “They remembered that they had been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13). Well, anybody who spends time with Jesus is not going to be ignorant and unlearned. Now if you want a degree or two, that will not hurt anything. If you are going to be all things to all men, it may be to your advantage to have a degree. The most important thing, however, is to love the people. Love will get past the intellect because to this day, the intellect cannot figure out why people can genuinely love another person.

Step two in counseling is to get the people to speak out the problem they are dealing with. Many times people will go to a counseling session for the purpose of discussing the problem, and when the time comes to talk about it, they clam up. I have seen it happen many times. They come in all weighed down, all ready to talk about it, and they cannot get it out.

This is when a counselor must set an atmosphere to enable the people to be comfortable enough to open up and talk. After you have established a friendly relationship, discussing their interests, families, etc., you gently guide them to the heart of the problem. Sometimes the people really do not even know what the problem is. They just know there is a problem.

In one meeting, as the Spirit of God was ministering, we gave a call in a particular area dealing with jealousy. The end result of jealousy is always strife. "What causes fights and quarrels among you?" Don't they come from your desires that you battle within you? You want something, you cannot have it, so you fight to get it. A person came up after the meeting, and said that as soon as the word was spoken, the Spirit of God began to minister inside, to break the heart. This is important because pride must be removed. It is a big step when a person starts to open up his heart. This means that pride is being removed, and they must be encouraged.

If you find that someone has a little difficulty sharing what the problem is, you must encourage them and say, "You have made a wonderful step towards freedom in simply desiring to get free." This will give them a little more confidence. The devil is always on hand trying to hold them and keep them in bondage, and he does not want to let them go. A counselor has to be a catalyst, to allow the Holy Spirit of God to get through to that person.

People deal with strife in different ways. Strife always causes tension and turmoil. Some people yell and scream, punch holes in walls, etc. Others bottle it all up inside. Those who do get ulcers, high blood pressure, heart attacks, and cancer. People do not realize that these diseases, in many cases, are caused by unforgiveness, bitterness, and resentment.

Getting the people to talk about the problem is necessary in order to deal with it. Some may feel it is a "negative confession" and they may be afraid to talk about it. But, if you have a problem, you have a negative situation! You may try to whitewash it, but it is still a problem.

A counselor who is sensitive, listening, and watching prayerfully will help people recognize the problem, and then take it to Jesus, the problem-solver. When you start to confront the issue, people will usually start to open up, especially when there is a trust bond there. In fact, they may amaze themselves when they begin to pour out their hearts. When God establishes that relationship, it becomes easier for them to share their disappointments, discouragement, and pain.

In Acts 4:13-23 we see a good Biblical example of two men who had a problem--Peter and John. The Lord had just healed a man through them, and it was a mighty testimony to the glory of God. Many people came to the Lord as a result, and Peter and John got hauled up before the Jewish Sanhedrin. They were told, "You quit doing this praying in the name of Jesus, and quit talking about Jesus, quit doing these works, or else!" The old threatening trick. This is one the

devil uses trying to produce fear in people. Then Peter and John were beaten and sent away. They went back to the other Christians and told them about the problem.

If you will look closely at this section, you will see they said, “Behold their threatenings.” Then they went to God. And this is what we do with people’s problems. We do not re-hash them. We take the problems to God in prayer immediately. We get into the Word of God to find the promise concerning that situation and then we bring the person to prayer. In the process, we get them to confess their faults to God. We are the witness to their confession, and there is something about confessing our faults one to another that provides freedom (James 5:16-18).

Nobody in the physical realm has ever had a full-blown manifestation where they saw God face-to-face. God uses people to make Himself known to people. He uses people to love people. Therefore, when people confess their faults to you, you in turn, give it over to the Lord. As they speak to you, they have a physical witness. They know that somebody else knows their problem, and that releases a tremendous weight off the person. Many have been going around for years with guilt, all kinds of pressure, bondage’s, etc., never telling anyone about it while their lives were torn apart. Just releasing all that to another person breaks the bondage, it breaks the pressure. It is no longer a deep dark secret. God knew about it all along, but He uses people as witnesses to help free them. James 5:16 tells us to confess our faults one to another that we may be healed. Getting rid of all the garbage begins God’s healing process.

Mark 11:25-26 tells that when we stand praying and remember that we have something against somebody, we must forgive them. That will release faith in God to remove that mountain, and we can stand on Mark 11:22-24, “Be thou removed and cast into the sea, and if you do not doubt in your heart, but believe that those things which you say will come to pass, you will have whatsoever things you say. Therefore, when you pray, believe you have received.”

When the people recognize what their mountain is, whether it is strife, bitterness, etc., they can speak to it directly, commanding it to leave. It has to go, and then changes begin to happen within themselves. When one person in a family gets straightened out and lined up with God’s Word, it starts to break everybody else loose. It takes one person to humble himself, get rid of pride, and allow God to turn things around.

There is an interesting scripture in Matthew 5:23: “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.” This tells us that if someone has a problem with you, it is up to you to make it right. “If your brother sins against you, you go and show him his fault just between the two of you.” It does not say we are to blab it all over town. The reason people do not go to the one involved is because they hate that person. In the flesh, we do not want to go to the one who wronged us. We would rather go around telling everybody else.

That person may never come to you directly, but somebody has to take the first step of reconciliation. God is concerned about building bridges, not blowing them up. The relief and freedom from taking that step will be well worth laying down your pride at the feet of Jesus.

In counseling, you may find that people at this point may begin to talk about so-and-so. As a counselor, you are not interested in so-and-so who is not there, and is not actually the problem. You can help the people to relate to so-and-so, but you never enter into the problem by taking sides. Do not allow the people to dwell on the problem. It is tempting for them to make a “mountain out of a mole-hill” now that they have started to open up. However, this can open the door for their pressures, insecurities, fears, doubts, etc., to attack the counselor, which is needless. They can state the problem, but must not dwell or meditate on it.

As the people talk, you can see how they are responding to others in their lives who they feel are the problems. Most of the time no one else is involved. It is all in their own mind. Many times pride is involved, and it is a terrible bondage. They feel insecure, rejected, and afraid although normally they have must love inside, but cannot get it out. It is a counselor’s privilege to help them get free. Once the problem is exposed, the devil’s cover is blown, the floodlights are on the issue, and now, glory to God, this is the point where freedom begins to come.

The Bible says that if we are faithful to acknowledge our sin, to confess our sin to God, He is faithful and just to forgive and to cleanse from all unrighteousness (I John 1:9). It does not matter how sordid, how gory, how miserable, how horrible and dishonorable the situation might be, God forgives it all. A counselor reinforces this to the people. They are not just ordinary words. These words bring life.

Let me insert a word of caution here. Sometimes a counselor may feel the people are dumping on him, and he begins to feel unclean. That is when you give it over to God. Do not start taking their problems on yourself. And if someone comes to you and says, “I have never told this to anyone, and I do not want you to tell anybody about this,” you say, “Friend, I love you. I want you free, but there is no way I can agree to that.” You see, if they are afraid to have you tell someone else, they are still in bondage. If you agree to their requirement, you put yourself in bondage. They go off scott free, and you are in bondage. Actually, they are not free at all. All they did was multiply their problem because now you have it too.

I believe that if people cannot give glory and honor to the Lord Jesus about getting rid of their problems, then they are not free. Think about that little lady who was in adultery and everybody knew about it. She came to Jesus and He was drawing pictures on the sand. The men were trying to trap Jesus, but they never could. He operated in the wisdom of God. If you learn to operate in the wisdom of God, nobody will ever trap you. Jesus did not even bother to look at those men. They were trying to get Him to judge that woman, and condemn her according to their law. They could have stoned her to death. But Jesus said, “Let him who is without sin cast the first stone” (John 8:7).

The Bible tells us that one by one, “From the eldest to the youngest, they all left.” Jesus asked the woman, “Where are your accusers?” She said, “They are all gone.” He said, “Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more.” In other words, “This is the end of the line. No more. You are on a new path, a new life. God has given you a new life. Walk it now; live it.”

The counselor must reinforce this truth to the people, and point them to look ahead to a new life in Christ, not looking back. They need to know that Jesus came for sinners, those who had

needs, so He could make them righteous and holy; set apart for God. Jesus told the religious people, “To whom much has been forgiven, the same loves much.” When a person is really set free, there will be fruit of that freedom.

That woman in adultery wanted, more than anything else, to be loved, to be needed, to be wanted. She went about it the wrong way, and when she got a touch from God, she knew it was the wrong way. Many of times people are in such bondage, they get set into a pattern and they cannot break it. They need somebody moving in the Spirit of God to shine some light on the situation and help them get free. When this woman knew she was forgiven, she knew how much she was loved, for the first time in her life. And that prompted her to “love much.” Now she was loving in a holy, pure way before God. Everybody in town knew her testimony that she was free. When that happens to people, they do not care if the whole world knows about it. That is freedom!

As a counselor points the people to God, they must realize without any question that it is God who is doing the work, not the counselor. God is the answer to their needs. God is going to help. God is the only one who can help them. A counselor’s part is to get them to God. In I Samuel 17:32-27, we read the story about David and Goliath. Saul sees a big Goliath, and he was big. It took two men to carry his shield, and Saul is meditating on big Goliath. The scripture says that David said to Saul, “Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him” (I Samuel 17:32).

Goliath is nine feet tall. David is a young boy. Saul was a big man, strong, a mighty warrior. And here is this young lad saying, “Don’t worry, folks. I am going to fight him.” David could not even wear Saul’s armor, let alone fight this Goliath. In verse 33, Saul says: “You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a boy, and he has been a fighting man from his youth.” This happens so often. People look at circumstances, at the situation, at the problem and saying, “No way. We cannot do anything about this.”

Saul was looking at Goliath, but David would not give in. In verses 34-36, he said: “Your servant has been keeping his father’s sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, I went after it, struck it, and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it, and killed it. Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear;” When a counselor is ministering to a person, you start now to testify by saying, “I have seen this situation where God did this,” or “I just heard about a situation where God did this for a person. And you know, my friend, you have the same problem. God helped them, and He can help you.”

You will be doing what David did in recounting the works that God did through him. There is no way a young boy could kill a bear and a lion unless God was with him. Continuing with verse 36, we read: “This uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God.”

He was the only one in the whole camp who had faith. He was pointing to God, not to the problem of Goliath. In David’s eyes, it was Big God, not big Goliath. A counselor must help people get the problem or situation into perspective spiritually. If they talk about their big problems, you talk to them about your Big God who is bigger than any problem.

Verse 37: “The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine. Saul said to David, Go, and the Lord be with you.”

We all know the end of the story. David went out and told Goliath: “This is it! This day, the Lord my God is going to deliver you into my hands.” Well, you know who guided that rock. If God did it for David, He will do it for any of His people who dare to trust in Him.

POINT COUNSELEE TO GOD

Step three in the counseling session is pointing the person to God. Remember how Saul kept looking at big Goliath, and David kept looking at big God. Here is a youngster saying, "Who is this Goliath to stand against the living God? I will go and fight him!" Saul was probably about six feet four or five inches, and as he looked down at young David, he asked, "You are going out there and fight Goliath, a man who is over nine feet tall?" But David said, "Let's look at God. God is going to go out there with me. Who is this Goliath? Who is this problem to stand against the living God?"

A counselor must whittle the problem down to size. Many times the problem becomes so big in a person's life; God just seems to get out of the picture completely. They cannot see God anymore because the problem has grown all out of proportion. In most situations it is a husband or a wife. The husband will say, "My wife is such a trouble maker; all she does is nag. I am fed up with it, and I do not want to hear it any more." Or you may get the other side: "He is just a worthless no-good. He does not do anything around the house, he is never home, he does not care about me one bit. I do not need him any more. Why did I ever marry him?"

All these complaints may sound negative, but they do bring out the problems in the relationship. A wise counselor will not get in the middle and take sides, and he will not talk about the other spouse. A wise counselor will talk only about the person that he is counseling. One thing to remind people is that when they are spewing out garbage, they are only making themselves look bad. A counselor must guide the people in stating facts, not name calling. The other person is not the problem. The problem is the one sitting there with you.

The real problem is their inability to handle the other person. Nine times out of ten it is because they have not really sought the Lord and allowed His enabling power to work through them (Romans 2:4). Jesus died for His enemies. He gave His life for enemies so He could make them friends. We can gain that kind of mentality as found in Philippians 2:4 "Have this mind in you which is in Christ Jesus." He humbled Himself, and that is what people must do.

When a woman is a counselor, the session must be with the wife, and not with the husband. God may use a woman to get that wife on the right track in her home, but it must be kept on a spiritual basis. If a man should come to a woman counselor, it may start out as a Godly relationship, but it may cause a fall. When a man has marital problems, he looks for someone who is understanding, thinking a woman counselor could be the answer to his problems. A wise woman counselor will immediately send him to a man counselor, and if he truly wants help, he will get it. This is using wisdom.

It can work the other way too, and when a man is counseling a wife, there should always be another person in the room, preferable the husband, or if he cannot be there, another woman worker. In a husband-wife situation, it is preferable that a husband and wife do the counseling. This keeps temptation out of everyone's way. People with emotional problems are susceptible and

vulnerable. They may have been very stable people at one time, but when emotions run high, people do strange things. This is when they need stability from the counselor.

Once the problem has been acknowledged, we bring God into the situation, and encourage them to confess their fault before Him (James 5:16). We tell them that God is faithful and just to forgive and cleanse from all unrighteousness (I John 1:9). The counselor is a witness to the confession, and the bond becomes stronger because two are in agreement. I can guarantee that fifteen minutes with the Holy Spirit can do more than one year of counseling in any other way. When we use God's Word, we have His guarantee of success.

In Ephesians 5, God's Word instructs the husband to love his wife as he loves himself. Plain and simple. To the wife, God's Word says to respect the husband as unto the Lord, and honor him. A wife may feel her husband has not earned her respect, but the scripture simply says to respect, and to love. If people want God's results, they must be obedient to His Word. They may not want to hear it, some may argue about it, and may even go to someone else for counseling. Hopefully, they will hear the same thing from whoever else they go to. Counselors cannot state their own opinions in any situation, but must stand only on what God's Word says.

People who run from one counselor to another really do not want to hear what God's Word says. They will keep looking for someone who will agree with them, but sooner or later, they will find that it is best to line up with God's Word. For instance, there is no excuse for two Christians to divorce one another. Divorce is not an option to Christians. If this was done in the past, God is gracious to forgive, but it must be recognized as being contrary to God's Word. A light attitude towards divorce hinders God's blessings on people, and He cannot do what He wants to do through people who do not honor His Word.

If a husband or a wife rubs the other one the wrong way, that can be used to develop some qualities which may be needed. Perhaps love, steadfast love that endures in needed, or patience, maybe some mercy. One cannot judge the other according to the Bible. There is only one Judge, and we cannot sentence anybody to life or death.

Next, we start peeling off the false fronts. James 5:16 instructs us to confess our sinned, acknowledge the problem. People may try to cover up the problem, but in Psalms it says, "That he who attempts to cover his sin is not going to prosper."

You may ask the question: "What is the problem?" Well, my husband is a jerk." The counselor answers, "That is not the problem. Even if I were to agree with you, that is not the problem." A wise counselor never agrees with the one he is counseling except on the Word of God. The minute he agrees, "Well you know, you are right. He has this problem, this problem and this problem. He is a jerk," he loses his ability to counsel her. He makes himself ineffective. So, where does the counselor start? He starts with the person sitting there with him.

The wife who does not respect and honor her husband gives the devil an opportunity not only on her own life, but she is undermining her household. By calling him a jerk, she is loosing in the spiritual realm, the actions of a jerk. The Bible tells us we speak life or death, and that we will bear the fruit thereof. A counselor must encourage people to speak what the Word of God says.

Job 11:6 talks about two kinds of wisdom. One is hearing the Word of God, and the other is doing it. We must hear what God says, and hear it clearly, in order to recognize what the problem is. The reason people have problems in their lives is because somewhere they violated a principle of God. When a wife calls her husband a jerk, it is obvious she is not respecting and honoring her husband, according to God's principle. Once a counselor shows her the Word, they move on to the second kind of wisdom which gives directiveness on what to do. They take the Word of God, she confesses her sin to God that she has not respected and honored her husband as to the Lord, thus examining her own heart.

Romans 4:17 is a very important scripture that a counselor should minister to people, that God calls things that be not as though they are. Instead of calling her husband a jerk, the wife should confess, "He is the most loving, kind, gentle, considerate, faithful, trustworthy, and Godly man I have ever known." That will get his attention! As she starts respecting and honoring him, that husband will begin to respond to the compliments and nice things she does for him. At first he may wonder what she is up to, but before long, he will begin to see there is something good happening, and that he needs Jesus too.

I Peter 3:1 says that a wife can win her husband to the Lord without even saying a word; simply by her behavior. Throughout the Bible we see that women are in very high esteem in God's eyes, in a tremendous place of influence. Not authority -- influence. There is a big difference. Women have had great influence for good and for evil. The wisest man who ever lived, Solomon, fell to women. Adam, the purest man there ever was, fell to a woman. Samson, the strongest man, fell to a woman.

I believe the Lord said to man, "Woman is not your problem! Your problem is that you did not take the authority that I gave you to use, in love, with your woman. You did not do what I commanded. You listened to her instead." In Genesis, chapter 3, God told Adam that the devil is not the problem, nor is the woman. The problem was that Adam listened to her rather than to God.

If those three great men of God were influenced by a woman, it means that women must have a tremendous influence. We men should thank God for our wives every day, and we should be thankful for the women under various ministries around the world. Women are usually the first ones to go to God because they line up with the principles of God. I believe it is because women operate through their emotions. Men operate from their heads. I do not know which is worse. That is why men need women, and women need men. As they go to God together, there is a balance in effect, and the result is a mighty powerful work of the Holy Spirit.

The Scripture says that a wife will win her husband to the Lord without speaking a word. When a woman lives by godly example, just loving and encouraging, living Jesus, as he watches he will see Jesus. That should get him excited enough to want Jesus too.

A woman who calls her husband a jerk is trying to cover up her own insecurities and fears. The fears could be about being displaced perhaps, about finances, etc. Fear is one of the biggest tools that the devil uses on women. In contrast, the Bible tells us in I Peter 3, that godly women

who put their hope in God were made beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands, like Sarah who obeyed Abraham and called him her master (or lord).

There are two types of wisdom. The one exposes the faults and the problems. The other kind gives direction on what to do and how to do it. The scripture in I Peter 3 says, "...You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear."

Fear is a woman's worst problem. It is rooted in a need for stability, which every woman craves. Unfortunately, fear leads a woman to start talking. "What about this? What about that? You know you should be doing this and this. Why are you not doing thus and so? My world is crumbling around me!"

A husband may try and reason, denying her fears, but the fear remains. In Proverbs it says in three places that a nagging woman is like a dripping faucet. It is better to live in the wilderness than in a house with a nagging woman. In another place in Proverbs it tells us that a foolish woman undermines her own house -- with her mouth. We can accomplish wonderful things with our mouths when used scripturally, but fear will get us into trouble.

How can a woman get rid of fear? There is only one way, and that is through God. No man can get rid of fear for a woman, no man can provide the stability a woman needs, no man can supply total and complete love, and in every way for a woman. Only God can fill the need. When a woman puts her expectations in the Lord instead of her husband, that frees the husband. And even if he is a jerk, it frees him to change. A loving wife will cover her husband's faults because love covers a multitude of sins, as the Word of God tells us.

Let us say the husband is a jerk, he is running around with another woman. Does the wife's life have to fall apart? No. If she is living in the Word, she will become so stable that even though the whole world may be crumbling around her like in Psalm 46, she will be able to be still and know that God is God. In Romans 8:26-27, we read that the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We may not know how to pray, but the Spirit knows. A wife may not be sure exactly how to pray in her head, but as she prays in the spirit, it is perfect prayer according to the will of God.

Verse 27 says, "And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will." This means we will get perfect results from God.

Verse 28: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been according to his purpose."

The first principle to teach people is faith. Get them believing God. As a wife is praying in the Spirit, knowing that God is in complete control of the situation no matter where that husband is or what he is doing, she has peace of mind, and she becomes stable in the Lord. In our ministry, we have seen many situations like this. There was grief of course, and heartbreak, but through it all, God helped those women to love their husbands as they went into prayer and were able to forgive them. Then God moved on the husbands.

There is a wonderful testimony about a woman whose husband ran off with another woman, and married her. The wife carried on just like she was still married to the man. She handled the children well; she was a stable woman living for the Lord. God gives amazing ability when one's heart is set on Him. Twelve years later, the husband suddenly decided he wanted the first wife back. He gave his heart to Jesus, excused himself from the other lady, and went back to his real wife. Why? Because she never stopped being his wife.

God forgives every sin that man commits including adultery and fornication. God cancels it, erases it, and He gives the ability to start new and fresh. That little woman had a lot of love in her, a lot of faith, and a lot of loyalty and commitment. She did not complain about her husband not paying support or ignoring the kids. She was believing God, and He met all her needs. She was taken care of.

In our ministry, I have seen this happen many times. The Bible says that with men things may be impossible, but with God, all things are possible (Matt. 19:26). When we believe in God, there is nothing impossible. It is faith that moves God. When we speak His Word to others, we are speaking life. And life produces fruit.

One of the prime requirements for a counselor is a love for God's people.

DOES COUNSELEE REALLY WANT HELP?

When people come to a counselor for help, they are obviously aware there is a problem they are unable to cope with themselves. It is a good start. Then, as the problem is identified and put in its proper place while dwelling on the Lord, the false front is stripped off, and the counselor can minister to them.

Getting people to be stable in God means they are walking with Him. A counselor helps them get their attitudes lined up with God. When one person comes for help, you must focus only on that person, not on anyone else they feel is causing the problem. As they open their hearts to God and are obedient to Him, amazing things will happen. Situations that are considered impossible are worked out, even when they have given up hope.

We always start with hope. With God, nothing is impossible, and that must be emphasized. When hopeless situations are solved, even the counselor's faith is revived. I have seen God pull together people from opposite sides of the country. I have seen Him save entire families that were into everything but God. I have also seen many physical and emotional healings take place that looked impossible. But we know that with God, nothing is impossible.

The most difficult counseling situation is with two people because you have two wills involved. If you are working with a family of four, or six, you have that many more involved, and there is usually a family feud going on, all of them wanting their own way, thinking each one is right. This is when you tell them that it may look impossible, but glory to God, with Him there is nothing impossible.

One of the most important passages of scripture that a counselor must hold on to is Romans 4:17b where it says that God calls things that be not as though they were. This means situations in counseling. The counselor and the people must believe God, and sometimes even when they do not, the counselor must believe God anyway. This is very important because when doubt comes in, everyone's time is wasted. A counselor must speak life into the situation. God calls things that be not as though they were. Past tense. In other words, as though it has already been existing. That is exciting!

When people tell you they are afraid, or weak, you must speak Joel 3:10 to them: "Let the weak say, I am strong." A counselor must call up hope and encouragement to keep going. If a counselor believes God, he will see the power of God move in every situation. Even when people run the away, you must continue believing God. Do not ever belittle your faith. God put it there. You are an ambassador of the Lord Jesus Christ, King of Kings, the Lord of all, and what you speak on this earth, your Father God is going to honor in heaven. God will get results in the name of Jesus.

A counselor is nobody special on his own. But, “It is no longer I who lives, but Christ who lives in me, and the life I now live I live by the faith of the son of God” (Galatians 2:20). That is what makes a counselor special.

An important lesson to learn is that when a counselor has spoken to that mountain to move, that is it. The case is solved, and you let go of it. It is time to move on to the next one. Do not feel they will fall apart if you are not there. It is a humbling experience for a counselor to realize that after you have spoken to that mountain, you gave them to God, and they belong to Him. God is able to finish the job. II Timothy 1:12 tells us: “I know whom I have believed and I am persuaded and convinced that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day.”

As the false fronts are peeled off, we get the person to confess the problem to God; confess it as sin and ask God to forgive them. When they start asking God’s forgiveness, God is “faithful to forgive and to cleanse as we acknowledge our sin to God” (I John 1:9). All we do is help get that person before God, identify the problem, get it clarified, ask God’s forgiveness for it, and then we get them some of the promises of God that are going to help them walk in newness of life.

