

Key Elements In Counseling

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Preface:

You will find a great amount of materials that will give you insight, wisdom, and ability to counsel. The need of counseling is a major truth taught in the Word of God. If you will study the section on the Biblical Basis of Counseling you will find that God would direct every pastor into the ministry of counseling. Your people desperately need your ministry in this area. Plan to prepare yourself. Learn out to use good, Bible centered homework. Learn how to allow the Holy Spirit to use you to meet others deep needs.

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Introduction to Counseling

1. What is your definition of counseling?
2. What do you think distinguishes Christian counseling from the secular approach?

Consider the following situations. These cause us to understand the serious nature of people's problems and therefore the serious nature of counseling to meet such extreme needs as people have.

1. A teenager comes in to see you, sits down, and says, "I hate my parents! They stink! And I don't care what happens to them!"
2. A wife in counseling says, "I just separated from my husband. I'm emotionally involved with another man. I'm not sure that my husband and I can work it out. I know what my beliefs are, but I'm not sure what to do."
3. A man is sharing and says, "I'm so depressed I can't work; I can't think. I just sit there all day. Nothing gets done."
4. For the twelfth time a woman in counseling says, "I reached out and gave him love for sixteen years -- first through his alcoholism then through his seven-year affair. I have nothing more to give. I can't trust him and I can't forgive him."
5. You have been called to see a man in the hospital. Before you go in to see him you find out through talking to the doctor that the man is terminally ill. You go into the room and the man says to you, "I want to ask you something. Am I going to die? Do you know? Can you tell me? Am I going to die?"
6. A husband is talking to you and says, "You know, I've got all this guilt. Every time I sleep with this other woman I feel so guilty. What can I do about it?"
7. You are phoned by a man. He must see you immediately. So far, over the past few years he has been gambling and now they are about to lose their home and he may lose his job. He wants help, and he wants it right now. And his wife is about to leave him for they don't even have grocery money. How will you help him? What will you say? How will you begin?
8. One of your members (a mother) phones in great anguish. The owner/manager of a store has caught the son stealing some candy. He wants the mother to come immediately. The store owner does not know whether he will call the police or allow the family to care for the problem. She wants your help immediately. How will you approach this problem? What will be your plans for ongoing help to them?
9. A couple gets saved and you begin to disciple them. Soon you realize that discipling must give way to counseling. They have both been married before. She is white and he is Spanish and nearly 20 years older than she is. She recently returned from Kuwait having been married to a Kuwaitian.

She had fled from the country with her two sons by that union. He could have killed her if he had caught her. They both drank a lot in the past and presently do so. They are both used to yelling, calling each other horrible names and they battle almost daily with great anger.

The husband has an older daughter as well from his first marriage who is now a teen and resists the new mother. To further complicate things, his mother, whom he tries to please, does not like this wife and many times he goes home and leaves his wife on week-ends. Where will you begin? How will you help them? What are the greatest needs?

10. A couple you are visiting for Sunday School announce to you that the wife had been sexually molested as a child. As a thirty-two year old, she is overwhelmed with the memories that begin to come to her. They also have four children, and are \$24,000.00 in credit card debt. She is suffering from tremendous depression and is at the end of her rope. Her husband is greatly frustrated and does not know how to cope. They need help desperately. What are you going to do? How will you help them?

These are truly the kind of things that those in the Lord's work face, especially those who endeavor to carry out a counseling ministry. And it represents the kind of problems many people have who set in the pew. Pastors are *"whistling in the dark if they think that preached from the pulpit will meet all the needs of the people God gives to whom they are minister."*

Some of the above situations are exact situations to which I was called to counsel. It is exciting to see what God will do when we are prepared, willing, and excited about God's work in the changing the lives of those in dire problems.

A thorough study of many of the principles, methods, and materials, etc., on our web site will give you the home work ideas and materials to use for working with those who God calls you to counsel.

I think many pastors do not counsel because of fear, facing the unknown, lack of preparation, and wanting to do the easier thing that is at hand. May God give you wisdom in what He desires for you to do and the courage to do it.

The material on the web site... **watke.org** is written in a form to be simple, easy to use, and comes from many hundreds of hours of counseling. May God help you in the use of it for His glory. Also much of it would make a good source for preaching and teaching in pulpit ministry to meet the needs of people.

The “Key” Elements in the Counseling Process

The key elements:

1. Building rapport and understanding (note other materials on this)
2. Gathering data
3. Finding out the problem
4. Establishing personal involvement
5. Giving hope
6. Giving homework
7. Terminating the counseling

I. BUILDING RAPPORT... or relationships

(see other materials concerning this.)

II. GATHERING DATA (establishing the background of the problem, former lesson)

A. By Using a Personal Data Inventory sheet

B. By Using a Marriage Questionnaire sheet

C. By Using an Intensive Questionnaire (example given)

D. By probing through questions: (consider questions shared in other materials.)

1. Extensive -- (over a large area of potential aspects)
2. Intensive -- (like a “fine tooth comb” over some specific area)
3. Questions should grow out of facts received.
 - a. Use “what” questions and not “why,”
 - b. Be specific, avoid generalizations,
 - c. Avoid questions that may be misunderstood.
4. Don’t jump to conclusions, or judgments while asking questions.
 - a. Listen for facts, interpret later.
 - b. Listen with your heart.
 - c. Do a lot of listening, at first - not much talking.
5. Note the suspected problem areas, give intensive probing later.

E. Be aware of verbal communication.

1. Why it is said, when it is said,
2. Significance of what is said.

F. Be aware of non-verbal communication.

1. How it is said, tone of voice when it is said.
2. Physical response while it is being said.

3. This is “halo” data. Over 50% of communication is body language.
(How did Eli interpret Hannah’s time of prayer? -- that was the halo data?)

G. Listen intently:

1. Prov. 18:13 -- or we will respond improperly, be a problem and not solve a problem.
2. Listen for, especially --
 - a. Words of a **victim** syndrome. Many feel they are victims of their circumstances, events, and people around them.
 - b. Words that denote **blame-shifting**. (See study on this.)
 - c. Words of personal **fatalism** giving up, unable, can’t, life is too difficult.
 - d. Words that denote **feeling** orientation, and not facts.
 - e. Words that call their problem a **sickness** or a disease, and not sin.
 - f. Words that imply God’s **standards** are not the same for them.
 - g. Words that are obviously **lies** and not founded on truth. (Obviously they have a “belief system” of lies.

III. FIND OUT THE PROBLEM (This is the outline given by Dr. Goodge and those from Faith Baptist Church of Indiana.) I have added some along the way. (**STOP becomes a counseling model.** There are a number of good models that are usable.)

A. Subjective Level

1. Presentation of their problem -- why they came.
This represents pressure, grief, sorry, frustration, anger, resentments, etc.
2. Feeling - orientation
 - a. “I feel guilty.”
 - b. “I feel depressed, down, discouraged.”
 - c. “I can’t get along with my boss, wife, etc.”
 - d. “I can’t stand it, I can’t take it any longer.”
People will normally be more in touch with their feelings than facts, or feelings rather than their behavior.

B. Thinking level (the cognitive)

1. Right thinking can only come from a focus on truth, on the Word of God. Expect that their thinking will be wrong, sinful, failing, etc.
2. Thinking is behind behavior and emotions. (Note the detailed study of “*Why Do I Feel as I Feel and Do as I Do?*”... a book on this web site.)
3. What were you thinking when you did that? (Most of the time our emphasis is upon behavior almost exclusively.)
4. The question is not: “How did you feel, but what were you thinking?”

C. Objective level

1. Look at the performance of the individual.

2. What are they doing? Consider behavior or action and causes.
3. What are the facts, and the D A T A seen?
 - a. Their personal habits have produced their attitudes, actions, & feelings.
 - b. Who? When? What? How? Where? In what ways?
(consider other notes)
 - c. Not “Who did what to you?” BUT, what did you DO?
 - d. Watch for their rationalizations, generalizations, defensive posture, etc.
 - e. Do they admit truth, and state facts about failure?

D. Preconditioning level

1. There is a PAST, what have they **programmed** into their lives in the past?
(Matt. 12:33-35 -- what they have put into the heart is what comes out.)
2. What aspects of past life (failures) are seen in the PRESENT?
3. They have built behavioral habits and patterns that are a part of present failure. *“What they have sown they are **reaping**.”* (Gal. 6:7-9)
4. Past actions done repeatedly have become a preconditioning for present failure and will continue to effect future behavior.
 - a. “I hated my mother and aunt.”
 - b. “I have been gambling for many years now.”
 - c. “I have had an ongoing battle with pornography.”

(Study materials about habits found on the web site.)

The purpose of all counseling is to bring God-honoring change in the life. Change is a process by which the person works at correcting both sinful thoughts and actions.

IV. ESTABLISHING INVOLVEMENT, (the counselor’s involvement with the counselee.) *Consider Christ’s involvement with people and the study on the word counsel found elsewhere!*

- A. Definitions:** They will differ from secular counseling at one end and Biblical counseling at the other end. There are over 200 different “so-called” therapy methods.
1. **Freud:** (the expert doing for the people) In depth psycho-analysis with very little concern or emphasis on the individual.
 2. **Skinner:** (the clinician) These “behaviorists” put their major emphasis on man’s behavior as a high-grade animal.
 3. **Third Force:** (Rogerian, client-centered counseling) They feel client has latent answers within, just need to discover them. Are involved in uncovering the client’s feelings. Counseling is to “mirror” back to the client their thoughts, feelings, etc.

4. Biblical Counselor: (seen in Paul's and John's life)

- a. Gal. 4:19 -- Paul travailed until Christ be formed in them.
- b. Eph. 4:15, 25 -- Speaking the truth with much love.
- c. II Jh. 1-4; III Jh. 4 -- Great joy because spiritual children walked in truth.
- d. I Thess. 2:7-9 -- Paul's ministry was gentle with them like a nurse, and yet charged them as a father.
- e. Acts 20:31 -- Paul did not cease to warn them.
- f. II Cor. 11:29 -- Paul *felt* for the weak and the offended as he gave pastoral care.
- g. Col. 1:28-29 -- Paul warned, teaching so he could present every men.

Involvement is: "Accepting the counselees as persons made in God's image, and coming alongside in concern by the power of the Holy Spirit and Christ's love (Eph. 3:16-19) to understand their problems in order to help them find Biblical solutions and change for God's glory and for the counselees' benefit.

B. Problems may be overcome, change can be made. (Consider Rev. 2, 3.)

- 1. Recognize the tremendous privilege as a counselor.
 - a. The counselee probably never had such a relationship with someone who loved them and would labor for them.
 - b. The counselee possibly has never experienced true, godly concern from any person in the past -- not mother, father, relatives, etc. In fact, those close to them may have abused them --verbally, emotionally, sexually and/or physically.
- 2. Recognize your need of expecting God to use you, by faith. (Heb. 11:6)
 - a. They desperately **need** you; God providentially opened this door.
 - b. God will use your Biblical, **total** involvement.
 - c. The Holy Spirit is there to do His **work** in the life. (Jh. 7:37-39; Jh. 14; 15)
 - d. Christ is the Mighty **Counselor**. (Isa 9:6; He will be at work.)
 - e. God will **honor** your willingness, sacrifice and labor. (Phil. 2:20,21)

C. Purpose of your involvement: To gain an opportunity to meet the need.

- 1. Don't under estimate what God wants to do and will do. (Phil. 2:13; I Thess. 5:18)
- 2. Help the counselee be -- "*God's kind of Person!*"

D. How is involvement gained or established?

- 1. By coming alongside to help, (Gal. 6:1); work at restoration, yet recognize the responsibility is theirs.
- 2. By being sensitive to hurts. (There will be their perceived needs, desires and wants compared to true needs.)
- 3. By honesty, not changing Biblical convictions.

4. By careful listening, taking the counselee seriously.
5. By lovingly understanding their problems. (I Thess. 5:14)
6. By magnifying Christ! (Phil. 4:13; Eph. 6:10; Matt. 11:28-30; Eph. 3:16-20)
7. By modeling! (Phil. 4:19; Gal. 4:12; Col. 4:12)
8. By sticking to the issues. (II Pet. 1:3-10)
9. By being solution-oriented! (Phil. 4:19; Isa. 40:28-31; I Thess. 5:18, 24)

The counselee may practice defensive methods, rationalizations, blame-shifting, etc., in order to resist personal failure and truth about the matters as they are. You must be aware of any manipulations of truth, and even of you, the counselor.

V. GIVING HOPE to the COUNSELEE; the only message of hope is in God!

(You will find another section on hope, study it also.)

Often hope to the lost or carnal Christian means a wish, a hope-so! For the believer our hope is a confident expectation of God's work. (II Cor. 1:20)

- A. God is a God of Comfort.** (II Cor. 1:3-5)
- B. God is a God of power** who can deliver us! (II Cor. 1:10; Gal. 1:4)
- C. God is a God of all grace**, *"..... after you have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settled you."* (I Pet. 5:10-11)
- D. God wants us to** *"... be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might."* (Eph. 6:10; II Tim. 1:7)
- E. God has given us His Word**, which gives us hope, because it is *"profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness."* (II Tim. 3:16-17)
There is great confident expectation that God will use His Word to meet our need.
- F. Many have a great need of hope.**
 1. Paul knew great pressure as seen in II Cor. 4:8-9.
 2. Christ is deeply **moved** for **these who need hope!**
 - a. The lost -- (II Pet. 3:9; Luke 19:10)
 - b. The weak Christians -- (II Pet. 1:3-11; I Pet. 5:10; Phil. 2:13; 1:6)
 - c. Failing homes, (marriages, children) -- (Col. 3:15-21)
 - d. depressed, suicidal -- (Isa. 41:10; Psa. 42, 43; Matt. 11:28-30)
 - e. addictive, compulsive, failing people (II Cor. 1:10; I Thess. 5:18; John 8:32-36; I Cor. 6:9-11; Phil. 1:6; 4:13; Gal. 1:4)
 - f. elderly, who may be depressed, lonely, frustrated, negative, fatalistic, etc. (God has a wonderful plan and purpose for lives of the elderly)

- g. unhappy marriages: (fatalistic, hopeless, things won't change, give up, or give themselves over to divorce, separation, etc.)
- h. facing life's crises experiences -- death, rape, cancer, terminal diseases, financial disaster, losses, children falling into deep sin, grand-children reared by grandparents.
- i. newly married and those who are engaged,
- j. children and youth in crisis, rebellion, etc.

G. Methods of giving hope

1. Our personal testimony of victory in Christ. (Gal. 1:4; Rom. 8:32, 37)
2. By our compassion, understanding and tenderness in dealing with the person.
3. By our sharing the promises of Biblical hope from Scripture.
4. By labeling sin as SIN. (Only as sin is dealt with as sin, can the person then embrace the answer for his sins. If some psychological label is given as the source of their problem there is no hope! True hope is only found in God's solutions.)
5. Taking the sin problem seriously. For then we can help them with answers.
6. Recognizing God does have the solutions. Share them! Christ the hope of glory who is "made unto us wisdom, redemption, sanctification, etc."
(I Cor. 2:9-13; Heb. 4:14-16; 2:18; Eph. 1:3-12; Heb. 12:1-4; 13:5-6)

When people get answers that meet the deep needs of the soul, extricates them from failure, and gives them renewed joy and fellowship with the Lord - they have HOPE."

VI. HOPE COMES THROUGH THOROUGHLY SHARING YOUR METHODS.

1. Share your plans about counseling: length of time, etc.
2. Share your Biblical perspective about counseling. (See my notes given to people when they come.)
 - a. That they are accountable to be honest, or no value in counseling.
 - b. That you can only guide them to truth; they must apply it!
(They need to be aware of the seriousness of lying, manipulating, etc.)
3. Share your plans about whom you will counsel with first.
(Meaning if there are a number to be counseled... such as husband, wife, maybe a child ... let them know your plans.)
4. Share your concept of "the tip of the iceberg - principle!"
 - a. Show that problems can be dealt with.
 - b. Show God has answers for what you do know!
 - c. Give some relief today, immediately if you can.
 - d. Show them there are symptoms, and there are root problems, and

to help you must get to the roots, the hidden things.

- e. Roots lead to larger problems surfacing and they must be dealt with.
- f. Help them to have hope and see the need of honesty.

Hope comes through correct language or words in communication.

Guard against defeating labels and terms used by secular counselors.

(Like ... mental illness, inferiority, self-esteem, paranoid, schizoid disorder, pathological, isolated explosive disorder, borderline personality, avoidant personality, etc.)

VII. GIVING HOMEWORK

(See my notes in the syllabus on counseling)

Christ gave commands of things and actions people were to perform in the midst of their healing: Christ gave particular commands of action, or doing, to the rich young ruler: (*go, sell, give to the poor, come back, follow me*)

Paul states specific actions to be worked at in the *put off and put on* principle: *Eph.4:28; steal no more, labor with your own hands, give to others in need,*

A. Why homework is so important --

- 1. It is vital for it helps the counselee --
 - a. to translate truth into daily life,
 - b. to make responsibility personal, for it is their choice,
 - c. to make progress toward change rapidly,
 - d. to recognize what they do outside the interview is most important
 - e. that the talk time alone is not therapy.
- 2. It is helpful for the counselor.
 - a. Principles taught are being assimilated between sessions.
 - b. It saves time.
 - c. It helps the counselor stay focused.
 - d. It helps the counselee to understand the counselor's concern.
 - e. It helps to prevent dependence upon the counselor.
(God has the answers; things can change; God's Word will direct me.)

B. Counselor's concern about the counselee's response.

- 1. Did he understand the homework?
- 2. Did he intend to do it?
- 3. If he did not do it, why not?
- 4. Does the response to the homework give guidance for further homework, or give additional data, etc.

C. The mechanics of homework

- 1. Must be specific. (not general)

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2. Must involve knowing and acting.
(promises are not enough, or vows, or desires.)
3. Must be a like a blue-print giving clear guidance.
4. Must be appropriate to the problem and the person.
 - a. Don't do all the teaching -- make it so they must make research, study, etc.
 - b. Use good materials that will guide them -- studies, booklets, tapes, etc.
 - c. Keep a record of assignments, etc. (Note materials given; keep good records while counseling.)
5. Always review previous homework at beginning of each session.
6. Assign new homework at the end of session. (Do your own homework as well.)
7. Have a check-up session for yourself, as well as for counselee.
8. After you terminate counseling, continue with periodical check up sessions for ongoing growth and maintenance of changes made.

Expect Great Things From God, Attempt Great Things For God!

Taking Counselee Inventory, Collecting Data

Consider these questions:

- **Why** do people “do what they do and feel as they feel?”
*It is my intent to consider the data collecting from the view point of the chart:
Why Do I Feel as I Feel and Do as I Do?*
- What brings the counselee to the place he or she is in life?
- What are the basic things we need to look for in gathering data so we can understand the counselee’s needs and arrive at “**root problems**” and not just deal with symptoms?

Recognize the need of gathering facts:

- In Proverbs 18:2 we read that the mind of the prudent acquires knowledge and the ear of the wise will seek knowledge.
- The wise person seeks and acquires knowledge -- not assumptions, speculations, or imagination. Knowledge as to do with facts.
- Accurate Biblical counseling must include an organized method of gaining information that incorporates substantial times of listening to the counselee.
- We will not understand present behavior without the knowledge of many things that have to do with the counselee.

I. THE COUNSELEE’S PROGRAMMING -- or Preconditioning! (gathering historical data)

A. Importance of the Counselee’s past: (the programming of their lives)

1. Historical data about the counselee and his problems is an important part of taking inventory and knowing better what the needs or problems are.
2. The past has a great deal to do with the present life. Often things of the past give understanding of why the person responds presently as they do.

B. Aspects of the counselee’s past we need to consider:

1. What information is there to gather about the past life-context? like,
 - a. the circumstances of their lives,
 - b. the influences or pressures they have experienced or are now experiencing,
 - c. how they have been sinned against,
 - d. their frustrations and hardships, joy and blessings,
 - e. their failures, temptations, temporal blessings, successes, comforts,
 - f. the example of others which they have embraced,
 - g. the habits and patterns of sinful practices they have built and continued,
 - h. the habits of thought patterns, and attitudes they have build and continued,
 - i. and has he been abused, neglected, and/or mistreated?

2. How has the person responded to any of the above? What is presently occurring in the life, probably from the way they have handled the past?
 - a. anger, bitterness, resentments, or hostility?
 - b. withdrawal, clamming up, indifference, despondency?
 - c. rebellion to authority, rejection of others, etc.?
3. To gather data, we will find out all we can about the person's past. This will include the many things listed above. This is imperative!

Warning: The past should be considered only to the extent that it has something to do with the present life. It is not a matter of "who did what to whom," but what problems of the past have been carried over into the present.

II. THE COUNSELEE'S SELF-TALK PRACTICES: (the concepts, belief system, etc.)

A. Thoughts or our self-talk evaluations are a natural part of life. (Jh. 8:32; Prov. 23:7)

1. Preconditioning, or programming takes place only *through* the thought processes.
2. Nothing enters our lives except through our thoughts.
 - a. God does not by-pass the mind.
 - b. All we know or experience in salvation is first ours through the thought life. It must be acted upon by the heart and will, but it first touches our minds.
 - c. Satan does not by-pass the mind.
3. For the content of the heart (Matt. 12:33-35) becomes ours only through the focus of our thoughts, concepts, etc., which are a part of life.

B. We self-talk within about everything of any significance in life. *From this inner conversation we build:*

1. beliefs (or a belief system) and ideas and ideals,
2. personal convictions, opinions, preferences,
3. attitudes, expectations, desires, and values,
4. concepts which become the "desires and intents (motive) of the heart."

C. By our self-talk evaluations we make judgment about people:

1. We decide which people we are going to trust, or fear,
2. whom we will listen to, depend upon, or ignore and reject,

D. By our inner thoughts we build these decisions:

1. What or whom we are going to serve in life.

2. What or whom are our functional gods. (who we serve. (Josh. 24:11-24)
3. What or who controls our life, or “calls the shots” in our life.
4. What our belief system is, thus our aim, goals, purpose or motive in life.

E. By our inner self-talk practices we build what is in our hearts!

(Matt. 12:33-35)

1. Mark 7:18-23 -- What is in the heart will proceed from within and defile the man.
 - a. The problem is basically a heart problem.
 - b. Gen. 6:15; Heb. 4:12; Mind and heart are used interchangeable in the Word of God. Both refer to the inner part of us that influences how we will act.
2. Rom. 8:5-8 -- We either “*mind*” the things of the flesh or the things of the Spirit.

Considerations for the Counselor:

1. The counselor must know how and why the counselee thinks as he does.
2. The counselee must understand that changing the thinking is as important as changing the action.
3. Part of data gathering is to gather facts about the person’s thought life.
Such as:
 - a. opinions
 - b. convictions
 - c. value system
 - d. source of truth
 - e. belief system
 - f. perceptions
 - g. desires
 - h. expectations

III. ATTITUDES IN THE COUNSELEE’S LIFE -- (attitudes are produced by something!)

A. