

The Basics of Biblical Counseling

By Evangelist Tom Palmer

Introductory Thoughts From Proverbs

- *Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety. (11:14)*
- *The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise. (12:15)*
- *Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counselors they are established. (15:22)*
- *Hear counsel, and receive instruction, that thou mayest be wise in thy latter end. (19:20)*

Introduction

- And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, **able also to admonish one another**. (Romans 15:14)
- "able"- to be able or possible (**Strong's Concordance**)
- "admonish"- "putting in mind, caution or rebuke gently"
(**Strong's Concordance**)
 - Same as "warn" in Acts 20:31, I Cor. 4:14, I Thess. 5:14
 - Same as "admonish" in I Thess. 5:12, II Thess. 3:15
 - Same as "warning" in Col. 1:28
 - Same as "admonishing" in Col. 3:16
- "admonition"- "calling attention to, mild rebuke or warning"
(**Strong's Concordance**)
 - Found in I Cor. 10:11, Eph. 6:4, Titus 3:10

*As a counselor, you must recognize that you are **using God's solutions to deal with man's problems**. Whenever there is a stronghold of Satan or a stranglehold of sin that is not dealt with in the life, an individual's life will be filled with chaos, conflict, and confusion. We must clearly understand what we are dealing with when we seek to help people with their problems.

Recognizing the Stronghold of Satan

*A stronghold is anything that we say is impossible, that God says is possible. We must understand that this is not an encounter of power, but an encounter of truth.

*II Cor. 10:4,5-

1. **Temptation** by Satan

- I Cor. 7:5- *“that Satan tempt you not”* (context of loyalty in marriage)

2. **Domination** by Satan

- II Cor. 2:10,11- *“Lest Satan should get an advantage”* (context of granting forgiveness)

3. **Infiltration** by Satan

- Eph. 4:26,27- *“Neither give place to the devil”* (context of dealing with anger and wrath)

4. **Saturation** by Satan

- James 3:14-16- *“This wisdom is...devilish”* (context of dealing with envy and strife)

*Each of these steps represents another attempt by the enemy to ultimately bring about destruction in the life (I Pet. 5:8). The enemy tries to create hurts, hang-ups, and habits that will make life miserable.

Satan's Plan

1. Satan Tries to **Sidetrack**

*Confusion of the **mind**

2. Satan Tries to **Hijack**

*Control of the **will**

3. Satan Tries to **Ransack**

*Chaos in the **emotions**

Recognizing the Stranglehold of Sin

*Sin must be Biblically defined. It is necessary to understand exactly what sin really is to a holy God.

1. A Disregard for **God's Person** - Rom. 14:23

*"*whatsoever is not of faith*"

*Note Gen. 3:3

2. A Disregard for **God's Principles** - James 4:17

*"*him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not*"

*Note Gen. 3:5

3. A Disregard for **God's Perimeters** - I John 3:4

*"*the transgression of the law*"

*Note Gen. 3:6

4. A Disregard for **God's Purity** - I John 5:17

*"*all unrighteousness*"

*Note Gen. 3:7

*Man's struggle to call sin what God calls it is clearly seen in the example of Adam and Eve in Genesis 3. Instead of taking responsibility and demonstrating repentance, they tried desperately to escape their sin and its consequences.

1. Tried to **cover** their sin (v. 7)

2. Tried to **hide** their sin (v.8)

3. Tried to **excuse** their sin (v. 10)

4. Tried to **blame** their sin (v. 12,13)

The Subtlety of Sin

*If allowed, sin will initially, eventually, and ultimately have its way in a person's life. The process goes from the first exposure to the full experience of sin.

*“But every man is **tempted**, when he is **drawn away** of his own **lust**, and **enticed**. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”* (James 1:14,15)

1. Sin attracts our attention
2. Sin presents an appeal
3. Sin stimulates our appetites
4. Sin develops an action
5. Sin creates an addiction

Stages of Addiction

1. **Curiosity** – intrigue and interest
2. **Experimentation** – first attempt to experience
3. **Obsession** – preoccupation with participation
4. **Compulsion** – irresistible urge to indulge
5. **Denial** – refusal to acknowledge a problem
6. **Powerlessness** – self-control is limited and lost
7. **Unmanageability** – life is now out of control

Basic Elements of Biblical Counseling

1. Trust

- It is the element of trust that allows the counselor and the counselee to experience the freedom needed to deal with the problems being considered. If the counselee is going to "open up", there must be a sense of freedom to share.
- Maintain privacy, confidentiality, honesty, sincerity

2. Time

- Many problems that you deal with have been years in developing. It must be clearly understood that there is not going to be a "quick fix". A patient counselor will be much more effective.

3. Truth

- God's truth, found in His Word, is the only solution for the problems that man experiences.
- 1Thess. 2:13 – *“For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but **as it is in truth, the word of God**, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.”*
- John 8:32 – *“And ye shall know the truth, **and the truth shall make you free.**”*
- Key Questions to be considered when using scripture:
 1. What does it say?
 2. What does it mean?
 3. What must I do?

Truth Aligns Us With the Very Nature of God

- He is the *“Lord God of truth”* (Ps. 31:5)
- Jesus Christ is *“full of grace and truth”* (John 1:14)
- The Holy Spirit is *“the Spirit of truth”* (John 14:17)
- The Spirit *“will guide you into all truth”* (John 16:13)
- *“All the paths of the Lord... are truth”* (Ps. 25:10)
- God’s law *“is truth”* (Ps. 119:142)
- God’s commandments *“are truth”* (Ps. 119:151)

Bringing About Change

- ❖ **The goal of Biblical counseling is changing behavior Biblically. Emphasize personal responsibility.**

*Information – changes the way a person thinks
*Reformation – changes the way a person acts
*Conformation – changes the way a person looks
*Transformation – changes the way a person is!

1. Confrontation

- Address the person, attack the problem.
- Ask questions- accusations will build resistance.
(Note how God approached Adam and Eve in Gen. 3:9, he began with a question)
- Listen attentively- gather information through facts and feeling that are being communicated.
(Prov. 18:13 - *“He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.”*)
- Don't be shocked! Maintain a controlled calmness.
Avoid the tendency to immediately condemn or criticize.
- Clarify anything that is not clear, and verify anything that is not certain
- Seek to use Biblical terminology as much as possible.
(James 1:25 - *“But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.”*)
- The problem must be faced directly, and it cannot be minimized. Our desire is to expose the need in such a way that it can be dealt with properly. (Prov. 28:13 - *“He that covereth his sin shall not prosper”*)

2. Conviction

- As God begins to apply pressure in the life, there will be an increased desire to change.
- Guilt trips, bribes, threats, etc. are basically a man-made attempt to force the situation and will not be effective in producing the long term change we need.
- Approaching the situation from God's point of view is essential. Ask the question: "What does God think?"
- Don't be afraid of tears. Conviction is painful but godly sorrow is what will bring repentance (II Cor. 7:8-10)

3. Confession

- It is necessary to "agree with God" about the sin that is involved
- I John 1:9 – *"If we **confess our sins**, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*
- Brokenness is a humble response to the conviction of God's Spirit and God's Word
- A "break-point" is needed to break through in the battle that occurs between self-will and God's will. (a **stalemate**, a **showdown**, a **stronghold**, a **standoff**)
- Selfishness and sinfulness go hand-in-hand but must be addressed on the heart level.

4. Cleansing

- **Repentance** – There must be a willingness to not only be sorry for sin, but to be sorry enough to stop doing it. (II Cor. 7:9)
- **Reconciliation** – There must be a willingness to go make things right with others who are involved. (Matt. 5:23)

- **Restitution** – There must be a willingness to repay any debt or fulfill any obligation that we may owe to another person. (Luke 19:8)
- **Replacement** – There must be a willingness to remove anything that God shows cannot stay in the life and then to put in its place that which is right and proper. (Eph. 4:22-24)

*These 4 steps are clearly demonstrated in II Sam. 12 as Nathan the prophet is sent by God to help King David deal with his sin with Bathsheba.

*Step #1 (confrontation) is in verses 1-6

*Step #2 (conviction) is in verses 7-12

*Step #3 (confession) is in verse 13

*Step #4 (cleansing) is in verses 13-14

Additional Suggestions

1. Always begin and end a counseling session with prayer.
(James 1:5)
2. Focus on progress even if that means taking small steps.
3. Assign projects- make sure that there is something that is to be done.
4. When dealing person to person, it is best to keep men with men, and ladies with ladies.
5. If it is necessary for a lady to seek counsel from a man (pastor, evangelist, etc.) then the man's wife or another lady staff member should be present.
6. When dealing with issues that are sexual in nature, singles should refer the situation to a married individual.
7. Limit the amount of time you spend counseling so that you don't get overwhelmed in one appointment.
8. If you don't know an answer, say so, and don't try to answer until you gather correct information.
9. Create accountability and let it be known that there will be a "check point" to see if progress is being made.
10. When you are dealing with a person or problem, look for opportunity to encourage or instruct even in non-formal counseling sessions.

The Significance of Progress

**“The journey of 1000 miles
begins with the first step.”**

-a Chinese sage

1. **Review** – every step becomes a “checkpoint”
 - Ps. 139:23 – “**Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts.**”
 - **Question** – Am I ready to allow God to show me what He already knows is true about my life?
2. **Renew** – every step becomes a “prayer-point”
 - Ps. 86:1 – “**Bow down thine ear, O Lord, hear me: for I am poor and needy.**”
 - **Question** – Am I willing to acknowledge my need for God and His working in my life?
3. **Redo** – every step becomes an “action-point”
 - Ps. 86:11 – “**Teach me Thy way, O Lord, I will walk in Thy truth, unite my heart to fear Thy name.**”
 - **Question** – Am I committed to doing exactly what God asks me to do, at the time and in the way that He desires it to be done?

**“For it is God which worketh in you,
both to will (His plan), and to do (His purpose),
of His good pleasure.”**

-Phil. 2:13

**TODAY
is the first day of the rest of your life.**

The Goal of Deliverance

Those who are in bondage are living with an area of their life that they cannot control. Another person or another thing has taken control. They need deliverance and a new-found freedom that only God can bring. The overall condition of their life may include:

- A state of **discouragement** – “I am hopeless”
- A state of **defeat** – “I am a loser”
- A state of **despair** – “I give up”

Our goal is to help them find the key (scripturally and spiritually) that will unlock the chains that have held them captive. This begins with the recognition of where the individual is in their own life personally. It will be impossible to face the future without first facing the past.

Bondage that Plagues and Paralyzes

○ Guilt	○ Rebellion
○ Fear	○ Anxiety
○ Addiction	○ Rejection
○ Bitterness	○ Insecurity
○ Failure	○ Doubt
○ Deceit	○ Pride

An Old Testament Prayer for Deliverance - Exodus 1-2

- *“...they made their lives bitter with hard bondage...”* (1:14)
- *“...the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage...”* (2:23)
- *“...and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage.”* (2:23)
- *“God heard...God remembered...God looked...God had respect”* (2:24-25)

It was the cry (prayer) of the children of Israel that God responded to in bringing deliverance. When dealing with those in bondage, sincere prayer is one of the initial steps that must be taken as we endeavor to help the person we are dealing with. In **Exodus 6**, God assured Moses of His response to their desperate prayer. This response provides a great pattern to follow as we pray for deliverance from bondage.

Ask God For:

1. **Relief** – *“I will bring you out from under the burdens”* (6:6)
2. **Release** – *“I will rid you out of their bondage”* (6:6)
3. **Redemption** – *“I will redeem you”* (6:6)
4. **Recovery** – *“I will take you to me for a people”* (6:7)
5. **Revival** – *“I will be to you a God”* (6:7)
6. **Redirection** – *“I will bring you unto the land”* (6:8)
7. **Restoration** – *“I will give it to you for an heritage”* (6:8)

This concept is born out again in the statement of Jesus in Matt, 17:21 (Mark 9:29). These kinds of endeavors must be saturated in genuine prayer.