There is a promise of God for every situation anybody could ever be in. All you need is one promise to blow the devil out of the water. You do not need fifty of them. Many people are concerned that they do not know enough of the Bible. I believe that if you have one promise of God for every situation, you have everything you need. When Jesus was tempted by the devil, he did not quote fifty chapters and verses. He quoted only one. He said, “It is written: and then he quoted one scripture. If a counselor feels he needs more, it will not hurt a bit.

Job 11:16 talks about two kinds of wisdom, and counselor has to operate in both kinds. The first kind of wisdom sorts out what the true problem is, and the second kind gives direction that will help the person get free. It is not enough to say, “This is your problem.” Then you rattle off the problem and say, “See you later.” That second kind of wisdom gives them direction in how to approach the situation, and that comes from the Word of God.

Matthew 10:16 tells us we are to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. This means we need the divine wisdom of God to be able to sort out the person who is really seeking help, and the person who is just being used by the devil to drain all of your spiritual energy in the Lord, and wear you out and cause burn-out. God will help you to be wise to love people enough to help them if they really want help, and also to recognize those who are just playing games. You may come across people who are just downright evil, depraved and deprived, whose lives are falling apart while you stand by helplessly watching them reap the evil of their decision. That is not a contradiction. You as a counselor are helpless because there is nothing you can say or do that will change them. That is when you must realize that you cannot carry other people’s burdens. There are already too many ministers, counselors, and psychiatrists who get depressed to the point of suicide.

You have the privilege to learn how to counsel without carrying their problems. You can refuse, in the name of Jesus. You take that person to God, and leave him with God. Your part is to believe God, and when it comes to the point when there is nothing that you can say or do anymore, you leave it with Him. There are many people who are used of the enemy, many times

unconsciously, not even realizing it. They really do not want help although they appear to. We will cover that later in another chapter. There are actually sick people who do not want to be well because they will have to give up their disability insurance, or they may like the extra attention.

If a person comes to you seeking and wanting help, but does not listen after you have given him godly counsel and shared the truth of the Word of God in love, that person is unteachable. At this point, you end the counseling temporarily. Simply tell that person, “I love you. I have told you what you need to hear, what you need to do. It is up to you now. I cannot do anything more in the situation.” They will want to hang on to you and keep pouting out their problems. They can run you ragged by calling you at all hours of the night, but you must firmly let them know that when they want to be a doer of the Word, you will resume counseling.

Sometimes when people are left on their own without a counselor always ready to help, they actually figure out the situation by themselves. It sticks a little better, I have found. The same applies to teaching. Many times, I can pour out the best material there ever was, but if you do nothing with it, it will not do anything for you. The more people work on things for themselves, the better it sticks.

There is nothing that beats experience. You can have all the book learning, all the lecturing, all the teaching, but there is nothing better than actual experience. God always does what He says, and counselors must always remember that.

Jesus counseled the people through a mode known as teaching. This is the way a counselor must operate many times. When Jesus finished, He simply said, “Let them who have ears to hear, let them hear.” In other words, those who wanted to hear something heard it; and did something about it. Those who did not want to hear went on their way, and Jesus did not pursue them. He just went on about the business of His Father.

As a counselor, you may go through this, but do not get discouraged because, quite frankly, there will be someone who will not want to hear your counsel or anything you have to say. A counselor cannot get downcast, worried, fearful, or fret over people. Jesus said, “Let the blind lead the blind and let them all fall in the ditch” (Matthew 15:14). In other words, if they do not listen to the things of the Spirit of God that will help them, they will reap the consequences of their decision.

Deuteronomy 30:15 tells us, “Today I set before you blessing and cursing, life and death; choose life.” This is all a counselor does. We do not see God getting involved. He gave His life to enable people to make a proper choice, and a counselor is always willing and available. But we do not see God falling apart because people choose to go the other way. Neither should a counselor. Any time you have involved yourself so much that you are in worse shape than they are, it is time for you to ask God’s forgiveness and release them to the Lord.

There was a situation where an individual kept calling and calling me. They had all kinds of problems, and in the worst of the situation, God called me to Portland. When I arrived there, God told me I was to be a stabilizer. I go only when God tells me, and you must learn this too. Otherwise, we would be in a mess.

God got things going again. They had lost their family, they lost everything. Their dad was dying of a heart attack, and all the kids were basket cases heading for the highways and byways doing whatever they wanted to do. We went to the hospital, prayed over the dad, and God healed his heart so it began functioning again. He was out of the hospital in two days. God got this man stable, and his health came back and his emotions were healed. The Lord moved on his family who had moved out of the state. This man is healthy, his business is prospering, his family is prospering and they are all having a good time in the Lord.

This did not happen overnight. This took place over a three-year period, and during that three years after I came back home, this individual became what I call a “spiritual leech,” because it’s what God called it. I wondered why I was ready to fall apart. I was praying more than I ever prayed. Finally, one day when I was in the Spirit, the Lord showed me a leech sucking away. He said this person was a spiritual leech and told me, “Take him off you and cast him aside.” In other words, cut all ties with him.

I believe in being obedient to the Lord, so I cut all the ties. It was amazing how my strength and energy in the Lord came right back. I felt good again. It was amazing. And that person was forced to go to God for himself. The God I know and love did a beautiful job. But there are many people out there who draw your spiritual strength if you allow it, so guard yourself. Jesus never let anybody leech off Him. He was constantly available to let the power of God move for people who wanted help, but He carefully guarded Himself from leeches.

In one situation, an individual went out into a ministry, and was unaware that an enemy was planted there. That enemy came with all kinds of needs physically, mentally, emotionally. They prayed and spoke to the mountain to move, and the person came back saying, “Glory to God, I feel so much better.” Next, that person said, “Jesus came to me and told me that on such and such a day at such and such a time, I am going to be healed.” Everyone got all excited. I do not know why they were all excited because, quite frankly, the healing happened when they prayed; but because of the immaturity in the ministry, they did not know it. They thought, “This must be God.”

They stayed up all night waiting to hear from this individual. They were praying and doing all they were supposed to do, and this person never called. I do not know how I got into this, but after staying up all night, they showed up at my door. They were wondering what went wrong. I told them, “It was an angel of light. Good-bye.” They were all discouraged and beaten down. The devil was trying to steal their ministry by causing them to think, “Here, we just get out of the boat and the first one we work with has failed. Now they will be talking about it all over town that it is a farce and God’s power does not work.”

Who said it does not work? Just because somebody does not receive does not mean it does not work. James 1:22-25 talks about not being just a hearer of the word, but a doer also. The doer of the Word is the one who gets blessed. It is not enough to be just a hearer.

There are people who draw the power of God out of me all day and all night, and I would not care as long as they are doing something with it. But if they just draw it out of me and it is bouncing off the walls and up into the stars that is a spiritual leech. There is a difference. Every time we pray there is energy that goes forth from the Spirit of God, and we must not waste that.

Jesus said, “Do not cast pearls before swine.” That means people who are not willing to receive the preciousness of the pearl. Spiritual counsel is precious, but a pig has no interest in pearls.

When people ignore your counsel, you must let them go and tell them to come back when they are willing to do what you have told them. Tell them to come back with a praise report that you do not want to hear about the problem until they have done what you counseled them to do. I guarantee that if they’re sincere, they will come back with a praise report because of your godly counsel. When they do it God’s way, they will get God’s results. If they do not, they still have their problems.

I got a telephone call at two o’clock in the morning from an individual who was all frantic. “My wife is passed out on the floor. Out cold. What do I do? What shall I do?” I asked him, “Has she been eating three meals a day like I told her to?” He said, “No.” I said, “You had better get her to the hospital quick. Goodnight.” In other words, if she was not going to follow the godly counsel I had given her, I could not be bothered. I say that in love. But you cannot expect to walk in divine health if you are abusing your body and not following godly principles. This was a consequence of her decision.

The husband called me about four days later because he realized I did not want to hear from him until that woman started doing what was right for her body. I asked if he had taken her to the hospital, and he said no. When I questioned him about what he did, and what happened, he told me, “It was amazing. All of a sudden she got up off the floor and went to bed. She was fine.” Well, you answered that one for me. Apparently, that woman did not want to go to the hospital or see a doctor. Her bluff was called. I believe she started eating three meals a day too. This is being wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove. The Spirit of God knows what is going on inside of people.

A counselor does not help people by coddling them. It is very important to know when to let go. Some people would like you to do everything for them, but you cannot run their house for them, anymore than they can run yours. Husbands must be taught to take authority over their own households, and wives must learn to be submissive according to the Word of God.

Proverbs 19:20 says: “Listen to advice and accept instruction, and in the end you will be wise.” This is good counsel indeed.

HOW TO OVERCOME HINDRANCES IN COUNSELING

The main hindrance in counseling is, of course, the lack of cooperation on the part of the people being counseled. If they go around moaning and groaning, "Poor me, poor me," it shows a complaining attitude, which is not of God. These people are not blessed, and it is obvious to the counselor they are not reading their Bibles; they are not praying nor fellowshiping with other Christians. People can choose to grumble and complain, or they can choose to get help. All a counselor can do is show them the Word of God and the decision is up to them.

A counselor may be misunderstood for seeming lack of concern, and even accused of being un-Christian. Sometimes God is blamed for the problems these people face. I call this spiritual pride and audacity. People like this usually want the counselor to take all their problems, and solve them while they sit back and watch, making no effort to change.

We know that God is our source, and He loves us, and He helps us to victory. But James 1:22 tells us that it is the doer who is blessed, not the hearer. Therefore, it takes some effort on the part of the people being counseled to gain victory over their situations and problems.

I believe the best place to begin is in reading the Bible, getting to know our miracle-working Jesus. If people are not familiar with God's Word, a good place to begin is with the book of John, or the book of Mark. Then they should be encouraged to pray. God is not interested in fancy prayers, just sincere words from the heart. That is why children's prayers are answered so quickly. As people grow in the Lord, they can learn to pray with more maturity, and go on to greater things.

In the book of James 4:2 we are told, "You have not because you ask not, and when you ask, you ask amiss to consume it upon your own lusts." I believe that on your own lusts" means asking for something that you are not willing to give away, but want to keep for yourself. It is my opinion that God gives us blessings so we can share them with others as a testimony for His glory. We are blessed so that others can be blessed through our blessings.

Just about every counselor will run into "Poor Job." No one wants to be like him. Most people think that Job's God put all that sickness on him, that God took everything away from him and killed his children. Poor Job. However, if you read that scripture closely, you will learn that the devil did all that to Job. It was not God who did all those things. Job 3:25 says: "That which I feared the most is that which came upon me." Job said it. Fear is sin.

God said that Job was righteous, as you and I are through the righteousness of Jesus because we love Him. Many Christians who are righteous have a mistaken concept of Job and have put him on a pedestal. Referring to Job, "They will say they are for Christ." They fail to realize that even righteous Job was in a state of fear. The Bible tells us he feared for his health, he feared for his children, and the very things he feared most came upon him. That came right out of his mouth.

There were three counselors who came to Job, and none of them was right. Each said things about God that God considered abominable, and in Chapter 42, God told Job that he had better pray for his three friends because of the way they spoke about Him. Instead of the counselors praying for Job, he prayed for them.

Spiritual pride is an abomination to God, and in the latter chapters of Job, we see that Job was guilty of this. God saw it, and although He called Job righteous man, He saw the spiritual pride. God gently rebuked Job, and in Chapter 42 we see him repenting and asking God to forgive him for talking about things too wonderful for him of which he had no knowledge nor understanding.

When Job repented, God blessed him not only with good health, but with twice as many riches as he had before, and he was already one of the wealthiest men of his day. God restored to him double, and gave him more sons and daughters. He got a whole new family. I wonder why most people dwell on the first part of the book of Job, and all the miseries he suffered, instead of rejoicing over his blessings after he repented.

I do not see the devil winning. I do not see God's people losing. We counsel people to victory, and we encourage hope, faith, and a winning attitude. A counselor must be convinced there is nothing impossible with God, and the best way to know that is to stay in the Word of God continually. I believe in the divine protection of God where the devil cannot touch God's people because we can have a hedge around us. Psalm 91 assures us of His protection. When the tormentors came against our minds, we can cast them off in the name of Jesus, and they have to go. Psalm 91 says we are under the shadow of the Almighty, and no evil, no plague shall come near us nor our dwellings. The only way a plague or evil can come near us is if we open the door and let it in, as Job did through fear.

People who are being counseled are almost always in the following states:

(1) Fear; (2) Guilt; (3) Unbelief; and (4) Pride. All of these are sin, and a good counselor will help the people look at themselves to see this. The best advice you can give someone with these problems, especially pride, is to get out of themselves and start being concerned about others.

They should be encouraged in their Christian walk, to fast, to watch themselves and stay out of trouble, and with God's help, they can make it. As they pray, and get into fellowship with others, as they share what Jesus has done for them, they will soon realize that God takes care of the problems. As we do our Father's work and go about doing good, He takes care of our problems.

An amazing thing about counseling is that God will put somebody in your path who needs help, and as you minister to them, the very words you speak are those you need to hear yourself. That is a double blessing for a counselor.

James 1:22-25 tells us that we are to be not only hearers, but doers of the Word of God. It is good to be hearers, but it is the doers who get blessed. People can listen to all kinds of good advice, spiritual truths, etc., but unless they do something about it, there is no change, and there is no blessing. Proverbs 19:20 tells us to listen to advice and accept instruction, and in the end we

will be wise. Proverbs also tells us that a fool, someone who is proud and arrogant, will not receive counsel. He thinks he knows it all, and it is unlikely he will go to a wise man for counsel.

A counselor will come across many fools, but scripture forbids us to call anyone a fool. You may recognize one, and that is discernment; but if you call him a fool, that is judging. There is a difference, and a counselor must be wise in this area. We do not know who will, and who will not change, and we must never hinder anyone from an opportunity to get right with God. Even when people turn their back on you and refuse to follow your counsel, you cannot stop caring about them and looking out for their welfare. You may no longer have contact with them until they follow your counsel, but you must keep loving them in the Spirit, and be quick to help when they are ready to get serious with God.

Proverbs 14:6-7 tells us that the Word of God is our standard, and counselors must put up a standard for the people. If it was too hard for us, God would not have given it to us. We are able to do what God says we are able to do; otherwise He would have given us something else. This scripture also says the mocker seeks wisdom and finds none, but knowledge comes easy to the understanding. These are the people who are open, seeking and growing. God assures us that knowledge will come easily, as will wisdom and insight.

When you explain something to a child and make it clear to him, it is easy for the child to understand it. Children usually put all their effort into something they understand and feel they can do. When my children were helping me weed the flower garden, it was easy to show them what to pull out. There was not a yellow dandelion left anywhere when they got through. This is how God wants His people to respond.

Proverbs 13:1 tells us that a wise son heeds his father's instructions, but a mocker does not listen to rebuke. As we walk with God, we move ahead, we do what we are learning, taking time. The basic principle is to act upon what we learn. That is why some grow thirty, some sixty, and some one hundred fold. The measure of growth depends on what we do with what we hear and learn.

Proverbs 14:7 instructs us to stay away from a foolish man because we will not find knowledge on his lips. When arguments of science or debates arise, a counselor should terminate the communication and go on to someone else who needs help. This is wisdom in witnessing, too. It does not mean you have turned your back on them; but it is pointless to keep batting your head against the wall.

You must always be open, willing, and ready for that person to come back and continue counseling, but only on scriptural terms; the Word and principles of God. When they are willing to follow God's way, He will start to move in their lives. This is the highest form of love that a counselor can minister to anyone. It teaches that person to become responsible and accountable for himself. This is an important lesson, and a person cannot be blessed until he is obedient to God's Word.

A counselor must be very careful in following another principle here. Do not let anyone rob you of private time with your family by calls at home for instant counseling. Your family comes

first. The order of priorities is (1) the Lord; (2) You and your family; (3) the world. Many churches are in trouble because they project the image of the Lord first, the church second, and the family last. That is not God's order. A counselor should never feel guilty for taking time with his family. When he builds a strong spiritual family relationship at home, he is covering them and protecting them from outside influences.

According to I Timothy 3, if a deacon or elder cannot take care of his own family, he cannot take care of anybody else. That work starts first in you and your home. Hours should be established. Counseling appointments should be kept at the arranged times, and should not interfere in your family life. No counselor should have to take a counseling call at two or three in the morning. Most of those calls are emotional outpourings that should be between that person and the Lord, not the counselor.

If somebody really wants help, they are usually willing to wait until you are able to talk with them. I have learned from past mistakes to use more wisdom in becoming more organized in counseling. I thank God for a loving, considerate wife who put up with phone calls at dinner time, or on our way out the door. Those calls robbed me of time with my family, and that should not have happened. I should have said, "I will be happy to talk with you at such and such a time, on such and such a date if you will call back." If that person really wants help, he will be willing to wait. In fact, you will get better results because you will be operating in the Lord's way.

People appreciate things that cost them something. If a woman buys a dress for \$150 or \$200, she's going to take care of it. She feels responsible and accountable for the money spent on that dress. Although we do not charge for counseling in our ministry, our results are worth a great deal because we point people to God who has the answers to every problem in the world. That is why it is so important to make people take the responsibility for themselves and become accountable for their own lives.

A counselor will have to deal with insecurities in people which make them want to become dependent on him. This is not a healthy situation, and it must be lovingly and firmly pointed out that God is the source, comfort, and strength. The counselor is merely a vessel God uses to point people to Himself. He is the One who has the answers, not the counselor.

Another situation is counseling people in a hospital. This should not be done unless it is requested. This is very important. Many people get into a lot of trouble as they walk into a hospital with a little bit of knowledge about laying on hands and praying for the sick. They think they can go in there and raise everybody out of their hospital beds, and all they do is get the hospital staff upset with them. This is not right. Remember, you counsel people only if you are asked to, and you never counsel anyone that another counselor is working with.

A counselor must never be guilt-induced to return a call, and certainly never intimidated by those he is counseling. If the Spirit of God directs the counselor to call, he must be obedient, of course. Many times, however, you do not need to hear a lot of personal grievances that those people should be taking to the Lord. A counselor is not an errand boy. Many people are just lacking for attention, and by listening, a counselor encourages them. It is not love and compassion

to sit there and let them feed you negative words. A counselor must stop the negative flow and turn them towards the Bible and God's principles.

Real kindness, love, and compassion from a counselor will cause people to take responsibility for themselves to go before God and allow Him to work in their lives. A counselor is not responsible for what people do with his counsel. A counselor is responsible only for communicating the Word of God in love.

A COUNSELOR'S KEY QUESTIONS

There are several key questions a counselor should ask people that will help sort things out for them. The first question is, "What do you expect of me?" This will help you determine why the person called, why he chose you as counselor, and what he wants. This eliminates people from rambling on for 20 or 40 minutes about their problems. In most cases it has become a pattern that has probably been repeated a number of times with others, and it is a waste of a counselor's time.

When people are confronted with a direct question like this, it helps them think about counseling with a positive attitude. They will usually realize that the first need is prayer. After the counselor prays, they may just want to talk. Sometimes they need encouragement, or a promise from the Word of God. This is done in love, and as the counselor winds up the conversation, both feel good about it, and the time spent has been constructive, not wasted.

The next question a counselor asks is, "Father, in Jesus' name, did You send them to me?" This is an important question, and a counselor must be obedient to God's will in this area. You may need to send the people back to their knees before God in prayer before counseling can begin. Sometimes people are too flippant and do not get answers to their prayers. It is because they do not spend enough time with the Lord. Ultimately, it is going to be them and God's Word that is going to get them through.

People are basically lazy and most will want to rely on the counselor. This can become a trap to a counselor, so you must get people into the Word of God for themselves. A counselor or a minister may not be around when trouble strikes suddenly. People must learn to go directly to the Lord in times of distress. This is not unloving or lacking in compassion. When you study how Jesus ministered, you will see that He was not at the beck and call of the people.

Ministers may be criticized for not being easily available to people who want to talk with them. However, if ministers allowed people to take up all their time (which they most assuredly would if they could), there would not be much done in the ministry. The minister who is tuned in to the Holy Spirit will know who God wants him to talk with. God will put it together for both of them. Otherwise, other counselors on the staff can just as easily deal with people who need help.

As a counselor assures his people that they have been freed from worries, fears, doubts, guilt, anxiety, and every kind of torment in the name of Jesus, they need to realize they are more than conquerors through Christ Jesus. However, doubts may rise up. The question to be asked then is, "Why are you cast down with this puny little problem that appears to be so big?" We have all the authority in heaven and earth in the name of Jesus. Why do we not do something about it? Urge the counselee to examine his heart, and encourage him to stand on the Word of God and act on it.

If people are still struggling with their problems, the counselor may ask, "Did you do what you were told?" You can coddle and baby people and never get any results with them. That is not love, and it does not help people. It only feeds their craving for attention, and sometimes

counselors get caught up on a big ego trip with people like this hanging on to them. It is damaging to both parties and is the reason why it is important for the counselee to take the responsibility of getting into the Word and praying for himself.

Galatians 6:2 instructs us to carry each other's burdens, and in this way we will fulfill the law of Christ. Where do we carry the other person's burdens? We carry them to the Lord, and leave them with Him. We do not carry them on our shoulders, but go with the counselee and lay them down at the cross.

I believe God intended for His people to stand up and walk as sons and daughters of the Most High God. We are not a bunch of spiritual cripples. Galatians 6:3 tells us that if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself without comparing himself to somebody else for each one should carry his own load. If you are expecting somebody else to carry your walk with God, you are deceived. It is time to start growing up in the faith. In the Lord Jesus, we are able to walk hand in hand with God and have complete victory.

When children are young, a parent may need to carry them now and then when they get tired. But as they get older, they learn to walk in their own strength. That is how God's people should be, walking hand in hand with the Lord, each one carrying his own weight. God did not intend us to carry one another. Real love is helping a person to stand on his own two feet with God.

As a counselor becomes sensitive to the Spirit of God, he will learn there are motivations inside people that may not be evident at first. There are people who may pose as a best friend, gaining sympathy and confidence, and then turn around and stab you in the back. Some people would con you out of everything you own, but by talking with them they appear to be nice, warm-hearted, friendly, and even giving towards you. They figure they will give a little bit so they can get a whole lot more. This does not show up in the beginning, so a counselor must be wise, and sensitive to the Holy Spirit.

We know that not everyone who says, "Lord, Lord," will enter into the kingdom of God, but he who does the will of the Father (Matthew 7). People can say, "He is Lord," with their mouths, but the test is the fruit of their lives. This should not cause a counselor to be afraid as long as your heart is sincere before God and you are moving in His Word, seeking and growing to learn how to do what God says. God will help you.

A prime requisite for a counselee is to be completely honest and open. You cannot minister to someone who will not be completely truthful. Some may balk at this requirement, and may even accuse you of being unloving, uncaring, unsympathetic, etc. The sad part is that they usually will not tell you, but everyone else in town.

As we deal with the motivation of people, we see that Proverbs 16:2 tells us a man's ways appear right to a man, but God searches the intention or the motivation of the heart. Further in the chapter we read that a man's ways appear right to him, but the end thereof is death.

You will often find that people cannot see the forest for the trees. They do not recognize the problem, and if they do, they do not want to admit it. If the counselor is not aware of the problem, nothing can be done about it. The only way to freedom is to admit there is a problem, and then state it. Many people, Christians and non-Christians, believe they are doing the right things, and they may even be good things, but if the motivation of the heart is not right before God, problems develop.

As an example, if you do a good deed for somebody and your motivation is not for the glory of God, but to be recognized by that person; in God's eyes it is not a good deed. Whatever is not done of faith is sin. A sure way to find out if your motivation is right is the way you feel about the person's response to your good deed. If you do not receive a thank you note or some other recognition, would you sulk, or give the glory to God? Motivation of the heart is so subtle that people usually are not even aware of what is going on in their own hearts. This applies both to the counselor and the counselee.

We will explore the proper and improper motivations, and begin with attitudes. You cannot be an effective counselor if your attitude is anything other than love. This must be the motivation of a counselor's heart -- pure, unadulterated love. It comes only from God.

When God came in the flesh in Jesus, our Lord, He came for what the Bible calls a stubborn, stiff-necked, rebellious generation and they have not changed. Still, Christ died for the ungodly. While we were yet in our sin, separated from God, enemies of God, Christ died for us (Romans 5:6). That is love, pure and unadulterated.

The world does not understand this kind of love. People are so conditioned to, "Get along with me, and I'll get along with you; you pat my back, I'll pat yours." As Christians we must love regardless. Otherwise, we are no better than the world. God gave His love with no strings attached, and it is free to all who will receive it. The choice is up to the individual, and God does not get offended if His love is rejected. He gave each person the right to choose, and His love is always there. As counselors, we must always strive to be like this.

There was a city in Samaria where Jesus went, and He was flat-out rejected. They did not want Him there. They had a little prejudice. He was on His way to Jerusalem, and the Jews and Samaritans did not hit it off too well. Since He was going to Jerusalem, the Samaritans did not want to hear anything He had to say. His disciples wanted to call down thunder, lightning, and fire to destroy the city. They had a solution: just wipe them all out and get rid of them. But Jesus had another solution. He said, "Don't you know what spirit you are of? I did not come to destroy. I came to save them."

This is all the counselor does. He says, "I set before you blessing, cursing; life, death. Choose life" (Deut. 30:19). He encourages the people to choose life. He cannot do it for them, and he cannot condemn them if they make the wrong choice. All a counselor can do is present it to the people. Some will accept it; others will not. There is no counselor who has 100% favorable results, so you must never become offended or upset with those who make the wrong choice. People have their own will and freedom to choose blessing or cursing; life or death. It is just that simple.

A counselor should ask people if they spent time with God in prayer before calling him. This helps establish the spiritual maturity of the people, and will give the counselor an indication of how serious they are about finding God's solution to their problems. The next question should be: "Have you searched God's Word yourself?"

We grow by reading and studying the Bible, by meditating on the scriptures. It takes time to get it inside. It may take a month or two just studying and meditating on one or two verses. A counselor will help people get established in a good Bible reading plan so they are not reading just here and there, gaining very little understanding of God's Word. Fellowship with other believers is very important too, and being where the Word of God is taught will help them grow in the Lord. Spiritual growth is an individual process, and there is no set pattern.

If a person has a problem with depression, and he has come to the Lord Jesus, receiving a touch from God, he will have to learn how to deal with that depression. That is the first place a counselor should start him in learning the Word of God. Part of the blessing of God is that he does not have the depression any longer. Get him to search God's Word. Show him how to use the concordance to look up the word, "joy." It is found in many places, and as he gets that Word of God ingrained in him, he will be walking, talking, sleeping, and seeking the Word of God. Then, when he needs a spiritual boost, the Holy Spirit of God will bring it to his remembrance.

A counselor must remind people that God's Word commands us to "Rejoice in the Lord always" (Phil. 4:4), and when we do, we will not have time for any other nonsense. Does that person have trouble with guilt? As we acknowledge our sin, God is faithful to forgive and cleanse from all unrighteousness (I John 1:9). As people realize that God has a promise for every need that any person in this whole world will ever have, it will change their lives.

Depression attacks so many people; you will find it is a big problem that is often overlooked. In Psalm 42, David asked himself, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" In other words, "Why am I depressed?" We do not have to be depressed. He goes on to say, "I will hope in God for I will yet praise Him." He had a choice to be either depressed or joyful, hopeful. Depression says there is no hope. Woe is me, all is lost. Despair sets in. The opposite of despair is joy. The opposite of hopelessness is hope. We have the freedom to choose which direction to take.

II Corinthians 10:3-5 tells us, "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but they are mighty to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down every false imagination and reasoning of the mind that is exalting itself against the Word of God." I John 4:17 tells us, "Perfect love casts out all fear." We have the freedom to cast down fear and thoughts that are contrary to God's Word. We can bring every thought captive to the mind of Christ. This is where people win or lose. In counseling people, you will be working with their thought patterns.

In helping people become set free, we must be conscious of their thought patterns. The devil may be part of the problem, but in most cases, it is their set pattern. The devil cannot make anyone do what they do not want to do. Over the years, people develop thought patterns, responding and reacting to situations and people in their lives. We hear what others say about us, whether it is good or bad, and it affects our thought pattern. That is why a child of God who

becomes a new creature must put off the old mind, and put on the mind of Christ according to the Word of God.

If a person is struggling in this area, the counselor should ask, “Have you done what you were told to do?” He sends them right back into the Word of God and prayer until they get results. Many impossible situations are turned around when people get in touch with God’s Word.

A counselor may be praying for somebody who has bondages and torments that try to drag him down too. This is when a counselor must intercede in the Spirit. He must remind the counselee what he should be doing too, in order to solve his problems. If the counselee is still dragging the counselor down, there may come a time when he will have to say, “I’m sorry, friend. You know I love you, but I cannot do anymore for you. You will have to come back after you have done what you were instructed to do. It is now between you and God.” If the counselee does not want to talk with God, that is his problem. You cannot help him at this point.

One of the finest things a counselor can learn through an experience like this is true humility in God. Otherwise, pride would come against him at this point and compel him to see the counselee get the victory, while the motivation in his heart was wrong. It would be tempting to keep pushing for the victory, knowing that God promised it, and you know the counselee can have it. The result would be even more torment. It is wiser to just let go, and let God deal with that person.

II Timothy 1:12 says, “I know whom I have believed.” When you can say that with total confidence and assurance, then you know your Father, how He works, what He is going to do, and what He is not going to do. That total confidence allows you to let people go. At this point you are fully convinced and persuaded that what you have committed to Him, He is able to take care of.

This brings us to a place of perfect faith. We have given that person to God, and we are not taking them back, not looking, or trying to carry them along. When we give them to God, they have every opportunity to receive everything God has for them. In that place of perfect faith and perfect release, that is where a perfect God is able to do His work.

I Peter 5 instructs us to be well-balanced, temperate, sober minded. We have an adversary who is out to get us, and he will use people and situations to do his dirty work. It can happen through people who walk all over you, stab you in the back, and do not care a rip about you. It can also happen through people pouring out all their cares, dragging you down with them. I do not know which is worse; both are wrong.

If you ever wonder whether you as a counselor are doing more than God requires of you, ask yourself these questions:

1. How many were blessed by taking the cares of other people on themselves?
2. How many really received joy out of having their problems dumped in your lap?
3. Did you like having their problems on your shoulders? Why?
4. Did you take their physical sickness on you? Did you enjoy their sickness?

You may have done some of this from your heart, but you did it ignorantly. You really do not want to be sick, nor do you want a lot of other people's problems, but those problems will make you sick. The solution is to give all those cares and problems to God. This is the scriptural way, and it is the only way it will work. Sometimes counselors try to help too much, allowing personal feelings and emotions to get involved, and they get into a mess. It is good to have love and compassion for people, but it must be done God's way.

When a counselor finds himself too emotionally involved, it is time for the church body to help put him back together again, like Humpty Dumpty. God intends His people to come together for refreshing, to get built up, for encouragement, for strength, to be fed, and then get back out there again. A little bit smarter this time.

There is a line between counseling according to God's way, in humility, and counseling with a motivation of pride. A counselor must constantly be on guard against allowing pride to creep in. When we realize that we are not God (how thankful I am for that!), but we are His servants to carry out His will, it gives God the freedom to be God, and us the freedom to simply be His errand boy. That is freedom. The responsibility belongs to God. We simply do what He tells us to do, and He makes it easy. God's love makes it easy.

PRIORITIZING THE MOTIVATION OF THE HEART

As a counselor, do you want to grow in the Lord? Do you want to know the innermost truths of God? What is it you want from God? He will take you as far as you want to go. Jesus said, "Be it done according to your faith" (Matt. 9:19). That is not one isolated text, but it appears time and time again.

Every counselor needs a deeper understanding of himself in the way he works. As God does the work in his heart, he understands other people better so he can minister more effectively to them. As you study God's Word and learn what is there for you, you can ask for everything God offers. There are nine gifts of the Spirit, and personally, I want all of them so I can be more effective in ministry. It is those who are really expecting, seeking, open, pressing ahead in the Spirit who are going to be used by God. Ministry is no place for someone who just sits around with a ho-hum attitude. It takes effort and a pure motive of the heart for any minister to be effective for God.

When I was in my second year in seminary, the Lord spoke to me and said, "Son, I cannot use you the way you are right now." That was a surprise to me. I had been working in churches for years before then, ministering the Word of God, and mighty things were happening. I was president of the seminary student body, doing all kinds of things for God. What did God mean? Priorities!

That night, the Lord had me search my heart for my priorities. I found Him at about Number eight. It may sound strange because there I was working in a church, attending seminary,

talking about the Lord to people all the time. But God was not on the throne reigning as number one. As I examined my heart, the Lord helped me see that all I did counted for nothing because my priorities were wrong. Proverbs 16:2 says, "A man's ways are pure and right to a man, but God searches the intentions, or the motivations of the heart." I thought what I was doing was perfectly right and good, but it was not so in God's eyes because my motivation and priorities were not right.

Say you are out witnessing to someone, telling them about the love of Jesus. You see the frown appear, you see anger building, and you know they are offended. As you keep talking, they get even more angry. So you leave, shaking the dust off your feet because you just know they are going to say something nasty about you to their friends. You think, "Pig." I will not cast my pearls before swine. They do not appreciate it, so forget them. That's the natural inclination.

Ministering with the proper motivation in the love of Jesus, you can say, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me." You will not be concerned about their negative reaction, and you can even trust God to protect you from the sticks and stones. If you act in wisdom, you will get out of the way before they start throwing them. With the proper motivation, you are willing to give your life because you care for that person. You care because God cares.

Paul says the love of Christ constrains me, it compels me, it drives me. I have to identify with that and live in anticipation and expectancy to do something for the Lord to give the glory to God. Whatever we do for the Lord, we are to do it heartily, and when our attitudes and priorities are lined up with the Word, He makes it easy. It is all about relationship.

Before God dealt with me in seminary, I would have said, "Wait a little bit, God, I will get around to it as soon as I get these other things done." My priorities were not in order.

I also remember a time when the Spirit ministered to me before a service while I was praying that I was to speak on unforgiveness. I ministered the whole service and never did touch on unforgiveness. Then the Lord had me call out healing for a foot condition, and when the person came up, the Lord spoke very definitely that NOW was the time. I said, "There is unforgiveness in your life." The woman began to weep and sob as the Spirit of God began to minister to her. Apparently, there was all kinds of strife in her home towards the husband at the time. The Lord ministered to that unforgiveness. As forgiveness was asked, the cleansing took place. We ministered to the foot, and the following week, the swelling and horrible pain left. There was no injury to the foot, ankle, or leg. It was all caused by unforgiveness, and the healing was completed as the unforgiveness was rooted out.

One thing I learned through that experience was obedience to God. When God says NOW, it is NOW. I got my priorities lined up so God could use me when He wanted to. When Jesus called His disciples, they did not ask for a month to get things taken care of first. They dropped everything they were doing, their nets, their boats, and followed Him. I can just imagine Matthew behind his tax table with all that money sitting there. Jesus came along and called him, and Matthew got up and left it all. It is just not normal for a tax man to leave so much money behind, but the Bible says he left it and followed Jesus. That is the kind of obedience that God wants in us today.

Ever since I was little, all I wanted to do was to serve God. Even when He was Number eight on my priority list, I still wanted to serve Him. When He told me He could not use me, I was broken. I was crushed. I had begun the preparation for ministry, and laid the groundwork for it. I did not know where God was going to end up with me (I still don't), but I wanted to be His servant.

I fell on my face that night before God and I wept and wept. It must have been hours later that the Spirit of God began ministering to me. As I lay before the Lord, my heart broken, I began to see the list of my priorities. I asked God to forgive me for putting baseball ahead of Him, running campus events, ministering in a church and all those other good things I was doing. Sometimes we get so caught up in our witnessing that we forget about the Jesus we are talking about. Examine the motivation of your heart.

Timothy was a young man, and Paul told him to let no one despise his youth. A person may be young in years, but mighty in God when his heart is in line with Him. There are people who have been serving the Lord 40 or 50 years who still do not really know their Heavenly Father. That grieves my heart. It does not matter how old a person is. No one is ever too old to get lined up with God's Word and be obedient to His Spirit. Moses did not begin his ministry until he was 80. It took him a long time to get prepared and lined up with God's plan and purpose.

We should resolve that we will not leave this earth until we have accomplished what God has put us here to accomplish. If we are wise, we will set our hearts toward that goal and when we stand before God some day, we will hear him say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant" (Matt. 25:21-23). That is what we should yearn to hear. We must fight the good fight, run the race, and win it for the glory of God.

Why do you want to serve the Lord? You love Him. You were created to praise Him, and your heart is filled with gratitude, and thanksgiving to God for what He has done. How glorious to know that we are His workmanship (Ephesians 1:12, and 2:10). There are people to be won to the Lord. They need to know about the love of God. Most of us want to do what God has called us to do, but life with its distractions gets us side-tracked and we waste precious time. It happens much too easily. That is why it is so important to get our priorities in order.

We all know people who go to church one day a week, they sit there for an hour, and when it is over, they have their sense of being religious. Then they go out and do whatever they want the rest of the week. If there is no delight in the Lord Jesus, and it is an effort to spend time with Him, they should take a good look at their commitment to Jesus. God longs for us to wait in His presence, to yearn for Him, to acknowledge Him in everything we do, say, or think. When you spend that time with Jesus, His thoughts will become your thoughts. It is only in the quiet times with Him that you can hear His voice speak to you.

Most people are so busy they do not even hear the voice of God. Then they wonder why they do not have that joy, and their lives are not a delight in the Lord. If we want joy, exuberance, zeal, and the power of God to operate in our lives in His wisdom, there is only one way to get it. Spend time in the presence of the Lord.

A lot of people want to be ministers for the Lord Jesus, but very few are actually willing to do what is required. It is surprising how many people think there is a lot of fame, grandeur, and money in being a minister, and there are some charlatans out there, but they will eventually all go down the drain. Some ministers may be urged by well-meaning friends to expand to other areas of ministry, but unless God tells a minister to go on radio or television, he had better stay exactly where he is. Otherwise he will fail. He must discern the motivation of his own heart.

Sometimes motivation is mistaken for fulfillment. Doing good deeds brings a sense of fulfillment to those who love people. It makes them feel good to help somebody else. The test is to ask who is getting the glory. Many luke-warm Christians do just enough to make themselves feel good about helping someone else. Jesus had something to say about luke-warm Christians. He said He would rather have them be hot or cold, but the luke-warm He would spit out of His mouth (Rev. 3:15-16). It is easy to become luke-warm, but it takes effort to be on fire for God. That only comes when those priorities and motivation of the heart are perfectly pure in God's sight.

Amazing things can happen in a ministry where the Word of God is used with its fine, sharp edge. It will cut the hardened, stiff-necked, rebellious ones who are sent in by the Holy Spirit. It can happen to Christians too, so they get cleaned up, shaped up, armed and ready to get moving in God's work. This is where we must be careful about judging by appearances. God confirms His Word with signs and wonders following, and there will be changed lives in evidence.

John 7:12-13 tells us that among the crowds there was wide-spread whispering about Jesus. Some said He was a good man, others said He was a deceiver, but no one would say anything publicly for fear of the Jews. The people were listening to Jesus, and at the same time were forming opinions about Him in their thoughts. This still happens today, and that is why people miss out on truths of the Spirit of God. It is easy to form an opinion quickly that is not consistent with God, and end up missing what He is trying to convey.

The people who thought Jesus was a good man formed their opinions because He healed the sick; He mended broken hearts, and did many good works. He did what His Heavenly Father told Him to do, and that is the only way we will bring glory to God in the works we do. Jesus is our example.

There are times when people will react to your message in strange ways, as they did to Jesus. If someone laughs at me or mocks me, that is all right as I communicate and the message gets through. Every response is good whether it is negative or positive. You can get a person mad as fire, but at least you moved them. The truth convicted their heart, and they hated it. Glory to God. Or, the truth convicted their heart, and they received it. Glory to God. If there was no reaction, however, it is time to examine your heart to be sure you are not just speaking your own words. It is God's Word that does the work.

Jesus was a Master Counselor. He sorted right through the heart of the people who were listening to Him. In any given assembly where He was ministering, there were people who believed in Him, and there were others who were there just to see something spectacular happen. There were some who were always trying to trip Him up with trick questions. Too bad they were not wise enough to give up their plotting. They thought they had all the truth there was. This still

goes on today, and a counselor must be in tune with the Holy Spirit to discern the motivations of people.

Jesus got His knowledge from His Father, and when He walked this earth as a human being, He spoke what God told Him to speak. He did what God told Him to do, and He was in complete obedience to His Father. He spent time in prayer, and He read the scriptures. As we follow His example, God will show us what to do, and He will teach us by His Holy Spirit. As counselors, our teaching and communication are not our own. We seek the clear, undefiled, unadulterated truth of God. Our teaching is not our own wisdom. It comes from God.

Many people heard Jesus, but only those who did what He said were the ones who really knew He was the Son of God. The hearers made up all kinds of excuses and went on their way. They all did good things, but were not obedient to the Lord Jesus. When God tells us to do something, we must not even give it a second thought, but immediately obey. There is no looking back. That can be dangerous in a Christian walk and will cause a sliding back to the cares of the world. But when we keep our eyes on Jesus, and the more we get into His Word, the stronger we become.

The most powerful thing a counselor can do to change people's lives is to get them to talk to God. As they start talking with Him, He begins to talk with them, and changes begin to happen. This takes the burden off the counselor, and the glory goes to God. He is the One being glorified, just as Jesus was glorifying His Father in what He was doing and saying. As God gets the glory, we get the joy.

There will be times when you will need that joy to sustain you. Walking close to God does not mean that everything will be going good for you. Paul paid a price for preaching about Jesus and doing the will of the Father. In Philippians 1:12 he says, "Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel." He was sitting in prison for telling people about Jesus, and yet he said it happened to further the gospel. How could it? What happened by his example?

It was evident throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone there that Paul was in chains for Christ. He was in chains, with a guard standing by, and he was still preaching Jesus. Paul had one motivation. That was the furtherance of the gospel of Jesus Christ. When we have a single mind like that, nothing will sway us. It does not matter where we are. The situation will be turned around to the glory of God.

Paul said that because of his chains, most of the brothers in the Lord were encouraged to speak the Word of God more courageously and fearlessly. They were encouraged by his example. If Paul could sit in prison and still preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, then those who were totally blessed and free could do no less.

Verse 15 is interesting. "It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of good will." Apparently there were people on the outside who were preaching against Paul while he was in prison. They probably said that if he really was who he said he was, he would not be sitting in chains. He would have broken the chains, crashed through the walls, perhaps stood

on a pinnacle proclaiming that Jesus is Lord! There are churches today doing the same thing. One puts down another because of certain pet doctrines, and they put aside the Lord Jesus Christ and the furtherance of the gospel.

Another incident to learn by is when the disciples discovered another man who was healing people and casting out devils in Jesus' name. They told him to stop because he was not one of their little group. There was Jesus trying to multiply Himself and teach others to preach the gospel and minister to the people, and His own disciples had the wrong motivation in their hearts. They were selfish, jealous, and trying to keep Jesus all to themselves. Jesus set them straight; however, when He told them, "He cannot very well be doing works in my name and be against me. Leave him alone, and let him do what he is doing."

As we follow this example, we must believe in our hearts that our Heavenly Father has more for us than we can ask for. The only thing limiting us from receiving is our minds. All the truth from the Holy Spirit is received by our spirits, not our minds, and our minds will work against us. It is so easy to believe that things are impossible, they will not work for us, and miracles do not happen in this day and age. Science opposes the Word of God in many respects. If something miraculous happens, and it cannot be lined up with scientific evidence, they will have to discard it, chalk it up as some unknown or unexplained occurrence.

When the Spirit of God moves on a person who is open and receiving His Word, he cannot describe it scientifically. I cannot explain how God puts hearing into people when they have had parts of the ear surgically removed. I know it happens, but I cannot tell you how God did it. All I know is that they hear. I cannot tell you how people can suddenly see even though the retina is missing from their eyes. All I know is that they see. There was a man who was bending his wrist, which was no big deal in itself, but he had a steel plate in his wrist. He had it for twelve years, but when Jesus touched him, he could bend it. Thank you, Jesus.

This is the way the Spirit of God works and moves. It is strange to the natural mind, but God can take a person who is into alcohol, drugs, immorality of every sort, and by a touch of His hand, transform them into a clean, pure vessel for His honor and glory. God can change impossible family situations. I cannot tell you how He does it, but I know He changes hearts and minds, and makes bodies whole.

Jesus said, "Be it done to you according to your faith" (Matt. 9:21). Believe, and receive. It is there for those who are willing to put their faith in God.

MOTIVATION OF THE HEART

A counselor must try to understand human nature and realize that every action and word are prompted by certain motivations. Some are good, some are negative, some are destructive.

Desire for excitement and adventure is a motivator. Escape is another motivator. It is important to understand that the reasons people do what they do is not always as simple as it may appear. Many actions and words are motivated by selfishness, greed, envy, fear, love, acceptance, security, guilt, lust, covetousness, fear of failure, jealousy, manipulation (trying to control someone else), anger, desire for recognition, loneliness, inferiority, depravation, grief, and overcompensation (to develop in one area to compensate for another one where they feel they are lacking).

It would greatly benefit every counselor to search out the motivations in his own heart to understand why he does and says what he does. If you are counseling someone or helping another person, you have to help them get in touch with the motivations for their actions, and get down to the root of the problem.

As we look at examples in the Bible of things people did, we can learn much from their motivations and experiences. Human nature has not changed, and people still do the same things today as they did in Bible days. It would be wise to examine our own hearts as we look at these people.

We have all probably met somebody who appeared to be obnoxious to us. We tend to see things clearly in that other person because we have the same obnoxious problem ourselves in varying degrees and forms. We see it so clearly that it irritates us. That is when we must look at ourselves, and examine our own hearts to see where the problem is.

Let us take a look at Judas. The first thing we think of is his betrayal of Jesus. Why would a fellow who traveled with Jesus for three years sell Him for thirty pieces of silver? That was an insignificant amount. Judas was the treasurer, and there was a lot more money than thirty pieces of silver that went through that treasury. What motivated Judas? The first answer we think of is greed, and there are usually several different factors involved in a person's motivation for doing something. Greed is one of the motivators.

The Bible tells us that a spirit of Satan came within Judas. What opened the door to that devil? It was greed, which is considered idolatry in the Bible. Judas was expecting Jesus to establish His kingdom on earth as the Messiah who was going to conquer the Romans and all the other enemies of the land. When he saw that Jesus had no intention of setting up an earthly kingdom, he was disappointed and disillusioned. This was a powerful motivator in Judas' life, and it opened the door for Satan to use him.

A kiss is a very affectionate, loving gesture. Anybody in that garden would have thought Judas was a friend of Jesus coming to greet Him with affection. A holy kiss. Why a kiss? There must have been great tension inside Judas because he still loved Jesus. That was obvious because

when he later repented and was rebuffed by the Jewish leaders, he was driven by guilt and hung himself.

Jesus was in the place of a counselor in that garden, and notice how He immediately sorted out the motivation of His betrayer. Imagine what Judas went through when he realized that Jesus knew he was betraying Him while sitting at the Last Supper. You can see how a devil can blind people and actually deceive them and their motivations so they deceive themselves. When everything was uncovered, Judas saw what he had really done, but because of the deception, he did not remember what Jesus had taught on repentance and forgiveness.

There was another time when Jesus was visiting at the home of one of the Pharisees, and they neglected to wash the feet of the guests according to the custom in that day. A woman came in off the street and everyone knew who she was. She approached Jesus and poured precious ointment all over His feet as she wept, and wiped them with her hair. The others made a big issue out of that precious ointment being wasted, and that it should have been sold to help the poor.

People who care for money are concerned about the monetary value of things, and it becomes obvious what the motivation of the heart is. To give the proceeds from the ointment to the poor was certainly in good order, and giving to the ministry is always right and good, but it was so much better to use it in bathing and perfuming Jesus' feet. That woman's motive was love. This was a woman of the streets, but her love for Jesus brought about repentance and forgiveness, and set her free from her old past life. She was filled with thankfulness and gratitude to God, and expressed it by ministering to Jesus, the man.

Love is a powerful motivator. There are people who go out of their way just loving others all the time, giving of themselves continually. They are so thankful that God has saved them and given them a new life that they want to spread it around to everybody. When a person's life is cleaned up, they feel new, holy, forgiven, and the thankfulness and gratitude they feel are expressed in loving acts towards others.

It is sad, but true that there are people who would rather have the goods than the Lord. In the Pharisee's house, those people were murmuring that the money from the ointment should have gone to the poor, and although it sounded charitable, their intentions were to put it into their treasury. In counseling people, you will find that not everything people say is what they mean, for good, or bad. I tell people, "Do not listen to what people say; listen to what is behind what they are saying."

When people come against you, perhaps even cussing at you and saying nasty things about you, there is something behind it all. You must be willing to love them and let them know it. There will come a time when they will thank God for His love in your heart that helped you overlook their words and actions. Then there is freedom. God is concerned with building bridges, not blowing them up. We are ministers of reconciliation (II Cor. 5:18). Our desire is to draw people together in the love of God, not separating or dividing them. Be honest with yourself to see if you have a problem in this area.

God is doing a good work with our problems and He is changing us. Thank God. He is daily making us into people who are just like Him. I believe that if Judas had repented, he would have been forgiven and restored. But he did not. The woman of the streets did repent and she was forgiven, made clean and pure in God's eyes. People make choices, and they make decisions which are based on the motivation of the heart.

In another situation, Jesus had told Peter that He would be going to the cross. Peter said, "Never, Lord!...This shall never happen to you!" (Matt. 16:22). What motivated Peter to deny the need for Jesus to die on the cross? It was insecurity. He was afraid of being left alone. He had grown to love the Lord Jesus greatly, depending upon Him. When Jesus was not with the disciples, they could not cast out devils, they could not heal anybody. They were afraid to be without Him.

At this point, the disciples were not yet leaders. They were still followers, and followers without a leader are lost. Leaders do need followers, and followers do need leaders. One cannot function in the Lord successfully without the other. If you are a follower, delight in the Lord and be obedient to do what is required of you. If you are a leader, delight in God that you have been called to lead, and know that someone will follow if you have been truly called to lead.

When Peter spoke to Jesus out of his insecurity, Jesus looked at him and said, "Get behind me, Satan!" (Matt. 16:23). Peter was being influenced by the devil, and we can be too if we are not on guard. Jesus recognized who was talking to Him. Although He looked at Peter and spoke to him, Peter was not Satan. Peter was motivated by ignorance of the plan and purpose of God, and that allowed a devil to use him. He knew that Jesus had to go to the cross, but he did not really understand why. He had not grasped the fullness of the Gospel and the need for Jesus to go to the cross.

In another conversation with Peter, Jesus asked him, "Do you love Me, "Peter?" (John 21:15-17). Peter immediately answered, "Of course, I love You, Lord." Jesus told him, "Feed my sheep." He then asked the question two more times, and Peter insisted that he loved his Lord. The third time, the question got right through to Peter's heart and he was grieved.

It was easy for Peter to tell Jesus how much he loved Him when they were together and everything was fine. But when the going got tough, Peter denied the Lord. There are people today who say they love Jesus, but their love is shallow. When the situations of life begin to overwhelm them, they forget that Jesus is Lord. They deceive themselves. True love for God brings obedience, and if we love God we keep His commandments.

Another interesting facet to the situation with Peter in his conversation with Jesus was when he looked in another direction and saw John. He asked the Lord, "Master, what about him?" Isn't that just like people? Always wondering about what the other guy is going to do, to take the focus off themselves. It is doubtful Peter said that out of love for John. His insecurity probably caused him to wonder if John was doing something better than he was. This motivation was rooted in selfishness, jealousy, and envy.

Jesus quickly cut to the heart of the matter, and told Peter it was none of his business what John was doing. He tells us the same thing today. Each one is to be obedient to do what God tells

us to do. When people have a tendency to want to do or be like somebody else, their motivation may be a need for getting more attention. This often happens in families where two children are jealous of time spent with their parents, even though it is equally divided. This must be dealt with whether it occurs in children or adults. When each realizes that our security is in the Lord Jesus, we will want only to be like Him.

In another instance, after Jesus had ministered to thousands of people, the crowd had just dispersed leaving only the twelve and He asked, "You do not want to leave too, do you?" (John 6:67). Peter answered, "Lord to whom are we to go? You have the words of eternal life" (John 6:68). Peter believed that Jesus was the Christ; the Son of the living God, and Jesus told him he could not have said that unless His Father had revealed it to him.

We sometimes chuckle at the disciples before Pentecost, and it is because we see so much of ourselves in them. It is encouraging to realize that if God could use those twelve from such different backgrounds, He certainly can use us. It is wonderful to know that as we draw closer to God, the more clearly we see ourselves. Then comes the purging time when the Holy Spirit takes away all the junk that we do not need. We do not have to feel that nobody loves us, or that we are alone. That is excess baggage that we do not need any more. When we get to know our Heavenly Father, He gives equal attention to everyone who draws near to Him. He shows no partiality.

In Matthew 18, Jesus is talking with His disciples, and Peter asked, "Master, how many times should we forgive people?" He thought seven times was really quite enough. Jesus said, "No, Peter, seventy times seven." That is four hundred and ninety times! If you forgive somebody for doing something wrong to you, how many sins are on the record? Zero. If they do it again, and you forgive them, it is zero again. It is impossible to ever get to 490 times. As long as you keep forgiving them, the record stays at zero. That is true forgiveness. That is what God does with us. He says that if we are faithful to acknowledge our sin to Him, He is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. It is off the record.

If someone has a problem in forgiving other people, the motivation of their heart is selfishness, pride, anger, and other emotions such as resentment, bitterness, self-pity, and a wounded spirit. These are all wrong, and only Jesus can heal that person. A counselor must keep pointing the way to Jesus as the only cure in overcoming an unforgiving heart. Only then, can a person be truly set free.

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF MOTIVATIONS: PHARISEES, SADDUCEES

A person cannot teach the Word of God with all his heart if he does not enjoy the Word of God. If it is not life to you, it will not be life to anyone else. If it is not true to you, you will be unable to communicate that truth to anyone else. If you do not know the Word of God works, it will not work through you for anyone else. We must hold the Word of God in very high esteem. God does. He said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My Word will not pass away" (Matt. 24:35).

We need the Word of God because of all the pressures we face. Our bodies need to be in line with God's Word. It saves our souls (our minds and emotions). As we conform to God's Word, I Corinthians 6 tells us that our life is not our own anymore. It belongs to God because we have been bought with a price.

Therefore, we will serve God with our spirit and our body which is the temple of the Holy Spirit of God. As we begin to see ourselves as God sees us, the world will have less influence on us. Other people will have less influence on us. The only thing that will have any influence on us will be the Word of God.

It is one thing to have knowledge of the Word of God, but we can have more. Jesus said, "My words are spirit and they are life" (John 6:63). We need more than knowledge; we need life, and we can have it abundantly. The Bible tells us to meditate on the Word day and night, and we will be "Like a tree planted in the living waters, your leaf is not going to wither up and your fruit is not going to fall off before its time. Everything you set your hand to is going to prosper" (Psalm 1:2-3).

In counseling (which is simply helping other people draw near to God), it is vital to encourage a deep love of God's Word, to meditate on it, digest it, enjoy it a little bit at a time. It is not possible to listen to ten ministry tapes a week and digest all that information in that length of time. We must study one at a time, get all we can out of it and learn it thoroughly.

As we look at different people in the Bible and the motivations of their hearts, we will find that there are two basic motivations. One of the flesh, (what I want to do for me), and the motivation of the spirit (what God wants me to do for Him and for others). There are three major motivations that we experience: fear, guilt, and love. Fear and guilt are flesh motivations, and love is a spirit motivation. It is probably true that more people are motivated by fear and guilt than by love. The reason is because they have not come into a full understanding of what love really is. But we are learning and growing in understanding that by loving one another, we are actually loving God.

The first subject in our motivation study is Abigail. The account is recorded in I Samuel 25:14-19. David had approached Nabal, Abigail's husband, for some provisions for his men and himself because Saul was after David's life. However, Nabal hurled insults at David and his men, and the servants came back to Abigail and told her what happened. Nabal refused to help David

and his men although they had done nothing to harm them, and were actually very good men. They felt there was no reason for the way they were treated, and told Abigail that Nabal "is such a wicked man that no one can talk to him."

Abigail lost no time. She took two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five dressed sheep, five sacks of roasted grain, a hundred cakes of raisins and two hundred cakes of pressed figs and loaded them on donkeys. Then she told her servants to go on ahead, she would follow them. But she did not tell her husband Nabal.

In verses 22-25, when Abigail saw David, she quickly got off her donkey and bowed down before him with her face to the ground. She fell at his feet and said, "My lord, let the blame be on me alone. Please let your servant speak to you; hear what your servant has to say. May my lord pay no attention to that wicked man, Nabal. He is just like his name. His name is Fool, and folly goes with him. But as for me, your servant, I did not see the men my master sent."

Abigail had sent goods to help David, and she came herself without telling her husband about it. She told David that her husband was a fool, and let him know that if David's men had come to her, she would have helped them out. She told David that her husband was an evil, wicked man, but she was on David's side.

In verse 36, we see that when Abigail went to Nabal, he was in the house holding a banquet like that of a king. He was in high spirits and very drunk. So she told him nothing until daybreak. Then when Nabal was sober, his wife told him all these things, and his heart failed him and he became like a stone. About ten days later, the Lord struck Nabal and he died.

When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, "Praise be to the Lord, who had upheld my cause against Nabal for treating me with contempt. He has kept me from doing wrong and has brought Nabal's wrong down on his own head." Then David sent word to Abigail asking her to become his wife. She bowed down with her face to the ground and said, "Here is your maidservant, ready to serve you and wash the feet of my master's servants."

On the surface, it would appear that Abigail was a very virtuous, righteous, upstanding woman of God. However, as we look beyond her actions and words at the motivations of her heart, we see a rebellious, unsubmitive wife. In calling her husband a fool, it shows she wanted to get out from under that evil, wicked man. According to the Bible, he did have an attack, and God finished him off for insulting his servant, David. But, did God need Abigail's help? She was the one responsible for Nabal's death at that point. Why would she take things into her own hands? What was her motivation? It was fear. She was afraid for her life and her servants. It appears she was not concerned about her husband, so the spirit operating in her was independent, wounded, judgmental, and disloyal.

Another factor to consider is that apparently Abigail was a very nice looking woman. And according to the Bible, David was a very nice looking young man. Motivation number two was: She was in the flesh lusting after him, wanting to be his wife. She wanted to dump Nabal whom she considered to be a fat, old, sloppy, drunk, evil fool. No doubt, word had gotten around that David was to be the next king, and Abigail was not only selfish, looking out for herself, but

ambitious also. David's track record was not all that great either. He did many good things for the Lord, and he was a man after God's own heart, but he also did a lot of things that were not godly. However, he was always quick to ask God's forgiveness and make things right.

This is a very important lesson for a counselor to learn. Many times in counseling people, you will find that the motivation they come to you with is not always true. You have to discern by the Spirit of God what is true, and what is not. People do not always mean what they say. It is a natural inclination to build themselves up, make themselves look good and make the other one to be the bad guy. A good way to get themselves out of a mess is to put the blame on somebody else. A counselor needs discernment and wisdom from God to help people make the necessary changes.

Another Bible character is Job, and we will take a look at his counselors. Although a counselor's role is to help people, it is unfortunate that not everyone who counsels is looking out for the best interest of the person he is helping. Sometimes a parent or a best friend counsels, but it may not always be godly counsel. The only good counsel is what comes out of the Word of God and what comes from your spirit. You will learn to discern between right and wrong. Sometimes, even a counselor's motivation may be off a little bit.

In the case of Job's counselors, one told him that he must have been a horrible sinner and that is why all those problems came upon him. There may be a time for a counselor to tell his people this, but in Job's case, God said that counselor's word was wrong. Another counselor told Job that God must be teaching him something through all the suffering he was going through. God said that man's counsel was wrong also. In other words, God does not allow someone to carry a heart disease to teach him something through that condition. God teaches people through the Word of God and applying His Word to daily life.

Those men counseling Job had many problems. In Job 42:7 and following, we read: "After the Lord had said these things to Job, He said to Eliphaz the Temanite, I am angry with you and your two friends because you have not spoken of me what is right as my servant Job has. So now take seven bulls, seven rams, go to my servant Job and sacrifice a burnt offering for yourself. My servant Job will pray for you according to your folly."

One counselor told Job he was a horrible sinner, another said God was teaching him something which is a total misunderstanding of how God operates. So what was the motivation of their hearts? Job was the wealthiest man of his time. He was blessed going in and blessed going out, blessed at every side. Satan himself told God he could not touch Job because God had a hedge around him. The motivation of these counselors was jealousy. They were glad he had problems. In Proverbs we are told not to rejoice when our enemy falls, and here they were rejoicing in their hearts that Job was in trouble. They were really proud of the privilege and opportunity to come to this brother and set him straight. They were not really interested in helping him; they were interested in telling him what his problems were.

How many times have we seen God's people come along with that accusing finger when someone is down, judging, criticizing, and belittling them? Instead of helping them, asking God for forgiveness and getting back on the right track, they just trample them down a bit more. It happens all the time. A counselor must be on guard against a judgmental, envious spirit that waits

for someone to fall so that he can have his big chance to set them straight about their failures. All a person has to do is call on the Lord, and He will vindicate them, and fight for them. I would hate to be the person stomping on someone that God is fighting for.

On the surface, it appeared that Job's counselors were coming to help him. They came, sat there with him, and talked with him. But look at their real motivation. It would appear that Abigail did a good thing going out to help David. She was saving lives and helping God's man. But the motivation of her heart was not right.

Now we will look at Jesus. We will discuss four things that came from Him. The first one is just principle. Jesus said "Let the blind lead the blind and let them all fall into the ditch" (Matt. 15:14). At first, that sounds a bit hard and cruel. However, as we examine the background, we find that the Pharisees and Sadducees had been causing some trouble, condemning Jesus for what He was doing. He offended them. He offended quite a few people. Why do people get offended? It is because they do not get their own way, or they hear what they do not want to hear.

The disciples came to Jesus and said, "Master, don't you know you offended these teachers of the law? They are high church officials." What was the motivation of the disciples' hearts? Fear of the religious authorities, and for Jesus was one motivating factor. Two, they had a need for acceptance.

Consider this carefully. How in the world did they have the audacity to come to the Master and tell Him He had messed up? There is something innate within people to try and make themselves better than other people, or at least bring themselves up to their level. In order to do that, the disciples had to bring Jesus down. Who were they to tell Jesus anything? Instead of helping Him, giving Him support, they were being critical. They were motivated by fear. After all, they could have been kicked out of the church, or into more trouble. They may even have lost their lives.

Jesus looked at them and said, "Leave them alone." In other words, be quiet because you do not know what you are talking about, or what you are doing. Jesus knew that people believe what they want to believe. What was His motivation? It was love. He knew the truth had to prevail, and only those who were open to the truth were going to follow the truth. Anyone foolish enough to follow the other kind of teaching and leadership would end up with the results of their own foolishness and their own decisions. Jesus knew that people are always looking out for themselves.

On the surface, it would appear that Jesus did not care one bit about any of those people, that He was unloving in His words. But one has to judge righteous judgment, not by the appearance of things. Jesus had to deal with refuting error, and He had to get His disciples back on the right track so they would not be turned by the faces or thoughts of other people from the truth. The only way to accomplish that is to grow in the Word of God so we know what is true.

In another example, when a crowd of several thousands had gathered, Jesus began to speak first to His disciples saying, "Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees which is hypocrisy." In Matthew 23, Jesus called them "whited sepulchres." They were all white on the outside, appearing to be very religious, righteous, and holy, but on the inside they were rotten and

stinking, and going against everything God stood for. He said, "There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed or hidden that will not be made known. What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the housetops." This is a beautiful section of how everything is going to have its day. Time is one of the greatest blessings we have. Time will show what is of God, and what is not. It will show whether a relationship is really true or not. Time proves all things. Regardless of what goes on around us, time will show us the truth of the matter.

When Jesus hung on the cross and said, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do," he was not covering up for what they were doing. He was not excusing them for their actions because they did not know any better. Mercy is not feeling sorry for somebody. People sometimes think they should show mercy when actually; there should be a little justice. Justice always precedes mercy. There must be justice for mercy to be true. When Jesus gave His life as the price for our sin, justice was served. Then, as He showed the justice, He asked for mercy.

There was a great cost on Jesus' part, and there was no excuse for the wicked actions that took place at the crucifixion. When He asked His Father forgive them, His motivation was love. Jesus never did anything that was not done in love. He is our example.

Another example is found in Matthew 7:15-27, dealing with false prophets in sheep's clothing. We must realize that the devil is not going to approach anyone with garbage. He poses as an angel of light, appearing to be something he is not. That is why there must be a sorting out, and verses 16 and 17 tells us how it is to be done. "By their fruit you will recognize them." We take note of actions and words, what they do and what they say. A false prophet rarely has anything come out true. Jesus said, "Every good tree bears good fruit but a bad tree bears bad fruit, and a good tree cannot bear bad fruit." And, "A bad tree cannot bear good fruit."

Jesus goes on to what I believe is a key scripture for the last days. "And not everybody who called to me, Lord, Lord will enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of Him who sent me." He goes in through the basis of salvation, which is: "We are saved by grace through faith, not by works lest anyone should boast." A person may claim to have faith, but if there is no fruit that accompanies that faith, it is likely that person is not saved.

Obedience is the key. It is the test for false prophets. Check to see if they are obedient to the Word of God. They fail the test because the motivation of a false prophet is Self. They want people to follow them rather than Jesus. Their goal is fame, wealth, and glory for themselves. One false prophet I saw on television had twenty-three Rolls Royce's, and as he drove down the highway, people bowed down to him. He lived in a mansion on a hill while everybody else lived down below him. They were happy, blissful, and completely deceived, depraved, and deprived. But he had it made, at the time.

Sometimes, the deceit is more subtle, but before we begin to look at other ministries and begin criticizing them, we must examine our own hearts to be sure we are in complete obedience to the Lord. It is only when the motivation of our heart is love that we can effectively use the Word of God to change people's lives.

As we examine the Pharisees and Sadducees, let us see if we can discover the motivation of their hearts. In Luke 11:53-54 we read, "When Jesus left there the Pharisees and the teachers of the law began to oppose him fiercely and to besiege Him with questions." Were they seeking to learn and gain understanding of the truths of the Spirit of God? No. Their questions were asked to trap Him in His answers. Jesus was asked loaded questions time and time again, and He often would not even answer them. He knew the motivation of their hearts. When Jesus did answer, they were never successful in trapping Him. In fact, many of them believed as a result of His answers. He had God's wisdom and insight to know exactly what was going on amongst them.

At one point, they were gathered in a group watching Jesus to see if He was going to work on the Sabbath, perhaps do some healing, so they could trip Him up. Jesus knew their intentions, and if anyone knew how to make a spectacle, it was Jesus. God is always wanting to display His glory, and He will do it in the most outstanding ways. God directed a man to come up and hold out his hand, and immediately Jesus knew that the Pharisees and Sadducees thought they had Him. He turned and asked them directly, "Which is it better to do? Leave this man crippled, or do the work of God and heal him on the Sabbath?" Jesus was appealing to a higher order; not the letter of the law, but the spirit of the law. At this question, they all felt like the bad guys. Instead of tripping Him up, Jesus turned the tables on them by simply asking if they wanted that man sick or well.

A counselor will always want what is best for the counselee, and his motivation will be from a heart of love. However, if people, like the Pharisees and Sadducees, have their minds made up and are not willing to change, it is better to avoid debates and long discussions. In their own minds, the Pharisees and Sadducees were right and Jesus was wrong. They would not accept Him as the Son of God.

In another instance in Luke 14:16, "Jesus was driving out a demon that was mute. The man could not speak. When the demon left that man who had been dumb, he spoke and the crowd was amazed. But some of them, the Sadducees and the Pharisees, said by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, He drives out demons. Others tested Him by asking for a sign from heaven." In other words, "If you are the Son of God, show us a sign from heaven." The devil did the same thing to Jesus in Matthew 4.

Those people could not rejoice in the fact that a man was made whole. They felt they had to do something about their position, and were motivated by jealousy, envy, strife, and hatred. To say that a work done by the Spirit of God was done by a devil is deep hatred. It was unbelievable that they would even say the devil made someone whole! When Jesus said in Matthew 12 that, "A house divided against itself will not stand," He said that Satan is not going to cast out his own devils.

When others tested Jesus by asking for a sign, He would not do it. People who look for signs before they can believe will never get a sign. Throughout the Bible, no one with an unbelieving heart got a sign. In the world, the devil is always ready to give a sign, but as believers, we have the Word and the Spirit of God.

I believe that many people have problems, not because of the devil, but because of themselves. We often cause our own problems, and to make it worse, we dwell on ourselves, our

problems and situations. God tells us to dwell on Him. If we are not dwelling on God, we are committing what is called idolatry, making ourselves as a god, and that is a sin. That gives the devil a right to our lives.

In Mark 3:1-6 we read: "Jesus went into the synagogue and a man was there with a shriveled hand. Some of them were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched Him closely to see if He would heal on the Sabbath and Jesus said to the man with the shriveled hand, stand up in front of everyone. And Jesus asked them, which is lawful on the Sabbath, to do good or to do evil? To save life or to kill? But they remained silent." They were not stupid. In the first place, they did not know how to answer, and in the second place, they knew Jesus was right, but they did not want to acknowledge that in front of all the people.

The Pharisees and Sadducees also remained silent to see what Jesus had in mind, and watched to see what would happen. They figured if they let Jesus talk long enough, they would find out what was really going on. One of the most beautiful things in counseling is that the Holy Spirit draws out the truth if you just let a person talk long enough.

Another reason those men remained silent is because they did not want to incriminate themselves. If they had said anything at that point, Jesus would have made fools out of them. He had done it time after time already, and they were starting to gain an understanding of some things.

The Scripture says that Jesus looked around at them in anger. This was righteous anger, and He was deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts. They were rebellious and stiff-necked, and could not rejoice in any work of God. They did not delight in God or His works. They did not love the people. They should have been overjoyed to see a man healed, but all they concerned themselves with was their doctrines and their positions. They were too proud to humble themselves and say they were wrong.

"And Jesus said to the man, stretch out your hand, and he stretched it out and his hand was completely restored. Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus." What was the motivation of Jesus' heart when He did that healing? Love and glory to God. When a servant of God is moving by the Spirit of God, it is a very unique work that is done. He has absolutely no fear of people or what they think. The miracle proves that God is real, and His Word is true, regardless of whether anyone believes it or not. When you move in the Spirit of God, you cannot be moved by what people think, or you will be defeated. When you are led by the Holy Spirit, it is not your reputation at stake, it is Jesus' reputation, and His will not be hindered.

Our last example is Joseph. Genesis records the account of how Joseph was sold into slavery, and ended up in Egypt. He was taken into Potiphar's house where he proved himself to be a faithful and loyal servant. For this he was exalted to be the head manager over all of Potiphar's affairs. When Potiphar's wife tried to seduce him, Joseph rebuffed her and said, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" He was motivated in his heart with love for God, loyalty to his master (Potiphar), purity, and a desire for holiness, so he ran away from the woman. She became upset and became motivated by rejection, revenge, anger, hurt pride, resentment, and outright hatred.

Potiphar's wife was to blame; and therefore, did not need to tell her husband anything. But she did. Why? She wanted him to take action against Joseph. When a person is in a state of wrong motivation, they become convicted, and they will feel hatred regarding that conviction. This woman knew Joseph was right, and she had to do something to cover her sin before word of it got to Potiphar, and she would be removed. So she went after Joseph, motivated now by fear of what would happen if her sin was discovered. She would have been killed for that sin. As a result, Joseph was innocently thrown into prison.

I believe this woman's sin eventually caught up with her. The Bible does not record it, but in Galatians 6 we are told that "Whatsoever a man sows, that is what he will reap." God will not be mocked. "If he sows to the flesh he will reap from the flesh. If he sows to the spirit, he will reap from the spirit." If you sow love, love will come to you. If you sow trust, trust will come back. On the other hand, if you sow hatred, hatred will come back. The same holds true of unforgiveness and bitterness.

All that we are motivated by will always come back to either one of two sources: being led of the Spirit, or being led of the flesh. We must always keep our eyes on Jesus who leads by the Spirit. He is our perfect example.

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF MATURATION OF THE DISCIPLES

“No weapons formed against me shall prosper and every word that is spoken against me will be turned back upon those who have spoken it. Such is the inheritance of the righteous upon those who have spoken it” (Isa. 54:17). This scripture makes it clear that when bad counsel is given, it will become a curse. That is why God told Job to pray for his friends. They had given him bad counsel, and those words would have fallen back upon them. A counselor must be sure to give counsel from the heart of God, not out of the motivation of his own heart.

The scripture tells us that life and death are in the power of the tongue. You can speak blessing to a person, and you can speak a curse to a person. The scripture also cautions us to take heed what we hear. We must pay attention to what we are listening to because it will have an effect on us for good or bad. The wisdom of people in the world is only natural wisdom, but God’s Word brings life. As wise as people in the world may be, their ways are not God’s ways, and God’s ways are not man’s ways. James 4:4 says, “If we are a friend of the world, we are an enemy of God.” We cannot have the world’s ways and God’s ways at the same time.

We see people who have one foot in the world and one foot with God. These people do not know how wonderful it is to have both feet in God where there is total peace, love, joy, power, provision, protection, and the divine blessing of God. They are too busy thinking with their own understanding, trying to use their own worldly wisdom. When a counselor points them toward the Lord to make a total commitment to Him, they will begin to realize they are sons and daughters of the most high God with the divine ability of God flowing through them. Counselors can change people’s lives by drawing them to God. This should be the goal and purpose of every counselor.

There is tremendous power in simple words that are spoken by the Spirit of God. You can lay hands on in the name of Jesus and the divine power of God will flow through and heal a person’s body, set their minds free from pressures, fears, and anxieties. When we begin to see ourselves as holy because of what Jesus has done, God’s strength, His wisdom, His power, His mercy and His love flow right through our bodies. His words come out of our mouths. They are words of life. However, this requires a real commitment, and to get into the deeper things of God, we must search for them. We have to dig for them. That takes perseverance and pressing ahead to get what God has for us.

We know that Jesus loved His disciples, and they loved Him in return, following Him faithfully in His earthly ministry. As we examine the motivations of the disciples’ hearts, we’ll see how Jesus dealt with them in each situation we look at.

In one instance, a man was doing works in the name of Jesus, and when the disciples ran across him, they told him to quit casting out devils and healing people in Jesus’ name. They came back and reported it to Jesus thinking they had done a good thing. However, Jesus told them, “No one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me, for whoever is not against us is for us” (Mark 9:39-40). Why did the disciples tell this man to stop what he was doing? It was because he did not follow their group. In other words, from their

perspective, he was not a part of their little clique. They thought that as true followers of Jesus, the power belonged only to them. The motivation of their hearts was selfishness, pride, jealousy, envy, conceit, and division. We see this happening in churches today.

Here was a man who got hold of what Jesus was teaching, and he started doing the works of Jesus. The disciples got all upset because of it. They were still tagging along on Jesus' apron strings, letting Him do all the works, while they took pride in being close to Him as personal friends. Jesus was trying to train them to do what this other man was doing, and they tried to stop him. The response Jesus gave them, "He cannot be doing good works in my name and be against us." Put it all into the right perspective.

In another situation, a mother approached Jesus and asked Him, "Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right hand and the other at your left in your kingdom" (Matt. 20:21). Every mother wants the best for her children, and there was nothing wrong with the desire, or the asking. However, Jesus told her, that it was not for me to grant (Matt. 20:23). He could do only what His Father told Him, and it was not up to Jesus to appoint who would sit on either side of Him. That should have been the end of the incident. However, the other disciples overheard the conversation, and needless to say, they became angry. I believe they were angry because they did not think of it first and ask for those positions for themselves.

Let us examine the motivation of the mother first. She loved Jesus, and she loved her sons. She wanted a place of honor for them. There is nothing wrong with wanting a blessing from God, but when you ask for a position, that is something only God can determine. In wanting her sons lifted up to a place of honor above the others, this mother's motivation was creating strife. People in the flesh want to be exalted. The Bible tells us, "Humble yourself under His mighty hand and in due time, He will exalt you." It is God who will exalt you. Honor from people is short-lived, but honor from God is eternal.

On the surface, it would appear that this mother's motivation was love. Proverbs 16:2 says, "A man's ways appear right to a man, but God searches the intentions and the motivations of the heart." What looked like love, simply wanting the best for her sons, was actually selfishness because the honor would have been at the expense of others. It was a subtle thing, and we can see why the other disciples were angry.

Let us examine the motivation of the two sons. Their mother did the talking for them, and they thought it was a good deal. They wanted those positions, but were afraid to ask for themselves, thinking it might sound better coming from someone else, like their mother. But notice that the other disciples were angry at the two sons, not the mother. They had been taught and trained as equals, and here they were trying to sneak ahead into positions of honor. The motivation was selfishness. Philippians 2 tells us to prefer others as more important than ourselves. They should have been seeking honor for the other disciples instead of themselves.

Another example is found in Luke 9:51-56: "Now as the time approached for Him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem and He sent messengers on ahead of Him. And they went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for Him, but the people there did not welcome Him because He was heading for Jerusalem. And when the disciples, James and John

saw this they asked, “Lord, do you want us to call down fire from heaven to destroy them?” Jesus answered them, “Don’t you know of what spirit you are? I have not come to destroy people. I came to save them.”

When the disciples saw their Master being shut off in the Samaritan village, they wanted to defend Him and call down fire on the heads of these people. The Jews and Samaritans were all-out enemies, and there was much prejudice against each other. The disciples were angry and wanted to destroy the people for rejecting the truth of God in their Master. They loved Jesus, they believed He was true, and they believed He had life for those people. They believed Jesus could help them, heal them, solve their problems, yet when they saw these people rejecting Jesus; they wanted to reject the people.

It is a natural, human response to defend someone you love who has been rejected, but it is a dangerous position in which to be. Scripture says that he who meddles in another man’s strife takes a dog by the ears. If you get involved in somebody else’s problem, whether you are invited into it or not, you would be wise to get out. Most of the time, it is impossible to get the whole truth from people because of their motivations.

In the Samaritan village, the people did not reject Jesus because He was the son of God. They rejected Him simply because He was a Jew. Prejudice ran high, and hatred motivated them. It was not directed at Jesus personally, but His nationality. This happens with people today. Someone may reject your witness although they may believe it is true. Pride gets in the way, and they cannot back down. Sometimes it is even spiritual pride. People have a hard time with change. They like to be comfortable, believing what they have been taught over the years. Change requires some effort, and it is uncomfortable.

If we are not willing to change an area in our lives for the Lord, the door is open for the devil to work against us. Our attitude has to change. Jesus showed us what the true attitude was, and what was in His heart, by saying He came to save the people, love them, and help them. If they did not want to receive it, that was all right. He moved on to somebody who would. There was no bitterness, unforgiveness, or hatred for those people for rejecting Him. He just kept moving on.

On the surface, it appeared that the disciples were sticking up for their Master. Revenge is a very powerful motivator. It would appear they were loyal to Jesus. But He rebuked them by telling them they were wrong. He rebuked their prejudice. They were just as bad as the Samaritans and were mirroring the same prejudice the people were showing against them. God does not use fear as a motivator. He uses love.

On another occasion, some mothers came to Jesus with their little ones wanting Him to lay His hands on the children and bless them. The disciples told them the Master was too busy, and tried to send them away. He had been ministering to all kinds of people and He was tired, and here came these women with their children. It appeared they were concerned about his well-being, and they wanted Him to get some rest and peace and quiet. However, Jesus saw what was going on and He called them aside and told them to allow the children to come to Him, and not to forbid them for “Of such is the kingdom of heaven.” He was rebuking them again.

God rebukes those He loves. Scripture tells us that open rebuke is better than secret love. Jesus wanted His disciples to know the heart of God. He trained them in the way that God would have them to go. In fact, He spent more time correcting the disciples than He did instructing them. Sometimes correction is better than instruction. No doubt, when similar incidents occurred in their ministries, they were slower to rebuke others who spoke in the name of and did the works of God. They were slower in calling down fire on people, and slower in forbidding anyone from coming to Jesus.

The disciples obviously felt that these mothers with their little children were too insignificant, and they would be a bother to Jesus. I wonder if they would have felt the same if some ruler from the synagogue or a high official in the government had approached them to see Jesus. There is an account in scripture where the disciples said to Jesus, "Master, this person is very well thought of in the synagogue. He is held in very high respect and has done much for the people." They were encouraging Jesus to minister to him and, no doubt, his importance had some influence on them, while these mothers had no social standing. But Jesus shows no partiality. He ministers to the rich and to the poor. He ministers to whoever the Spirit of God leads Him to.

The motivation of these mothers was love for their children when they wanted Jesus to bless them. They were asking for a blessing from God, not for a position of honor. That put their motivation into the right perspective. The motivation of Jesus' heart towards the children and their mothers was compassion and mercy. He wanted to bless them.

Now let us look at two examples with Abraham. The first concerns Sarah and Pharaoh. Abraham came to Egypt with his wife, Sarah where Pharaoh was ruling. He was a nasty character, and Abraham was afraid for his life. In his natural wisdom, he told Sarah to pose as his sister. He was motivated by fear. Sarah was beautiful, and Pharaoh loved beautiful women. Apparently, it would have been nothing for him to bump off Abraham and take the beautiful Sarah for himself. Knowing this, Abraham tried to save himself and used deceit as a cover. Pharaoh took Sarah into his harem, but God spoke to him one night and warned him not to touch Sarah. When Pharaoh discovered that Sarah was actually Abraham's wife, he gave her back and told them both to leave.

Abraham was so motivated by fear for his own life; he put his wife into a dangerous situation. God protected her though, because her motivation was obedience, respect, and honor to her husband. The same principle applies today. God will protect the wife who respects and honors her husband even when wrong motivations influence his decisions.

The second example with Abraham concerns his agreement with Lot, his nephew. They both had money and all their possessions had grown to such an extent, they were too much for the land. One day, Abraham told Lot, "There are two sections of land here. This one is the Sodom and Gomorrah area, a rich and fertile valley with lush vegetation, a great farming area, and good grazing for the animals. This other area is not too good, but I want you to choose the one you want. Naturally, Lot chose the rich, fertile farm land in the valley. Abraham took the other for himself.

Abraham's motivation in this situation was love. He gave Lot the first choice, and he did not grumble or gripe when he took the better land. Sometimes people today give others first choice, but when it is the one they wanted, they are unhappy about it. In other words, they did not

really give you a choice. They were just hoping you would choose the one they did not want. That is not the motivation of love, although it may appear to be on the surface.

There is a very important lesson here that every counselor must learn well. God loves to bless His people, and it is all right to have a Rolls Royce if the Lord gives you one. However, if you are not willing to give it away to someone else if the Lord speaks to you about it, your motivation is not right. If you are not willing to give it away, then it has a hold on you. And if it has a hold on you, and you get attached to it, or any blessing God gives you, the motivation of your heart is wrong. God blesses us with things so we can bless others. He does not give us things to hoard them.

Motivation is the key to understanding and wisdom. If you can grasp what the motivation of God is, what He does and why He does it, then you have an understanding of what pure motivation is. On the other hand, if you see what the devil does and why he does it, you understand pure motivation there too. One is for good, and one is for evil. We must recognize both.

Another Bible character who was interesting is Timothy. Paul said this about him, "I have nobody else like him with me. He is the only one who does not seek himself." Timothy was seeking only for other people to come to know Jesus. He was looking out for Paul and others in the ministry, not for himself. It is no wonder Paul esteemed Timothy so highly. He took him aside as a young man, trained and instructed him to become a mighty man of God. I believe God can use young people, and as they grow older, they gain more wisdom, more insight, and more sensitivity to the Spirit of God. Experience and diligence only come with time. Young people, be open to everything God has for you.

When God told Solomon He would give him whatever he asked for, that young man, who was already wise, asked for wisdom. What would you ask God for? This really touches the motivations of the heart. Solomon could have asked for riches, for fame, for honor, and even the world. But he asked for wisdom. He said, "God, give me the wisdom that I might lead your people in the way that you want them to go." His motivation was pure. In Proverbs, chapter 3, he said, "You acquire God's wisdom, you gain on the one hand long life and on the other hand riches, fame, and honor." This is the result of God's wisdom. God told Solomon, "Because you have asked for wisdom to lead my people and not for riches, honor, and fame for yourself, I am going to give you riches, honor, and fame that there will not be another wise man as wise as you on the face of the earth from this time forth. And there will not be anybody as rich nor as famous." The wealthiest people today cannot even come close to what Solomon had under God's blessings.

For further study, read I Kings 12:26-33 to find out what Jeroboam's motivation was. Then look at the rich young man in Matthew 19:16-22 and see what his motivation was, deep down in his heart. You may also study John 6:14-15 and verses 60-71; John 2:23-25; Numbers 12:10-15, and Numbers 27:14. Read these scriptures and discover what the different motivations of the heart were.

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF MOTIVATION: INTENSITY, DILIGENCE, & OBEDIENCE

Why do people do what they do? Why do people say what they say? Why do people think what they think? Why are people unwilling to say what they think? Why are people not doing what they are thinking about doing? As we examine our own hearts with these questions, may it drive us right to the Lord.

There are many examples in the Bible about motivation. When we looked at the motivations of the disciples we learned that they were prideful, selfish, jealous, and vengeful, but they loved Jesus. And yet, they left Him to save their own hides. That does not sound much like love. It was more like a good-weather friend. If things were great, they would stick with Him, but when things got bad, it was good-bye.

There are marriages like this. As long as things are going along fine, the couple is in love and they have a wonderful marriage. But as soon as things get a little rocky, they start thinking about getting out of the relationship. Love, however, remains steady when things are at their worst. That is what Jesus was basically saying on the cross when He said, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." He was not giving up on them because He realized they did not know what they were doing. It was not said out of pity, but out of a heart of love.

Jesus knew the disciples were blinded by themselves, blinded by the crowd's reaction, and blinded by the devil. The whole crowd was shouting for Jesus to be crucified. A lot of people there did not even know who they were crucifying, let alone why. They were motivated by peer pressure. A lot of people jump on the bandwagon because everybody else is doing it, but that certainly does not make it the right thing to do. In fact, most of the time, what everybody else is doing is ungodly. Read Proverbs 1.

Why are we so afraid of people that we can be moved by what somebody else thinks is important, or what somebody else wants us to do? Fear of people is the motivator. People allow themselves to be pressured by others for fear of losing friendships, the respect of someone they admire, or not meeting with their approval. The world is full of pressures, and we see it in our clothes, hair styles, colors that are popular. If we could just be ourselves regardless of other people's opinions. That is what breaks down pressures.

Romans 12:2 tells us to not be conformed to this world, to the way the world thinks. We are to be conformed to what God wants. What God wants is always in. It does not pass away or change.

In Philippians, chapter 2, Paul writes about Timothy who was a very precious young man. He said he had no one else like Timothy. We know that Paul had many other helpers who worked with him, but he made special note of Timothy that no one else took a genuine interest in the welfare of the saints like he did. Everyone else was looking out for themselves, but Timothy

proved himself to be genuine, loyal, and true blue. He was not concerned with himself and his own ministry, or what he was going to do or where he was going. He was concerned only about Paul, the ministry, and the people. He was faithful to his calling. The motivation of Timothy's heart was love, selfless love.

When people are gathered together, there may be a hundred or more motivations for them being there. They may come to learn, to increase in wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. Some will be there because they have to be, others because somebody else is there with whom they want to be, and others may be curious. Even with the best motivations, people often are diligent for a few minutes, but are easily distracted and the attention wanders off. Without discipline, no one will enter into the realm of the Spirit of God to tap into God's abundance.

One of the qualities required for a counselor is diligence, and they are disciplined. A counselor must refuse to let the devil have an inch in his life. He must be diligent to quickly catch the devil's attempts to sneak in. When fear comes, he deals with it. When doubt comes, he deals with it. When worry comes, he deals with it. Sometimes four or five things will come at once, but a quality counselor is always watching and praying which makes him alert. Scripture warns us to "Be sober, be vigilant, be alert for your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion."

This is a time for seriousness. People are dying in the world every day, and they do not know the love of Jesus. Homes are breaking up right and left because they do not know Jesus. This even includes Christian homes. This is serious business, and there is no room for foolishness or wasting time in nonsensical, meaningless activities. You may be criticized for your diligence, but when you stand before God, you will be able to give a good account.

People ask me why I am so intense. I say it is because life and death is going on. I want abundant life. Jesus supplied it, and I want it. I cannot let anything hinder my walk with God. On the other hand, there are people who ask me why I laugh so much. I tell them it is because my God reigns and there is nothing that can defeat Him or me, or anyone else who is walking with Him in intensity. Hebrews 11:6 says, "Without faith it is impossible to please Him (God) for if we were to come to Him we must first know that He exists, second that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." When we diligently seek God, that is intensity. When Jacob wrestled with the angel, that was intensity. If we want something badly enough, we will seek it with diligence, with intensity. A half-hearted attitude will not get us anywhere. We must be determined to get all that God has promised us.

To be an overcomer, we must be serious and intense, diligent and disciplined. The wonderful part is that we can rejoice always in the Lord too. It is not difficult at all if one would purpose in his heart to do so, even when everything is going wrong. If we want things to go right, rejoicing in the Lord is the only way. Dwelling on the problem causes us to bury ourselves, and you can be sure the devil is just watching and laughing. He will not have to do anything because people bury themselves, tormented with fears, worries, and doubts. The only way out is to diligently, and with discipline, get into the Word of God.

People are afraid of what others think, or they are always trying to please others. If you find yourself wanting to please people, you will lose. One day they will like you, and the next day, they

will ignore you. There is no pleasing people. I remember a time when the people in our church wanted to have potlucks. I love potlucks, and so we had one. We had a great time, but all those who had wanted the potluck did not show up. I thought they were just not able to make it, so we threw another potluck which was bigger and better. Again, they did not show up. I went to those people and asked what the problem was. They told me they did not really want potlucks; they simply did not want so many Bible studies. They felt I was preaching the Word of God too much. They wanted to just get together and potluck.

Now, when I have a potluck, I believe in having a little bit of the Word of God too, and some fellowship around the Word of God. I like to talk with people about the Lord. When I read the Bible about fellowship, it says they gathered around the Word of God, and they had a good time. I believe we can go out and do things together and it can be all around the Lord. We can bring God with us wherever we go and whatever we do. When people complain there is too much Bible study, I have to question the motivation of their hearts. As a pastor, I must answer to God for my leadership in the ministry where He has placed me. If the leadership is not intense and disciplined, the people will not grow in the Word of God, nor press on in the Spirit of God. I want to stand before Him knowing I did my best.

The more intense the spirit, the more pure and refined the working of God will be. The Bible says that to whom much has been forgiven, the same loves much (Luke 7:47). Paul said, "The love of Christ constrains us," (compels us) (II Cor. 5:14). Paul knew he had been a murderer. He was responsible for the death of many Christians. Then the love of God hit him. He forgot those things behind. He pressed ahead. The intensity was in his heart because he knew how much God loved him, and he knew God loved those people he had killed. When the love of God is driving you, only amazing things will happen in your life. You will not be concerned about yourself any more.

Paul gave up everything he thought was important in his life. He had status, wealth, intelligence, and education. He had everything the world thinks is important. In Philippians 3, he said, "I count it all as a pile of dung for the sake of knowing Jesus Christ and the hope of His resurrection." Nothing else mattered to him. When you come to people with that kind of intensity, it will evoke a response. I have found from experience they will either love you or hate you. When you walk into a room and do not evoke a response because of the love of God in you, the Lord Jesus and the wisdom of God, then there is something wrong with your life. If people do not even know you are a Christian, something is wrong.

When Jesus kept asking Peter if he loved him, Peter kept saying he did. Finally, at the third time, Peter broke down in his heart because it dawned on him, it finally got through. He had to ask himself if he really did love Jesus. He had forsaken Him several times. With tears, he said, "Yes, Lord, I love You." There are people who glibly say, "Jesus is my Lord," but the Lord admonishes us that not everyone who calls Him Lord will enter into the kingdom of heaven. It is only those who do the will of the Father.

Prior to this, Peter had been very shallow, saying things off the top of his head without thinking. But suddenly he realized the depth of the truths of the Spirit of God. They are not light

nor shallow, but holy and pure. God's truths change and transform people's lives. I believe at that moment, Peter was converted to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The depth of our relationship with Jesus must be strong enough to stand firm when the going gets rough. When people come with distractions and want you to go or do things you know are not pleasing to God, you must love Him enough to say yes to Jesus and no to the people, and your flesh. You must check the motivation of your heart. God wants a heart that is sold out to Him. The closer you get to Him, the more you will love Him. God's Word is your guide book to follow, and it is how He gets your attention so you can line up your motivations with Him.

A counselor must learn not to take everything at face value when counseling someone. People will lie and deceive a counselor, skirt around the situation, or even deny the situation. They will say anything and everything but the truth. But time will prove it all out. Many do this without even realizing it because they are not aware of the true motivations of their hearts.

No doubt, the disciples were amazed when they finally realized the motivations of their hearts. Peter really did love Jesus with all his heart, but the only way he could get to that point was to get himself out of the way. As long as Peter had his own agenda, doing and achieving what he wanted to, looking out for his own life, he could not love Jesus the way Jesus wanted to be loved.

Timothy, on the other hand, was genuinely concerned about Paul and the ministry. He was not interested in money or the recognition, or in any personal gain. He was genuinely interested in the people's lives. No greater joy came to Paul than to see people grow in the Lord Jesus Christ, and Timothy shared that same compassion.

When someone you know is being blessed with God's goodness, it is easy to say, "Oh, that's nice. I'm really happy for you." But do you really mean it? Are you genuinely excited and happy for them? Or are you thinking about your own situation and hoping that maybe soon you will receive your blessing too. What is the motivation of the heart? Even when we are walking with God, some of the most ungodly attitudes can show up. They show up in you, and they show up in me. We must always question why we say and do things, why we are feeling the way we do. Prove it, test it. If it is of God, keep it. If not, repent and get it straightened out.

Jesus did not care about Himself. He took no thought about what He would eat, drink, or wear. He even took no thought about all those people who were plotting against Him. In John 6:14-15, Jesus fed the five thousand, and they wanted to make Him king. "Surely this is the prophet who was to come into the world." And Jesus knew they intended to come and make Him king by force. They were not going to ask Him, they were going to MAKE Him the king. The crowd decided it.

Jesus sensed all of this, and withdrew into the hills to be by Himself. He knew the people did not really love Him as their Messiah. They were lazy, and saw He could provide for them. He supplied food, the power of God was there, He healed the sick, He talked of peace and love, and this just had to be the Messiah. Even the disciples wanted Him to be king. When Jesus told them His kingdom was not of this earth, they did not want to hear that. It was too hard for them to understand, and they did not believe it nor accept it.

Jesus wanted to tell them the truths of the Spirit of God, and they wanted a potluck. They wanted their flesh satisfied. Their thoughts were on meals, healing for their bodies, their families to be cared for, and everything provided for them. They were not too interested in the things of the Spirit of God, and did not want to do anything for God to His glory. When the disciples said, "This is a hard teaching, who can accept it?" Jesus was aware of their grumbling. Why do you think the disciples were grumbling?

As they watched all those people becoming dissatisfied with their Jesus, the disciples knew they would lose their positions, their recognition, and status because they stood with Jesus. When the thousands of people began to stand against Jesus; and therefore, against the disciples, they felt the peer pressure and started grumbling to Jesus. He asked them, "Does this offend you? What if you see the son of Man ascend to where He was before? The Spirit gives life, the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are Spirit and they are life. Yet there are some of you who do not believe."

Jesus was speaking to the disciples, telling them they did not believe. "For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray Him." He went on to say, "This is why I told you that no one can come to Me unless the Father has enabled him. And from this time many of His disciples turned back and no longer followed Him." Jesus had just fed five thousand men along with women and children, so it could have been about fifteen thousand people, and He did it with five loaves and two small fish. And there were baskets of food left over. It was great they were being fed, but when Jesus started talking about the Kingdom and who He really was and why He came; they did not want to hear it. When He got spiritual with them, they wanted to leave. They did not want their spirits ministered to. They only wanted their flesh satisfied.

"Do you want to leave too?" Jesus asked the twelve. Simon Peter answered, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God." Jesus replied, "Have I not chosen you twelve, yet one of you is a devil." Jesus never tried to please anyone except His Father. Those who were in tune with Him were blessed, but He never told anyone things just because they wanted to hear something nice.

In the last days, people want to hear things that sound good to them, but they do not want to be called to make a commitment. They do not like discipline nor diligence. They do not want to be called to change their lives and their ways, especially when they are in wrong. Man in his natural state is selfish, deceitful, proud, greedy, jealous, non-committed, and inconsistent. Jesus knew all this, and certainly would not entrust Himself to the people. One day, they wanted to make Him king, and the next day, they turned against Him. People are fickle. But Jesus was concerned only in having favor with His heavenly Father.

The Scripture tells us that Jesus "would not entrust Himself to them." This means He would not let their desires dictate what He was going to do, or not do. He was not moved by people or their ideas about Him or His ministry. He was moved only by His Father. When we can develop that kind of attitude, we will see the power of the demonstrations of the Spirit of God moving in our lives to set people free. If you, as a counselor, have not made that kind of committed decision to

Jesus, and to God's people so you are willing to stand for the standards of God with the risk of losing friends or family, then you are not right with God. When you are in a place of compromise, God cannot help you, nor can you help anybody else through your counsel because it would be ungodly counsel.

If there is a tug-of-war going on inside between pleasing people and pleasing God, you need to let the Spirit of God minister to you. You have to decide who you are going to serve. In the Bible, a lot of the people came to Jesus and wanted to follow Him until He started showing them what was involved. Then they started making excuses. They were compromising. Elisha did that with Elijah when he was first called to follow Elijah. God wanted Elisha trained by Elijah, but Elisha first went back home. It is very significant that in the latter time just before Elijah was ready to take off to be with his Father Elijah told Elisha three times to go home. During the time Elisha spent with Elijah, he learned a lot of things. He traveled with him for about thirty or forty years, and he told Elijah, "There is no way I am going home. I am going to stay with you." After the third time, Elijah said, "Be it so. Follow me."

Elisha also asked for a double portion of the anointing that God had placed on Elijah. He could not give that, so he said, "If you see me go into the heavens then God has granted you your desire." He did see Elijah go up into the heavens, and God blessed Elisha with a double anointing. He would never have received it without perseverance, discipline, diligence, and sticking with the plan of God. He followed the man of God. That was the test. Like a true prophet of God, Elijah spoke the Word, and let people make their own decisions. Jesus never made up anyone's mind for them. He simply spoke the words and people made their own choice. It is each individual's decision, and a counselor cannot make anybody do anything. You simply set before them blessing (life) or cursing (death), and it is their choice. Elisha chose the blessing, and God blessed him. He picked up the mantle where the anointing was.

When Elisha struck the mantle on the water and it parted, it was one of the most miraculous mysteries, next to Jesus, that ever took place on the face of this earth. I believe that obedience is where that anointing comes from. Obedience to God because one loves God, not because one has to. Otherwise it is a burden, and that grieves the Spirit of God. If we are obedient because we love God, we will be winners.

TRUE MOTIVATIONS OF COUNSELOR AND COUNSELEE

The Lord is good. He provides, protects, and blesses us abundantly. Regardless of how big a problem may be, God is certainly able and willing to help those who believe in Him. It is up to each individual to allow God to be strong within.

Sometimes in a healing line, a person will fall. The Holy Spirit of God comes upon them with an anointing. They get as light as a feather and down they go. They are perfectly fine, yet they appear to be dead. The Bible tells us about some guards who experienced this when an angel came down. When the Lord appeared, Ezekiel flopped down on his face, and even more amazing, God flopped him back up on his feet. It is a sign of the presence of the Lord and the power of God in demonstration. When people fall, it is Jesus ministering to them, and they receive that anointing. Amazing things happen during that time. People get healed in their bodies. Deliverances take place.

On one occasion in our church, we were praying for a 26-year old deaf and dumb man. He had never spoken nor heard a word in his life. God touched him, and he began to hear. To test this, I went behind him so he could not read my lips. The young man kept pulling me around to stand in front of him. The Lord finally made me understand that this man had never spoken any words before so he was trying to see how to make the sounds. His mother, a registered nurse, was there and overjoyed at this miracle as the Spirit of God began to minister to him. He began to speak clearly. We understood what he was saying. He was thanking Jesus, among other things.

I was trained as a counselor and received all my degrees in counseling. But I found the ministry of the Holy Spirit of God to be better. We can do more in an hour with a person than I used to be able to do in months of counseling out of the ministry. We all need to learn about counseling and helping people. God loves us and has a plan for each one of our lives, and it is more abundant than we can even begin to imagine.

In examining the attitudes of a counselor and the counselees, we should realize that as God's people, we are ministers. That does not necessarily mean someone who stands behind a pulpit. It simply means people ministering the love of Jesus Christ as God leads you wherever you are and in whatever you are doing. If you desire a personal ministry, ask the Lord for it and be patient as you seek to find out what it is.

Romans, chapter 12 tells us about ministry gifts which are in the body of Christ. Those who have received Jesus Christ and are filled with the Holy Spirit will have those gifts operating in their lives. It will just come naturally, with no strain or burden. You will know if God has given you the ability to teach because people will listen to you. If they are not listening, you are not called to teach. If you walk into a nursing home and your heart goes out to those people with compassion, and love flows over you so you just want to hug and love those folks, then you are operating in a ministry service gift of mercy. You may feel at home there while another person might walk in, start crying and have to leave. They would realize that is not their ministry. It is best to try various

areas of ministry to see what God shows you. Each one of us must be equipped for the work of the ministry, and when we find it, we must learn how to do it.

In Romans 12, we learn about counseling and motivations. We can find out what makes people tick, and why we all do the things we do, and say the things we say. We must learn our own hearts in order to minister to someone else effectively. In verse 8 of Romans 12, we read: "If it is contributing to the needs of others." This concerns a ministry service gift of giving, a person who loves to give tithes, and offerings over and above. This ministry not only supports God's ministries, but it also helps God's people in need. People who are givers never seem to lack funds. They may give their last dollar, and God will just multiply it back to them so they always have plenty to give. That is the way God operates.

II Corinthians, chapter 9 talks about this also. If you are giving out of a generous and thankful heart to God, He will keep flooding it in and you will never lack. God will give you more than enough to give out more than enough, and then He will give it back to you again.

Let's look at the attitudes which are involved in this. In a ministry service gift, scripture says, "let him give generously." A person with this gift should be generous, and they are. But at times they may tend to squeak where the dollar is concerned and want to hang on to it instead of asking if there are needs to be met. They should not have to sit around and wait, but should ask where the need is. God should direct our giving.

The first attitude of love to look at here is one of generosity. Giving should be generous whether we are giving love, encouragement, funds, our time, or whatever it might be. The motivation of our heart should be generosity. Love is the true motivation of generosity. God is generous. James 1 says: "If any lack wisdom, let him ask God and He will not hold back but will give generously the wisdom that is needed." God gives generously, and He intends for us to give generously. We will begin to understand the motivation of our hearts when we start to think we have given enough.

Another ministry service gift is leadership. Verse 8 says: "Let him govern or administrate diligently." A sign of true motivation is diligence. Without it, nothing gets accomplished. Along with diligence is perseverance. We must see things all the way through. We cannot believe God for a little while, and then give up. We cannot begin ministering to someone, helping them, working with them, and then drop them to go on to someone else. True motivation is diligence, and we must finish the work God has given us to do.

Another quality of true motivation covered by love is: "If it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully." God's Word tells us that whatever we do, we are to do it heartily as to the Lord out of thankfulness to Him. If we find that our attitude is not cheerful in what we are doing, then there is a problem. There are several good indicators to help us see whether our motivation is pure, true and clean, and really of love. They are: generosity, diligence, and cheerfulness. If they are present, God is receiving glory, the Spirit of God is flowing through us, and God is touching people with His presence through us. We then have what the Bible calls a pure heart. This brings us blessings.

Matthew 5:8 says, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God." Those who are pure in their motivations are going to see the glory of God demonstrated through them. When things are done out of a pure motivation and a heart of love for God and His people, then God is able to show Himself strong through us. And we will see mighty things done for His glory.

A counselor seeks to be diligent, disciplined, intense, obedient, loving God and the people he helps through the Spirit of God. Each counselor must want to learn this so intensely that he will not let one word slip by. This teaching can change not only a counselor's life, but another as well.

Romans 12:9 says, "Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil, cling to what is good." Sometimes people glibly say they love someone, and it sounds wonderful on the surface. In their hearts, however, they may hate that person, and their words are a sham. The Bible tells us to love sincerely. When someone insincerely tells you they love you, and you know they really do not, it makes you feel uneasy. You recognize that it is a phony statement, and your spirit does not bear witness. A counselor needs this kind of discernment.

It is a wonderful experience to have someone you do not even know come up to you in sincerity and your spirit bears witness with them. That is the kind of pure motivation that touches and changes another person's life. They may walk up to you and start pouring out their heart. It is the Spirit of God working through you, drawing that individual to you. They have a problem, and you have the answer. Not only the answer, but the life of God in you helps you minister to them and set them free.

In Romans 12:10 we read: "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves." This means we are to prefer others as more important than ourselves. It is a humbling of self. True motivation includes humility, and we will have it when we are more concerned about other people's needs than our own.

Romans 12:11: "Never be lacking in zeal but keep your spiritual fervor serving the Lord." Another quality of true motivation is zealousness. In other words, we are on fire to bring people truth. We must learn to move in wisdom so we will be in God's timing in all things. When someone comes to you with a question, answer it. Do not overload them with a lot of extra information. Simply answer the question, and let them hunger for more. This is how people grow. In counseling you will find there are all kinds of different motivations in the hearts of people. Sometimes Jesus answered people's questions, and other times He ignored them and kept right on going. He never even spoke to them. Was that rude? Was it abusive? No. He knew where their hearts were in their questions. They wanted to trap Him so He ignored them. Sometimes what appears to be real, honest, open, and seeking, may be just the opposite in light of the Word of God. This is why we must keep our faith energized day in and day out. We must pray in the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues. This energizes our most holy faith, according to Jude 20. It is important to learn what God's Word says and follow it. Then we will see God begin to use us mightily.

People who lack in zeal have let their guard down. That is when they begin to get weary. Scripture tells us not to be weary in well doing. You may have experienced someone who wears you down, and you dread to see them coming. But if you are doing God's work right, you will be

able to minister to them and not give up. You can get them on the right course and give God the glory.

In counseling and ministering to people, keeping our spiritual fervor, our attitude must always be to serve the Lord. We are not serving people. If your motivation is to do a service for a person, your motivation is wrong. That person may reject your counseling from the Word of God and bad mouth you. You then feel you have failed because that person did not respond. You must never try to please people because the devil will try to beat you with it. Scripture tells us that whatever we do, we should do it heartily as to the Lord, not as men pleasers. Our reward does not come from people, but from the Lord. What we do for Him brings glory to God.

God has given us a commission to love His people. However, I have seen many people whom God would have used mightily, but they fell on the rocks because they let themselves take on the cares of the people they were ministering to. One of the highest suicide rates is found among psychologists, doctors, psychiatrists, and ministers. The reason is because they let themselves carry the burdens and cares of the people, and it ruined them. A counselor must never allow this to happen to him. You are not responsible for what another person decides. All you do is simply share the Word of God. What they do with it is their decision. That is how God operates.

In Deuteronomy 30, God tells us: "Today I set before you blessing and cursing, life and death. Choose life." If you choose life, you are blessed. If you choose death and cursing, that is what you will get. Our responsibility, as counselors, is to simply present the truth of God in love. We are to guide people to God, not to us. A counselor must avoid the temptation of an ego trip in counseling. There is a sense of feeling important when someone comes to you seeking understanding, wisdom, and knowledge. If the motivation is not lined up with God's Word, however, people will weigh you down, and both will become frustrated and confused. If people start seeking a counselor's permission to do everything, they'll find themselves in trouble.

A counselor must help people to learn that God will meet their every need. A counselor's job is to show them the Word of God and the promise He has for them in the area of their need. A counselor is not a healer, not a miracle worker. It is God who meets all the needs. All we do is usher in the Holy Spirit of God to accomplish His great and mighty works. We serve God, and we all need to seek to be faithful to all that God has given us to do.

The pure in heart will see the glory of God both in their own lives and all those whose lives they contact. There is nothing more exciting than seeing people's lives change to the glory of God by the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no other excitement that compares to see what God does in the lives He touches.

I Corinthians 11:4-8 gives other love motivations: "Love is patient, love is kind, love is gentle, considerate, does not think evil, love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and love never gives up." Think of it. God's love never gives up. His love is inside each of us, and it is generous enough to flow over the whole world and meet every need. If God's people were faithful in His work, and each would contact 12 people in one year (one a month), the whole world's population would be turned to Jesus within a span of probably two years. Imagine what could be done for the glory of God if we all did our part as zealous and fervent servants of the Lord.

Let us now look at the motivations of the counselee, the one being counseled. You will find that not everyone who comes to you really wants help, and you need to be able to distinguish those who really do.

Remember the rich young ruler who came to Jesus and asked, "Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" On the surface it appeared he wanted eternal life. Jesus mentioned the Ten Commandments to him, and he assured Jesus that he had observed them since he was a child. Scripture tells us that Jesus had love for him. Compassion went out to that young man. Jesus also looked at his heart through the discerning of the Spirit, and knew he was lying. This could happen to you, as it did to me recently. An individual was lying right to my face, and I knew it. Thank God for His wisdom and insight, because it helps you sort out people like this. Sometimes it is wise to let them go on and they will lead themselves into their own trap so they will see clearly what they have done. Jesus was a master at this.

With the rich young ruler, Jesus moved in the divine wisdom of God, and through a word of knowledge, He said, "If that is the case, then go and sell all that you have and give it to the poor." Scripture says, "The man bowed his head and sorrowfully went away for he had great riches." If his motivation was true, and he really wanted eternal life, he would have obeyed Jesus, given up all his possessions to the poor and followed the Lord. This does not mean we should all go out and sell our possessions to give to the poor. But in this case it was a stumbling block to that rich man. If this is a stumbling block in our lives, we must consider the issue ourselves.

If we are not willing to give up our goods and possessions, we will not have eternal life. This does not mean we must give them up unless the Lord calls us to do it. Our true motivation would be put to the test. We should know that if God wants us to give up everything we have, He will supply all our needs and then some. If a person is not willing to give up everything for the Lord, the motivation of his heart is not pure. Some people want God and eternal life on their terms, not God's terms. Jesus said, "If they lose their life for my sake, they will gain life." That rich young ruler actually went to Jesus looking for something he could add to what he already possessed. He had temporal things, Jesus had eternal things, and he put aside the eternal for the temporal.

There is a fine line between being discerning, and suspicious of people's motivations. If something is out of line with a person, and you acknowledge the Spirit of God for direction, He will reveal it to you. Sometimes people are misunderstood because they are afraid to receive love, even the pure love of God, because of past hurts. They build barriers to protect themselves, and are afraid to trust anyone for fear of being hurt. This is when the Holy Spirit will help you in discerning the heart of the counselee.

Time is one of the most valuable means of help in the process of counseling. It takes time to build trust, and we must have the freedom to permit as much as is necessary so that a person can develop the trust needed. Many marriages break up during the first year without having a proper chance, mostly because trust has not been developed between the husband and wife.

In discerning the true attitude of the counselee, the counselor must look for a desire to be obedient to God. If the person has no desire to be obedient to Him, you cannot help him. A Christian counselor operates from the Word of God, and if they do not want to hear it, they will have to go elsewhere for help. They may leave for a while, but if they really want help, they will be back because there is nothing else that works like the Word of God.

Sometimes it hurts to be willing to do God's will. It would have hurt that rich young ruler to give his wealth, but it would have hurt only for a moment, and then he would have known the joy that comes with giving. You cannot get that kind of joy from wealth which does absolutely no good if it is sitting around not doing anything. A million dollars in a bank does not give you joy, delight, or pleasure, nor even security. It could become worthless overnight if our money was devalued. Our only security is in God. He will give us that abundance, and we become good stewards as we give of the abundance that comes from God. Joy floods our hearts in giving to others.

The next attitude of the counselee is to grow up in the faith. There are areas in their walk with God which need to be examined. The reason they are having problems is because a door has been opened somewhere in their life and the devil is causing torment and problems. I believe in the power of God's divine protection. Psalm 91 assures us, "No evil or any plague shall come near me or my dwelling for God has given His angels charge over me." Job 1 records the devil saying, "I cannot touch him. You have a hedge of protection around him." This is divine protection, and God did not take down the hedge. Job, himself, opened the door through sin. He said, "That which I feared the most is that which came upon me." He feared for his children, and he did it on a continual basis.

People must examine their hearts and see if there is a door open some place to the devil. That is the source of problems, and they must be willing to admit it, ask God's forgiveness, which involves humility and repentance. Counseling is not a negative thing. It is positive, and will bring positive results. A person without any problems may come for counseling just to learn God's principles, and gain more abundant blessings. If a problem area becomes apparent, it will be cleared out through forgiveness and cleansing. This brings not only God's blessings, and a growing up in the faith. As that faith grows, confidence and hope develop.

The third attitude in the counselee must be a desire to be a blessing. This is a very important part of spiritual growth. The counselee must be willing to make a commitment to bless somebody else. Everything God does in our lives is intended by Him to be a testimony to others to change their lives. This encourages them in the faith. God is concerned about letting people know that every problem can be solved in the Lord Jesus Christ, and mighty things can happen if people would turn their lives over to Him. God is looking for people who are on fire for Him, and bold enough to stand up and say, "This was my problem, but my Lord Jesus set me free. If He did it for me, He will do it for you. If you are ashamed of your past, then you are not forgiven of your past. If you are forgiven, then you are free from your past and you can tell the whole world."

Scripture tells us that to whom much has been forgiven, the same loves much (Luke 7:47). There is no shame, guilt, or condemnation when forgiveness has been given. Thankfulness wells up in our hearts, and we are so thankful we want to tell the world. There are people everywhere

who are hurting very badly, just waiting for somebody to help them. Counselors or ministers are not holier than anyone else, and we do not walk around on air, in a glory cloud all the time. Worry, doubt, and fear try to attack us too, but we cast them out in Jesus' name. That is how we grow in the faith, and as we share those testimonies with others, that is how we can be a blessing to them.

The fourth attitude is a desire to help others. It is one thing to be a blessing to someone else, and another thing to help them. There is a fine line here. I can communicate a truth to you, and you can be blessed by it. You may get excited, thankful to God, and be filled with love and peace. It is another thing to actually help someone. This involves giving your time, talents, and gifts. One of the finest principles is taught in Ephesians 4 where it tells us that if we have stolen in the past, we are to give now and to give generously. In the past we took, now we give. The Scripture goes on to say, "Let him steal no more. Let him work for a living so he can give." This means a life is totally changed. It is a healthy attitude. God's principles which provide freedom for people result from doing what God tells us to do, and we learn them as we get into the Word of God.

Another true motivation for the counselee is to be truthful, honest, and have integrity. If people want help, they should be encouraged to be honest about their problem right at the start of counseling. Sometimes people do not even recognize the real problem, and this is when it is important to allow the Spirit of God to reveal the truth of the matter. This often happens with couples who tell their side of the story, and you get only one version of it. Always listen to the one you are helping, and do not discuss the other party who is not there. Help that person in front of you to get their attitude right with the Word of God so they will be truthful, honest, and willing to work with integrity.

When I counsel with someone and find they are not being truthful and honest with me, I will give them two opportunities. At first, I let it slide a bit, giving them opportunity to come clean and repent on their own. Then, if they do not admit the dishonesty, I tell them bluntly they are lying, and I want the truth. If it happens a third time, I cancel the counseling. This causes them to wake up to the fact that if they really want help, they will have to be truthful and honest. It may sound harsh, but it is actually done in love because nothing is accomplished with lies and dishonesty.

A person may be self-deceived and not see the problem, or they may think the problem is always the other person. In any relationship, there are always two sides which must be examined. The Bible tells us to "be not deceived," and the only way any problem can be resolved is with truth, honesty, and integrity.

The last motivation of the counselee is a desire to give glory to God. That should be the reason for wanting to be set free. The result should be a testimony to the glory of God; a life conformed to the image of Jesus Christ so people can testify about what Jesus has done, for the glory of God. I believe that one of the highest of the motivational factors for the counselee is to be set free to give glory to God.

FALSE MOTIVATION OF A COUNSELOR

As God's people, we need energy to serve the Lord and help others. We cannot let the devil drain our energy, and we must guard ourselves to protect our energy from other people too. Joy is strength, and love is energy. Everything originates from love. Scripture tells us about faith, hope, and love, and the greatest of these is love. I always thought faith was the greatest because we need faith to receive everything from God. Faith moves mountains, it sets people free. We need faith to receive God's blessings. But the Lord told me that love is the greatest. He told me, "If I had not first loved you, there would be no reason for faith."

God's love is the motivator, the power. It does no good to have all the gifts of the Spirit operating in our lives if we do not have love, because it is love that motivates everything else. When we remember what God did for us, how much He loves us and how much He cares, that is when the power of God starts to move to give the gifts. The gifts are intended for the building up of the body and to draw unbelievers to the Lord. Gifts get a person's attention. God is in the gift business, and we want HIS gifts. Scripture tells us to "covet and desire the gifts of the Spirit and not to be ignorant of them" (I Cor. 12:1, 14:1).

In counseling with people, you will find it is very helpful to have the gifts of the Spirit operating. It cuts through much of the deception, and you can get through the false fronts and the "self" which gets in the way. A counselor must always keep in mind that he is not God. God is God, and we are people, but through the blood of Jesus, we have become sons of God. This gives us all the rights and privileges thereof.

A counselor must guard against the temptation to feel superior in his position. It is easy to feel God-like in helping people solve their problems, but all a counselor does is bring people into the presence of the living God and drops them right in front of Him. When a counselor has done that, he has done his job, and has done it well. God is the only one who can help people and set them free. A counselor cannot take care of the people; he cannot worry, or be fearful about them. A counselor must be free from people. They may want to praise him, or they may want to kill him, but their attitude must have no effect on the counselor.

You, as a counselor, must be turned in to God, walking with Him continually, and you will find there is not anything nor anybody that can come against you who is greater than God. You need not be concerned about what people will think because that leads to compromise, which is of the devil. There is no compromise with God.

We have already examined the true motivation and how it is displayed in a counselor, and in the counselee. Now we will examine false motivations within a counselor and those he counsels.

It is very important that we examine our hearts when we are ministering to people. It will also be very enlightening because as people start coming to you for counsel, you will have to be aware of false motivation on their part. Not everybody who comes for help really wants help. A good way to test their motivation is to see if they have a desire to be obedient to the Word of God to get free. We know the only way to freedom is through doing what God says. If the counselee

resists obedience to God, all you say is: "We love you, we praise God for the good and perfect work He is doing within you, and when you realize that you need to do what He says, we will be more than happy to talk with you then. No one can help you until you get into agreement with God and do it His way."

It is important to remember that God will help people do things His way. Philippians 2-13 says, "Work out your own salvation." That means we stay away from temptation, and keep walking in obedience to the Word of God. Verse 13 says that it is God who works in you enabling you both to will, or to want to do what is pleasing to God, and then He gives you the ability to do it. It is not our ability, but His. No one can get free from alcohol, from drugs, from depression, worry, fear, guilt, or anxiety on their own. We can be free only by the ability of God, and then we are free indeed in Jesus Christ.

When people resist obedience to God's Word, and you confront them with your decision to let them go, it forces them to make a decision. They must face up to take some responsibility, and it may be the first time in their lives they have ever come to that point. Too often, they have looked to someone else to bail them out. When we stand before God, we will not be able to blame somebody else because they did not help us. God will ask us what we did. It will be between you and Him, me and Him. When people understand that the responsibility is theirs, they will realize they alone are accountable to God for their lives.

The motivation begins in the heart. People are often seekers, but they do not seek from a genuine heart. When the Lord ministers, the genuine hearts become evident. I tell people that even embarrassment is a form of self and pride which has to be removed or it will hinder them, even a genuine seeker.

Have you ever gone to someone's door and decided at the last moment that you will not knock, and just walked away? Have you ever started to call someone on the telephone, and when you got to the last digit, quickly hung up? The motivation may be funny, but it is being a chicken. The Bible says, "The righteous are as bold as a lion." Someone could go to the fiery pit because you did not have the spiritual fortitude to say, "You need help, and together we will go to God."

If a counselor's attitudes are not right, then God is not able to use us for His glory. People may be helped, and in fact, God can and has used even an agnostic. This one I knew did not believe a word I said and was not too shy about saying so. People were getting saved in his ministry and things were happening, but his motivation was not right. He told me once, "I do not believe any of this stuff." Well, I do believe in this kind of stuff and that is why I became a thorn in his flesh. A testimony will go out if you do not compromise it. My point is that even though a counselor has an ungodly motivation, people can still be helped. It is God who helps those who are genuinely seeking help.

A counselor must never interfere with the work of God that He is doing through counsel by trying to compromise it, and then cover up by saying it in another way. You need the kind of boldness in counseling by the Spirit of God that will accomplish God's results. This is extremely important. If God is dealing with a person's heart and He has them on the run, do not interfere and

say, "Oh, it is all right. It will be okay," when God is saying, "Humble yourself in the presence of the Lord." This is a lesson in obedience.

God cannot use disobedient counselors or disobedient people. He works through people that He has placed in authority, and although it may seem extreme, if you are told to clean the toilets, you had better clean the toilets. "He who would be great in the Kingdom of God must become the servant of all." With obedience comes humility. Learn it well, for before honor, comes humility. This does not mean you become like a worm. It simply means knowing your place under God, being obedient to Him.

I Peter 5 tells us, "To the elders before you I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed. Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care serving as overseers." Note the phrase, "serving as overseers." It is a very interesting paradox. On the one hand being a servant, and on the other hand being an overseer concerned about the flock of God and their spiritual growth as those who must give account. This is why those who are under the leadership of God's authorities are responsible to obey them that are over them. The purpose is that the work of God might be accomplished and increased.

As the overseers minister the true Word of God, and He is confirming that true Word, God's work is able to be spread and increased. It is like an army where a General gives a command to the Captain, and the Captain says, "No, we are going to do that three weeks from now." The rest of the men say, "Forget it. There is no way we are going to do that." It ends up with the whole war being lost because people are not following the commands given from the General. People do not have to learn through disobedience. It is a waste of God's precious time.

If you are serving as an overseer because you have to, not because you want to, check your attitude. If you are unwilling and unhappy about going to another meeting, wondering when the counselee is ever going to learn, then you have a wrong heart. The begrudging attitude along with an unwilling heart must be replaced by a willingness to serve. God wants you to have a right heart and a desire to handle the situation to the glory of God. It should be a privilege from God to minister to someone else and help them in the Lord Jesus. It is a high calling.

The second false motivation is being greedy for money instead of being eager to serve. I have been told I could make a lot of money counseling, and that is right. Counselors who have all the required credentials are paid good money, especially when they get good results. I could make a fortune if I wanted to, and I know God wants to prosper me. But I read a verse one day and it struck at my heart. I could not get away from it. "Freely I have given to you so freely give." When I asked God how that was going to make me rich, He told me, "You cannot get much richer than you already are." He meant rich in blessings. God does not want me to get rich and greedy, but He blessed me and told me I do not have to worry about it.

Each counselor should note the admonition of the Scriptures: "Rather than greedy for money, eager to serve." A counselor's false motivation will be evident if he indicates he has a certain amount of time for a certain amount of dollars whether the counselee benefits or uses all the allotted time or not. Another indicator would be to have the counselee pay up front, or appearing to lack interest in what the counselee's needs really are.

A third false motivation for a counselor comes out of, "Not lording it over those entrusted to you but examples to the flock." This describes the type of person who wants to run other people's lives. Unfortunately, there are people like this, and you will recognize them as the kind who give orders and un-asked-for advice. The motivation is control. They tell you what you can and cannot do with your spouse, and how you should run your life. There is only one Person who can do that and it is the Lord Jesus Christ.

If a counselor is operating with a motivation of control, the leadership authority must step in because he is violating a principle of the Lord Jesus Christ. When working in a ministry, the one God has placed in authority is a vessel through which He operates. It is actually God's authority working through a man. This is how results come by the Spirit of God. Interestingly enough, it keeps coming back to obedience. A counselor must be obedient to God as that is His working order. It is how He tests and proves them. There is a check and balance in His method, and if we are working as a team, we are going to get God's counsel which is going to get God's results.

One of the strongest clues of a false motivation is when you question yourself with, "Gosh, do I really have to do it?" This is not willing to help. To do something for God grudgingly or unwilling is an abomination to the Lord. That person will get help, but you will lose the blessing of God for that situation. I personally do not want that kind of attitude to rise up in me any more. God has really dealt with me on that. The counselor is the loser at this point.

Another aspect to be aware of is when people who are concerned about others controlling them, it indicates they have an authority problem. They do not want anybody else telling them anything because they think they are doing a fine job of running their own life their own way. Matthew 23:5 speaks about the Pharisees: "Everything they do is done for men to see." This is another quality of false motivation that counselors must watch out for. It is tempting to exalt themselves, seeking recognition, wanting others to see how great they are, so good, so knowledgeable, wise, powerful, and wonderful. "Everything they do is done for men to see. They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels of their prayer shawls long; they love the place of honor at the banquets and the most important seats at the synagogues; they love to be greeted in the marketplaces and to have men call them Rabbi."

The title, "Rabbi," was an important one in Bible days. It means a teacher who is over other people. And they loved to have people recognize them. I remember from earlier days when I would walk into a hospital in my plain clothes and get static from the staff as I was trying to get in to see a patient. But when I walked in with my collar on, they would stand to attention and bow and kiss my feet. I have seen men purposely wearing those collars when buying a set of tires just to get a discount. This does not mean that all men who wear those collars have a false motivation, but I know how people treated me when I wore mine. They gave me honor, instead of the Lord Jesus. Finally I said to God, "This cannot be the way You would have it be. God, I thank you that I am blessed so that I do not have to use deceitful means to get what I need." When I took my collar off, God taught me how to walk into a place and look important without it. People now sense that I know who I am and just what I am doing there, and where I am going from there. Jesus has the authority; not like the Pharisees who were all show with nothing behind it.

The scripture goes on to say, "But you are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for you have only one Master and you are all brothers. And do not call anyone on earth 'father,' for you have one Father and He is in heaven. Nor are you to be called 'teacher,' for you have one Teacher, the Christ. The greatest among you will be your servant. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to.

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are. Woe to you, blind guides! You say, 'If anyone swears by the altar, it means nothing; but if anyone swears by the gift on it, he is bound by his oath.' You blind men! Which is greater: the gift, or the altar that makes the gift sacred?" (Matt. 23:15-19).

Jesus never beat around the bush. He spoke the truth with boldness. As counselors, we must always be on guard to avoid the false quality of not speaking the truth, of glossing it over. It becomes easy to compromise by taking the Word of God and lightening it up a little bit in certain areas. A counselor may feel the counselee cannot handle the whole truth, so he alters it a bit.

For example, God may be dealing with a counselee about giving back everything he had stolen in his past life. If the counselor advises him against it, glossing it over and compromising what God has for them, he is going against God's Word. The stolen merchandise may amount to quite a lot, but the Word of God says, "Thou shalt not steal." God's Word also says in Ephesians 4, "Let him who stole, steal no more and let him work." One of the exciting principles of the Spirit of Christ is that we are to recompense. In other words, if we stole from someone, we are to give it back. To compromise the Word of God to grieve the Holy Spirit would have been to say, "No, it is all right. You do not have to give that back. It was in the past, that is now over. You are a new creature now so go ahead and keep whatever you stole." No, it does not work that way. A counselor must be very careful not to encourage someone to do what is ungodly, especially when the Spirit of God is dealing with their heart.

It would be a very tempting situation for a counselor to have a Rolls Royce, or some other expensive item offered him that had been stolen by a counselee during his past life. There are counselors who succumb to that temptation, and you may be sure God is not pleased with those actions. A counselor's job is to make sure he gives the proper counsel to get God's proper results. The tendency of the counselee is to compromise, thinking there has to be another way. But if he has stolen and still has these things, what does he do about it? On the one hand he may want to give them back. But maybe there were many items stolen from many different places, and he thinks twice about it. If he stole something from someone he does not know, he should either give it to the Lord's work, or give it to the poor as the Lord directs, but he must get rid of it. This is where it is so important that the counselor hold the line on the Word of God. He must be a source of encouragement and a blessing to that person so he can be obedient to the Word of God.

We also hear, "Oh, one drink is not going to hurt me." One drink is death to the alcoholic. If that person used to be a drunk in the past, and God has made a change in his life, he must avoid alcohol like poison. A godly counselor will tell him just that. Going back for just one drink is far

more than just one drink. It is actually a past life, and everything starts with "just one." Godly counsel says, "Neither do I condemn you, go and sin no more. You are free in Jesus' name." The tendency may be to say, "One drink is not going to hurt anybody. Go ahead, but don't overdo it." That is ungodly and deadly counsel. If one drink is death to that person, that counselor's advice just killed him. We must speak out the truth boldly as God would have us do.

There are spiritual principles involved, and it is more than just the stealing or the drinking. There are devils that go with the stealing and the drinking. If you steal, not only is your flesh sinning against God, but if you continue in that as a way of life, you are opening a door to enemy territory and those devils will start to get a hold on you. Once you are clean by the Spirit of God and freed from those influences, then to have those goods around in your homes is opening up doors to past things. A lot of the work we do in deliverance with people has to do with things they have in their homes. This is scriptural.

In the Old Testament, the Lord called the people to cleanse their homes of every unclean item. Stolen goods are unclean items. Remember the account of Akan who stole goods out of Jericho when God had ordered everything to be burned and destroyed. He took them to his tent and buried the stolen items. The abomination of God came upon all Israel and they were all held guilty for what this one man had done. God dealt with all the people because of him. When the stolen goods were exposed, that man and his whole household were destroyed. The thief has a motivational spirit of laziness, greed, and hatred of other people, as well as jealousy and envy. They want what others have.

The sixth false motivation of a counselor is described in Micah 3:8-12: "But as for me, I am filled with power with the Spirit of the Lord, and of judgment, and of might, to declare to Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin. Hear this, I pray you, ye leaders of the house of Jacob, you rulers of the house of Israel, who despise justice and distort all that is right; who build Zion with bloodshed, and Jerusalem with wickedness. Her leaders judge for a bribe, her priests teach for a price, and her prophets tell fortunes for money." Part of a counselor's job is to help people see their sin. We see the sin and we see the problem. We can then get God's forgiveness for the issue, and loosen God's ability to do something about it. But first, we must see the problem.

Giving words for money, teaching for a price are false motivations. I once had an individual tell me, "You work for us. We pay your income." I said, "Friends, I love you dearly, but you are barking up the wrong tree. I do as God directs me. You cannot buy me nor use me because I work for God." In the same manner, a counselor is responsible to God, not to the people he counsels. It is a big responsibility, but it is comforting to know that God helps us as we learn and grow in the work He has given us to do. If you come up against a situation you are unable to handle, call in the rest of the body for help. Trying to handle a problem that is over your head will only cause more problems.

There are people who give answers off the top of their heads when they do not really know the answer. The motivation of the heart in people like this is pride, ignorance, ego, recognition, etc. They will not admit they do not have an answer. No one should ever be reluctant to say, "I do not know, but I will pray and we will get some answers." You might even say, "Let's wait on this for a while." This is one of the finest things you can do for a person. It is much better than going down

the road ten miles and go twenty in another direction. Stop, get your direction and bearings, and then go on.

I used to have a problem ministering to rich people, and would not do it. I read in Micah about giving a word for money, and I did not want to be contaminated. I did not want rich people thinking I wanted what they had, so I simply would not minister to them. However, there are many rich people who need ministering, and I was in a snare of the devil at that point without seeing it. One day, the Lord said to me, "Son, the rich people need your ministry just as much as the poor, and you are prejudiced." I thought, "Prejudiced? Me?" But God showed me that choosing the poor over the rich was prejudice indeed, and the motivation was just as wrong as if it was the other way around. I asked the Lord to forgive me and now have a tremendous freedom to minister to the rich, the poor, black or white, red or brown. Fear of getting greedy was keeping me bound, but now God is meeting all the needs of the ministry through His people. Every ministry that is growing and expanding needs people who can give freely, joyfully, and thankfully as God leads them. God knows the needs, and He meets them through His people.

There are times when people you counsel will not be as likeable as others you have ministered to. If a person is a whiner, and you cannot stand it, remember they are hurting and that is their way of expressing it. As you focus on the problem and get your eyes off the personality, you will soon want to get that garbage off their head. You have to tell that person to be quiet and quit whining in the name of Jesus and start praying with them. It is just that simple, and there is no need to be shy about it. God gets great results when we are willing to confront the situation in a loving, kind, but firm way. Remember that the sooner you get to the heart of the problem, the sooner it can be taken care of.

Hebrews 13:5 says, "Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.' Be not covetous with avarice (which is another term for greed), craving earthly possessions." Greed, interestingly enough, is equated throughout the Bible with adultery, fornication, homosexuality, and drunkenness. Another name for greed is laid out in Colossians 3 as idolatry. We do not need a craving for earthly possessions. I believe in prosperity and all the abundant blessings of God, and we can have all things according to God's word in Deuteronomy 28 and many other places. However, our goals should not be things and goods, but the wisdom and the knowledge of God. Proverbs 3 tells us that if we have wisdom from God we have on the one hand long life, and on the other hand, riches and honor. We can have everything the world seeks after, and we can have it all through knowing God. God will give the increase when we are obedient to Him.

Each child of God has a place and a function, and we must all be faithful to do our part. Unfaithfulness has no place in the life of a Christian, and Proverbs tells us, "Like a bad tooth or a lame foot is reliance on the unfaithful in times of trouble." A broken tooth is very painful. We must be careful to uphold faithfulness in all we do for the Lord.

The fear of man can hinder a counselor from telling people the truth which they need to hear. A desire to not offend or to be liked has hindered many people from speaking the truth in love so people can grow into all that the Lord has intended. Others are afraid that they will lose the person if you tell them what the Lord says is the truth about the person's situation.

Remember the only truth is the Word of God. If you are more concerned about what people think, and think of you, than what God thinks and says is truth, then you are unworthy to be a counselor or a helper. The fear of man will become a snare for you and make your walk with God and your counsel unprofitable (John 5:41-44, Prov. 29:25).

Saul lost the kingdom because he was more concerned about what people thought than what God said to do (I Samuel 13:11-14, 15:20-35). Jeremiah spoke the truth of God to people, even though they did not listen or obey, because the Lord has saved him from the faces of man (Jer. 1:6-10). Jesus said, "Woe to you when all men speak well of you for so they do of the false prophets." (The ones who do not speak God's Word and truth to the people which would help them.)

The last false motivation we will cover is lust, and a counselor can be motivated by it. In my ministry, I prefer men to minister to men; and women to women, unless they minister in couples. There should always be other women present when ministering to a female whether she is young or old. This prevents any kind of ungodly actions, and it's a protection for counselor and counselee. We simply give the devil no place or opportunity to take advantage of a situation. When the Lord is honored, everything is clean and good.

There may be times when a man will approach a woman for ministry, and it may not be ministry on his mind. Girls, as sweet, loving, caring, attractive and wonderful in God as you are, do not put yourselves in that position. I always advise the women in my ministry who are approached by a man, to tell him, "Brother, there is help for you in the Lord Jesus Christ. Come on over here and we will put you in contact with one of our men who will be happy to minister to you concerning the Lord Jesus." If his motivation is to know more about God, he will be thankful to get help from a man. Otherwise, you will never see him again. If he leaves, pray for him and claim him for the Lord Jesus. Pray a blessing on him, and then God will draw him to Himself. In this way, the false motivation has been cut off and put right back where it belongs.

Discussing these false motivations should not cause us to go around being suspicious, but it should cause us to search our own hearts when sharing with people so we will not allow any of these hindrances to rise up.

A counselor must never be motivated by his own personal interests. Only God's interests are to be shared, and the counselor must always be truthful. Sometimes without even realizing it, a counselor has an attitude towards someone else. An example is a mother-child situation where the child wants to marry a person against the mother's wishes. The mother feels it is not the right choice for her child, but in reality the mother does not want to let the child go. Emotional counsel is not wise counsel. This is the reason there is much wisdom in a multitude of counselors. Solomon put it very wisely, and I do not believe he was a woman hater when he said, "In a thousand men there is one counselor, and no women." Ecclesiastes 7:28 says, "While I was still searching but not finding, I found one upright man among a thousand, but not one upright woman among them all."

Solomon was the wisest man who ever walked the face of the earth. He was not a woman hater. To the contrary, he had thousands of wives. He learned something throughout his life, and

when he wrote the book of Ecclesiastes in his later years after he made all of his grander successes and grander failures, he had even more wisdom in his old age. He learned both sides.

The final product of good counseling is a person who is able to take the Word of God himself and go to God with it. They all need help at first, and we carry them to Jesus. Sooner or later, we all have to learn to operate on the Word of God ourselves, and then together. That is why the devil will often get his foot in the door and cause us to think we have the answer for ourselves and do not need to ask anyone for help. That is a lie of the devil. God intends for us to stand, each on our own, doing what He has given us to do, but in conjunction with each other. The lie would separate me from you and you from God. Seek help first from God in all matters. He will direct you.

FALSE MOTIVATION OF COUNSELEE

A counselor will find there are people who will come for help who really may not want to be helped. For example, someone may come to you who is hurting somewhere either in body or mind. As you begin to talk with them, you may find they are very receptive to your words. As you share some of the promises of God that by His stripes we are healed, and that Jesus bore our griefs, our sickness, diseases and maladies, they receive the Word.

You pray the prayer of faith, speaking to the mountain, to that sickness and disease, to leave in the name of Jesus because it has to go as we believe in our hearts and do not doubt. The counselee will get excited and eager for the healing and agrees with you in prayer. Two or three days later, they are back again asking for prayer about something else. When you ask about the healing, they will say everything is fine, they believe they are healed. As you ask what they are doing about it, they will tell you, "Not much, just sitting around and waiting for it." This is when you must tell them it is already done, and they must believe they have received and act on it. If it is a leg problem, they must get walking, jumping, and/or dancing before the Lord. There must be some action to the faith. If they are calling you to say there is still pain, you wonder why the healing has not taken place.

The first false motivation we will examine is called "attention." A person who comes to a counselor may not necessarily want help for a particular problem. What they really want is some personal attention. This can take two forms. One is a need to be recognized and feel important. The other is a need for love.

The true motivation of a counselor's heart is love and caring for God's people. We know there are all kinds of hurting people in the world who are suffering from physical pain, mental pain, and emotional pain. There are many kinds of pain, and many kinds of needs. When these people find a loving, caring counselor, they want to soak up that attention like a sponge.

When I was ministering in a situation to a person who was sick continuously, day in and day out, it seemed there was always something else to be prayed for. We would pray over one thing, and it would leave, and soon something else would come in. It bounced from the top of her head to the bottom of her feet. There was always something. I love to pray for people, and I love to see the power of God move, so I went to this person, and while standing in front of her, the Lord said, "Do not pray." I said, "What?" The Lord said, "She will not receive it." As I questioned the Lord further, He told me, "This woman loves the attention she is getting being sick." It caused the husband to pay more attention to her, among other things, and this was an older couple. It showed me that old or young, people have a desire to be loved, get attention, and be cared for.

You will find in counseling that the counselee has a choice on some things. They have a will of their own. You can have all the power of God going towards them, but if they will not receive it, they will not receive it. It will go right through them. I have seen it go right out through their backs, or hit them in the chest and go right out the top of their head.

If you have been counseling a person and praying with them for a long time and the situation has not improved or changed, then there may be another motivation in that person's heart. That is the time to examine the situation. We must be effective in helping people, and one of the ways is to know that person's motivation. An attention motivation in a person will eventually cause them to become a nuisance. They will try to put a guilt trip on you if they do not get the attention they crave. A person once told me, "I'm going to slit my wrists and you are going to be accountable for it." I said, "No, I am not. If you slit your wrists, it is your decisions, not mine." They said I did not care about them or love them, and everything I had said was false. It was an unhealthy situation, and if I had continued, it would have fed a sick attitude that wanted attention, and would have destroyed that person by reinforcing negative attention. That is not love.

Many times people cannot get attention in a positive way because they lack understanding of what positive love is. If they would simply say, "I need some love," it would be a positive approach. The negative approach causes a big scene to get attention. It may not be a conscious effort, and is probably not a deliberate attempt for attention, but it is definitely not acceptable behavior. A child that acts up for attention needs a spanking. An adult who acts like a little kid needs firm handling, with love. I have told people, "You are wrong in what you are thinking. I do care, I do love you, but what you are doing and saying are unacceptable behavior and I cannot condone it. Unless you want to change, I cannot help you, God cannot help you, and I will not continue this relationship." This forces the counselee to make a decision. They will either continue to act like that and be tormented the rest of their life, or they will decide to make some changes.

The counselor must be strong and bold enough in the Spirit to be the kind of loving person who does not let them get away with nonsense for negative attention. Helping a counselee understand and receive positive love will break a cycle that has probably gone on in that person from early childhood. Things will start to change in their life as they see God has a better way for love and attention.

The second false motivation of a counselee that we will examine is greed. Proverbs 15:27 tells us, "A greedy man brings trouble to his family, but he who hates bribes will live." A greedy person will bring trouble to his family because he is always thinking about himself, revolving around worldly things, acquiring things and hanging on to them. The qualities of a greedy person are selfishness, fearfulness, stubbornness, stinginess, and they are often broke. "That which I feared the most is that which came upon me," as Job said (Job 3:25). People like this suspect others of wanting what they have, and that kind of attitude does not do much for relationships. They may be tempted to steal, and ridicule anyone who tithes. They may like to boast about what they have, or are going to have.

Ecclesiastes 5:10 says, "Whoever loves money never has money enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income. This too is meaningless." A greedy person with that kind of motivation will be a problem when they come for counseling. This kind of person will want all a counselor's time, all the counseling ability and help, but are not willing to give a dime towards helping in any way. People would rather get into the healing line for a touch from God than go to the doctor, and it is usually because they do not want to pay the doctor. Of course, a touch from God is preferred, but let us examine the motivation. How many people, after hearing of the wonderful work of the Spirit of God in counseling would prefer it than going to a psychiatrist or

psychologist? Psychiatrists and psychologists are expensive. The point here is that if a person is coming to you for counseling to save a nickel, his motivation is wrong. It is for gain, and that is not love.

People like this must be shown that greed is a wrong motivation. They should be willing to sow into the ministry what it would have cost them for counseling elsewhere. If greed is the motivation of their heart, they expect God to set them free, not so they can serve Him, but to be freed from their problems and go on as before. I am not suggesting that counselors should expect payment for counseling, and only a certified counselor can accept money for counseling, but there needs to be a right attitude of the heart, a giving attitude on the counselee's part. If a person is counseled and set free by the Spirit of God, they should give the same time, the same energy, and share their testimony with somebody else. If they are unwilling to do that, they really do not have any right to get help.

The third false motivation of the counselee is lust. The same rules and principles apply here as they do with the counselor. A woman may be a point of contact as the person is drawn to God, but if it is a man, she should immediately refer him to a man counselor. Women may minister to women, and men minister to men. Otherwise, what may start out very innocently could end up in a very sticky situation. A male counselee may see how helpful, understanding, and wonderful a woman counselor is, and before long, his affection is drawn towards her. Emotions get involved. It is wiser to prevent the occasion for the enemy to get a foot in the door.

The Bible tells us that older men are like Dads, the younger men are like brothers, and the women are sisters. We are a family, and must see one another in this way. What would you do if you were counseling a person and detected a lust influence in him or her? You can do as Joseph did, and run. I always encourage young men to scoot if they run across a lady with questionable intentions. There is no need to hang around and take a second look. The way to deal with temptations of the flesh is to run from them.

The fourth false motivation is fear. A counselee may be afraid of what a counselor thinks of them, or what they have done. They may also be afraid of what other people think of them going for counseling. This fearful attitude causes them to lie. They will be dishonest by telling the counselor just a little bit of the problem without getting into the real truth of the issue. They may even come up with a totally different story, perhaps hoping deep down in their hearts that somehow they will get around to the truth. Sometimes they may be checking the counselor out to see what the response is before opening up with the real problem. There is a fear of revealing the truth, and often it is because they are ashamed of it. It is also possible that a counselee may want help, but there may be an area they choose not to give up.

As a counselor, the first thing you must do is win the counselee's confidence by establishing their trust. When I discern fear, I simply tell people right up front that they need not be concerned about anything they tell me because I have heard everything that could be said, I have seen everything that could happen, and there is nothing they can say or do that would cause me to be alarmed. I have heard about incest, rape, sexual relations with animals, you name it. When people realize that I will not be shocked by their stories, it helps them feel free to open up and discuss whatever it may be.

God will set people free. God will forgive; He will heal and deliver them from all things. There is nothing too shameful for God to take care of. With help that person can get out of the false motivation of fear and get into a motivation of faith, honesty, and truth, they will begin to get set free.

When people are afraid of what others think about them because they are going for counseling, it puts a real cramp on the counseling. Most people have negative thoughts about going to a shrink. A shrink is a counselor. All it means is that a person needs some help in his life. He is not able to cope with the situation and problems going on, and needs some outside help. We have to help people like this understand that counseling is not negative, but actually very positive. If it is needed, the sooner the better.

Many people are ashamed to admit they are going to a marriage counselor. I tell them, "shout it from the rooftops. Maybe somebody else out there who needs marriage counseling will get the idea and get some help too." This is positive, and we must get rid of the fear associated with it. The only difference between counselors and a dentist is that we are painless. We yank stuff out in the name of Jesus, and put something good back in.

The devil uses fear to keep people from getting their deliverance because he's always trying to steal their blessings. After they have been counseled, and they leave excited and blessed, the devil is waiting to put doubts into their minds. Confess your faults one to another that you may be healed (James 5:16). A counselor must prepare counselees for this, and remind them that if they thought they needed counseling, then they did need it. They should not listen to what others tell them. They must get rid of the fear.

I believe that every marriage can be better, even good ones. There is always room for improvement, and if a couple gets a little outside help in counseling it does not always mean there is a problem. Sometimes a counselor can help one or the other spouse become freer in the Lord, see things from another perspective, and be more blessed than before. It is important that counselees pay no attention to what others think, but keep their eyes on God.

The fifth motivation is guilt. It takes two forms. In one, the counselee may feel guilty with the counselor because they are not following the counsel given. Every time they see the counselor, they feel guilty and ashamed because they are not being obedient, not following the counsel; and therefore, not getting results. I believe that if people are following the Word of God, they will get God's results. God always keeps His promises. In a marriage, even if only one of the couple is following the counsel, they will get results, and before long, the other will too.

The other form of guilt is shifting the blame from themselves to the counselor. The counselee will dump all the garbage on the counselor, not taking the blame for their actions, and so the blame falls on the counselor. They put their life in his hands, trying to make him feel guilty because things are not better. A counselor may give the best counsel he can, given by the Holy Spirit of God according to the Word of God, and they come back and say, "That was a nice try." They refuse to take the blame for their problems, and try to intimidate the counselor to make him feel guilty.

When people try this on me, I tell them, "Friend, you made your bed, you lie in it. I did not make those decisions, so do not try to make me take the responsibility and consequences for your decisions." People will never stop trying to put a guilt trip on the counselor if things do not go right. I have heard, "You counseled me, and it did not work." And I tell them, "Who are you trying to kid? If you had followed the counsel, it would have worked." I know God's Word works, and God keeps His Word. God never lets His people down when they are obedient to His Word. When people complain that God has let them down, I tell them, "You let yourself down, and the sooner you start to understand that, the better off you will be." As a counselor, I refuse to take that kind of garbage from people who are disobedient to God.

God cannot be blamed for anything because He is perfect and holy, loving, and just. That leaves God blame-free. A counselor must refuse the blame, and help the counselee realize it is not the spouse, the in-law or whoever that is to blame. That person must face up to accepting the blame for his own actions.

One woman came to me complaining about her husband saying nasty words to her, hitting her, and drinking. I looked at her and said, "Yes, and you do this, and purposely taunt him. You have a fear in your heart that he is going to beat you up." She started to think about that and realized it was she who had the problem. Many people make their own problems. She asked, "Do you know what my problem is?" I said, "Yes, but I want you to tell me what you think it is." She answered, "It is my mouth." She egged her husband on to the point where he would lose it.

A counselor must be careful to avoid getting involved in the counselee's problem, especially when they want to use him as somebody to blame for not helping them. This is not meant to be discouraging, but to encourage learning how to be perceptive. This will help the counselor be more effective in recognizing the various games that counselees play. Simply tell them to do what the Word of God says and they will get God's results. If they do not, they will not.

The sixth false motivation is unforgiveness and bitterness. As a counselor, you give the people counsel, telling them exactly what they need to hear and do, or you let them sort it out for themselves. When they come to the conclusion, they may not like or want it. Now you are no longer on their top ten list. They hold unforgiveness and bitterness towards you, bad-mouthing you because you told them what they needed to hear, but would not receive. Proverbs tells us, "Rebuke a scorner and they will hate you." This type of person comes to a counselor, not for help, but to get someone to agree with them in what they are doing. When you do not, they decide you are wrong because they think they are right. Unfortunately, they do not hesitate to tell anyone and everyone how unloving, disrespectful, and rebellious you are, and will look for somebody to agree with them.

If you, as the counselor, know in your heart that you have shared the Word of God with them, that it was spoken as the truth in love without compromise, you can stand before God clean, and it will not matter what they spread all over town. It usually has a reverse effect because I have found that negative praise spreads very fast, and more people will come for help as a result. In Psalms, it says that God will turn that negative word around to a positive word to the praise of His glory. You do not need to defend yourself when that person comes against you with unforgiveness

and bitterness. You will find that in due time, they will come back and thank you for having the spiritual fortitude to tell them the truth, and what they needed to hear. It will gain you respect and a good report in the end.

The seventh false motivation is envy. James 4:1-2 says, "What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God." Envy is a very interesting false motivation. A counselee may want to be like you, and is drawn to you because they see something in you they want. There is envy and jealousy, but they would never come out and admit it. Pride holds them back, but down in their heart, they would give their eye teeth to be like you. Envy and jealousy are very destructive, so if they cannot be like you, they will try to destroy you by tearing you down. This happens in counselor/counselee relationships.

People will come on the one hand seeking help, and on the other hand wanting to discredit you. They might say, "I sure wish I could move in spiritual gifts like you can. I would be the best counselor around." This is not good. They want to be the best. My Bible tells me there is only one who is the best, and He is God. After God, everyone else is on an equal level. No one is better than anyone else, and if one is trying to rise above another, there are serious problems. This person will cause disruption, fights, strife, and all kinds of hurt feelings.

A counselor must be on guard if a person with this kind of motivation comes around. If they are drawn to you and want you to teach them something, they may want to learn from you. At this point, a counselor must ask the right questions. Ask them what they want to learn. As a counselor, I encourage people to learn as much as I know, and I am learning every day. But if they do not want to learn to the glory of God, to the building up of the body of Christ, but are merely seeking to have more knowledge than somebody else, they have a false motivation. I Corinthians 8:2 says, "Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies or builds up. If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know. But if one loves God, one is known by him."

Church sessions are actually group counseling. You can be set free through God ministering right into an area specifically in your life while you are being taught. This happens all the time. In fact, some of the longest lasting changes and healings take place through the instruction of the Word of God. People listen and learn how to keep their blessings.

Another false motivation of a counselee is power. This person may attempt to control or manipulate the counselor. They come to you with their problems, lay out for you and expect you to be God, which you are not. They try to manipulate and control the counselor with statements such as those mentioned earlier, like, "My life is in your hands." This is an attempt to make the counselor responsible for them. Typical statements may be, "Well, if you do not do this for me, then I just cannot carry all of this any more," or, "I do not know how I'm going to live any longer," or "I thought you were my friend, that you care about me and love me."

Frankly, I love them more at 9:30 A.M., than at 3:00 A.M. They must understand they cannot call just any time they need your help. It amounts to manipulation, power, and control when they feel they can command your attention at any time, day or night.

Another way counselees use this false motivation is through a sly method, going around to other people telling them you said things which you did not say. It is an attempt to gain control over you.

The reason for wanting control over other people is a need in that person which may be for attention, or perhaps jealousy. There could be a number of reasons. The devil wants to control people too. God does not want to control anyone, nor will anyone led of the Spirit want to control someone else. God believes in free loving response from people. As soon as you feel someone is trying to control you, cut it quickly. Simply say, "I think it is time you go to God with this. I am releasing you to the Lord Jesus right now with total faith, and total confidence that the good work God has begun in you, He will perfect and complete."

I believe in helping people, and if someone is going over a cliff, I will do all I can to help them, but I will not go over the cliff with them. I tell people, "If someone is in the quicksand, do not go in the quicksand after them. You stand on a rock, reach out with a stick or your hand and pull them out. If you go into the pit with them, you will drown too."

It is easy for some counselees to become dependent on the counselor for everything. They look to the counselor for instructions and direction so much that before long, they are led right into the next false motivation which is laziness.

This type of person wants the counselor to do all the work for him, take all the responsibilities to do everything that needs to be done, and it amounts to what I call the "Little kid syndrome." They like being dependent on someone else, and do not want to grow up. When working with this kind of person, a counselor must be careful in giving instructions and direction, to avoid them becoming too dependent on him. A counselor must help this person to grow up.

Ecclesiastes 4:5 says, "The fool folds his hands and ruins himself." This means he does nothing, and it ruins him. God intends people to be creative, to be blessed. A principle of God is that if we work we are going to mature, we are going to acquire various qualities of God such as integrity, honesty, diligence, and discipline. These all come from working. A person who does not work destroys himself because he does not mature.

It is surprising how many people think of God as some kind of sugar daddy. They think that whatever they ask in Jesus' name, Jesus will do for them so they do not have to do anything. They would love to sit back and relax in a lounge chair and wait for God to plant them a money tree in their back yard, a few oil wells, etc. People who sit back and let somebody else take the responsibility to do what they should be doing lose the joy and the freedom as well as the blessings that come with doing what God has established for them to do. It is easy to let a mother, father, brother, or the minister take care of things, but that person should be doing it for himself, or a lazy spirit will take over.

In counseling people with this lazy motivation, a counselor must make it clearly understood he will not do what the counselee should be doing in order to make a change in his situation. The counselee must take the responsibility and make the effort required. When someone comes to you saying, "I am broke. I don't have a nickel to my name." And then they will go on, "I read somewhere in the Bible where it says if a brother is in need, those that have something are supposed to help them out, and I am in need." This person may be unshaven, unclean, and smelling like a pig. My answer would be, "The way I read the Bible, it says if a man does not work, he does not eat."

A lazy spirit is an abomination to God. So when people with an obvious lazy spirit come to you saying, "I was told you care about people, that you love them and help them," do not hesitate to answer, "User and abuser, repent in the name of Jesus." There is plenty of work out there if somebody wants to work. The person who lets himself go in appearance tells the world he is lazy. Nobody is so broke that he cannot shave and brush his hair, or get a shower some place. Who would hire a person like that? If a person does not respect himself enough to clean up, he is certainly not going to be a good worker.

The best help you can give a person like this is not a hand-out, but motivate them to get a job. Give him some want ads and tell him to go through them. Have him follow up with phone calls, get cleaned up, and beat the pavement. That puts faith to work. To the lazy person, this is like throwing cold water on them, but it is good counsel, and if they truly want to change, they will follow it. However, it all depends on the motivation of their own heart.

Another false motivation is selfishness. This type of person continually dwells on himself and his own problems. Every conversation revolves around a problem he has. It is here a problem, there a problem, everywhere a problem. The finest thing a counselor can tell someone like this is to get their eyes on God, and off themselves and their own problems. They need to help somebody else and pray for them, and then God will take care of their problems.

This selfishness is a demand for attention. The selfish counselee will talk to only one particular counselor, preferably the one he thinks is the head honcho, thinking he is getting the best possible counsel that no one else can give. If that counselor is not available, he gets offended. It's a selfish, "me first" attitude. This type wants to be in front of the appointment line, and has no qualms about taking all the counselor's time without regard to others. No Christian counselor should let people like this get away with that kind of behavior.

Part of a counselor's work is to train people to be equipped to be self-sufficient, depending on God and not the counselor. If a life-and-death emergency situation comes up, and it well may, the Spirit of God will help you determine if it is really an emergency. It will not be motivated by a person. It will be motivated by the Spirit of God moving on your heart, showing you it is a situation needing immediate attention. Situations and people do not control the counselor. The situation is controlled by the Spirit of God, as all situations should be.

KNOWING YOUR HEART, RECOGNIZING MOTIVATION

The Bible tells us that whatever we do, we are to do it heartily, as unto the Lord, not as men pleasers. People do things to please others, or to please themselves, and it is usually done to gain recognition. When there is a void in a person's life, they do things to fulfill that need. All these are the wrong reasons because they are not being done for the Lord, but for self.

There are people who believe they have gifts, and they probably do. However, if those gifts are not being used to the glory of God, then He does not recognize them, and neither does anyone else. If a gift of God is being used with improper motivation, it will not produce God's results. In many cases, it will actually backfire. God establishes His channels through His authorities, and if people would realize and understand that, they would not work out of their own selves and their own motivations, and thus avoid a lot of problems.

Sometimes control and manipulation are practiced by using "godly gifts." When a counselor moves in love, he never manipulates another person. I Corinthians 13 clearly shows that love is the true motivation. It says that though I speak with tongues of men and of angels and I have not love, work miracles and do all kinds of good things, if I do not have love, it is like tinkling cymbals that clang, and brass, empty, with nothing in it. Anyone who tries to be recognized has a problem whether it is a counselor, or a counselee. Seeking recognition is a false motivation and God is not pleased, nor honored by it. You must check your heart and your motivation to examine why you are doing what you are doing, or saying what you are saying. If, at any time, you feel a compelling drive to do or say something, it almost certainly is not the Spirit of God.

It is important to remember that the Spirit of God does not create an obsession with people. The devil does. I have seen many people obsessed "to get holy, to do the works of God, to pray more, to read the Bible more, to do this or that." They feel driven to do things that God never expected them to do. It is true that God instructs us to read the Bible, to pray, and to be obedient to Him, but when we become obsessed with it, there is a problem. I am pleasing to God because of what my Lord Jesus has done for me. That is what makes me pleasing to God. Anything else I happen to do by God's Spirit working within me is a bonus. Jesus set you and me free from our own expectations about ourselves.

Whatever we do for the Lord should be done heartily unto Him, thanking and praising God for the privilege of His Spirit working in us, by His faith, and by His wisdom. When we realize that God does what He wants to do when He wants to, it frees us to allow Him to work through us at His will. When it is God working in the body of Christ, then it should be confirmed through the authorities He has placed in that body. In the Old Testament, God showed the prophets ahead of time what was going to happen, and what He would do. God always confirms His works. That takes the responsibility off us. If God chooses to use you or me in a gift during a service, that is wonderful. But if He does not, it makes no difference in our position with Him. Sometimes people rush in to operate in a gift so that people will recognize them as being spiritual, and God is in that place. My Bible tells me that where two or three are gathered together, God is present. My Bible also tells me that the gifts operate as the Spirit of God wills. Not as I will, not as you will. They are given by the Spirit of God to whom, and when the Spirit of God chooses to do it (I Cor. 12).

It is important to understand that God has the responsibility of allowing people to operate in the gifts. If we try to force something that God is not doing, we will botch it up. People will not be blessed. We will not be blessed. Doing it God's way is so easy. As a new creation, born of God, with His wisdom, His power, His love, His everything right inside of us, all we have to do is let God flow through us. That is not hard. It is actually very simple when you come to this awareness. At this point, you will not want to do your own thing anymore. You want to do what God wants you to do. I tell people I do not have a thought of my own any more, and when one tries to creep in, I cast it down. I want God's thoughts, not my thoughts. His thoughts are consistent with His Word, and His promises.

The devil loves to try and sneak his thoughts into our minds. A favorite is the feeling of being unloved, nobody cares. That is the time to remind the devil he is a liar, that you are loved by God. And those who love God, love you. Those who do not love God, do not love you. Recognize that fact. The important one who loves you is God, so do not let those old thoughts come back. Allow God's love to flow through you. Grow in the Word, and gain understanding of what God says. That is how your mind is renewed so you can think straight.

When I personally understood the truth that no sickness or disease could live in my body because Jesus bore my griefs, sickness, disease and malady, I realized that life and health were my blessings. When I first began to understand this, I remember how the devil tried to prove it wrong, and he will try.

My body was reacting and erupting, and when I got into the bathroom, I said, "NO! I refuse this! I refuse this in the name of Jesus. I walk in divine health." Of course, the devil immediately said, "Well, what is going on in your body, then?" Knowing where that came from, I said, "I refuse it in Jesus' name because this is a lie." My head felt like somebody was bouncing it on both sides, my throat had little white dots all over it, and as I looked at my throat in the mirror, I said, "No, devil! As God says, I walk in divine health in Jesus' name, and you cannot slap any sickness or disease on my body. It is cursed in the name of Jesus and it has to get off!"

I will never forget that day. Those white dots disappeared and my throat returned to perfect color right in front of my eyes. I watched it. I was stupid then. I watched it. Do not be like that. If I understand the Word of God correctly, I do not even have to look at it to see it go. I could have walked out of that bathroom and that would have been the end of it in Jesus' name. It was finished!

That dominion, that authority is important in your life. When you tell the devil to move, he has to move. That sickness, that disease, that mental turmoil has to bow and leave. If you have done something wrong, ask God's forgiveness, and be quick about it, whether it is known or unknown, and then command that thing to go. James 4:7 says to submit yourself to God, resist the devil and he will flee from you. The devil will not go anywhere until you have submitted to God. That's the first step. You cannot expect a healing, financial blessings, or any other blessings until you are submitted to God.

In counseling, it is important to make it clear that God cannot help anyone until they receive Jesus as Lord and Savior, and ask God's forgiveness for any area that's out of line with Him. The

promises of God won't work until we let God take the reins of our lives. When that happens, the power, the life, and the wisdom of God start to flow through us. The result is that people become free. We become free, and others become free. We must stand up, and refuse to allow the devil to run over us any more (James 4:6-7).

It is comforting to know that God does not use novices. There is a danger of a novice using a gift, being recognized for it and becoming puffed up. That is where people get into trouble. When novices become mature, they do not need recognition. Maturity breeds a very healthy respect, realizing it is God who is doing the work, not the person. This frees us from depending on ourselves, our gifts, our words or actions. When we allow God to use us, He gives us the words and tells us what to do. This is when we get God's perfect results, for His glory. When His Spirit moves in freedom, everything falls into place, like the pieces of a puzzle. God orchestrates situations and circumstances for beyond anybody's ideas or understanding, and He does it without any effort. He makes it easy.

God will allow impossible situations to develop so we will know it is not man solving the problem, but it has to be God. He does amazing miracles for us, so He can get the glory. He is a jealous God, and when we give Him all the credit, all the recognition, and all the glory, we get all the blessings that come with simply being obedient to do as He says.

When ministering to people, we must be careful to have the right motivation. If I am thinking about what I am going to do or say, I am not in the Spirit. According to the Word of God in Matthew, chapter 10, it says that when you stand before the high authorities, do not even take a thought about what you are going to say or what you are going to do for at that moment, the Holy Spirit of God is going to give it to you, what to do and what to say. If we have done our homework and are prepared to be used by God, He will work and speak through us for His honor and glory. It comes with practice, and we keep getting better as we allow the Lord to use us.

The first time I saw opposition against the work of God, I was standing behind a pulpit, speaking the Word of God about what Jesus said, about what Paul said, and what Luther said in a situation. It was all the same Word of God. Nobody had any problem with Jesus, or Paul, but when I got to Luther, all hell broke loose. The problem was not Luther. The people came under conviction because even Luther did not agree with them. People stood up and called me a liar, accusing me of quoting incorrectly, etc.

I stood there a moment and then felt a shield go around me. My head went down for a second and I started thinking about Jesus. After they finished their tirade, it got very quiet. The glory of God came down on me and when I finished speaking, you could hear a pin drop. I told them, "Today, we are not going to have the Lord's Supper because of the division in this place." I just turned around, not even knowing what I was doing. I like it that way because when I do not know what I am doing, I know God knows and He is leading me. I knelt down in front of the altar and began to pray to God, that He would forgive them, that He would bless them and show them mercy, that He would help. When I stood up and walked down the aisle past the people and out the door, it was still so quiet you could hear a pin drop.

That has happened number times, and in each case it is like an invisible shield surrounds me. No one can touch me because the glory of God is on me. Scripture says, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31).

There is no need for any of us to go around telling others what kind of office we hold, whether it is that of an apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, or teacher. People who talk about it are looking for recognition. God knows, and that is all that counts. We are all ministers of the gospel, and that means we are servants. I say let the works speak for themselves. All we should be concerned about is that God recognizes us, and when we are ministering and counseling that our motivation is right in His eyes. Every counselor must remember that everything he does is not for people or himself. It is all done for the glory of God. That is the proper motivation, and everybody gets blessed. God gets the glory, the thanks, the praise, and people's lives are changed. There is nothing finer than seeing people being set free by the Spirit of God. There is no greater joy.

When a counselor helps people, not looking for a personal blessing for himself, it goes against a lot of religious thinking. Many people feel they are chalking up a lot of rewards in heaven for their good works, expecting to have a big bank account up there. That is a false motivation. We must do everything for the glory of God out of thankful hearts to Him for what He has done for us. We must guard against getting wrapped up in our own personal lives, our blessings, etc. Many people even go to church for themselves. The Bible tells us "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another..." (Hebrews 10:25).

We are to encourage one another in the things of the Lord, to keep moving ahead, keep doing what God tells us to do, keep believing God in spite of situations. The result is that people become free. But if everybody is thinking only of themselves, their problems, their ministries, their own this and that, it hinders the work that God wants to do in our midst.

There may be times that as a counselor, you will be pressured into setting up appointments for something that you know is not in God's timing. You will know by the grieving in your spirit. When that happens, take courage from Paul (in II Cor. 11:10-11) when he made a stand. Sometimes things are not of God, and the works must stand for themselves. On the other hand, when God is in a situation, He will work in and through you, and nothing can stop it when it's all done for His glory.

Over the years, every true ministry throughout the Bible started from nothing, with nobodies that God called and gave gifts to. He equipped them, and made them successful. He gave them a name, and God gave the increase so He could get the glory from it all. I thank God our ministry started out in a laundromat. We had no people who were seeking glamour or glory. We were seeing healings and deliverances take place in that humble little place. God started me out there, and although it was a small beginning, He has blessed this ministry just as He told me He would. God has sent us faithful people who are more concerned about the vision of Glory to God Ministries and the work of God than their own blessings. This is His ministry, it has His name, and He runs this operation. It's all His work, and He's sending people who are faithful, committed to the work of God, not their own purposes or recognition, but to simply be a servant to the work of God.

Man's wisdom is foolishness to God, and God's wisdom is foolishness to man. God came down into flesh in a smelly little stall with donkeys and cows. He grew up a nobody in a small town. Philip said, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" That town did not have a reputation, it was not world renowned. It was the pits. How wonderful that God uses things that the world considers foolish and unworthy, and makes His glory come from nothing. We must never forget the humble beginnings, and avoid getting caught up in the world's ways, because that is how God starts His ministries.

Every ministry that is packing thousands of people into auditoriums and coliseums started out small. They were nobodies when God called them, but God has a way of spreading His Word. The key to keeping the right motivation is to remember that in ourselves, we are nobody. God is the One who does it all. The moment you start thinking you are somebody, you lose. God resists the proud, but He gives grace, or ability, to the humble, therefore, humble yourself in the presence of the Lord and in due time, He will exalt you (I Peter 5:5-6). He will give the increase and it will be in His timing, and in His way. A servant is to be faithful, no more, no less, doing the best he can to the glory of God.

I would caution the counselor or minister to watch out for people who would use you. This can happen easily when you have a compassionate heart and truly love people. Spend time in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes to gain wisdom and insight into people's motivations. Love and compassion are key ingredients in ministry, but use wisdom and discretion also. People will try to use you as "climbers" to build their own ministry, but with God's help, you will discern the intent of their hearts, and He will give you the wisdom to handle it as Jesus would. It does not matter what motivation Christ is preached. What matters is that Jesus is preached. Do what the Lord has given you to do.

God works in many different ways, "His wonders to perform." Leave everything up to God. He may lead you to teach, to preach, to exhort, but when it is God who does it, He will communicate the message He desires to give. As you keep your eyes on the Lord, He will accomplish His purpose in every situation, for His glory. You will be blessed, the people will be blessed, and God's work will go forward. Glory to God!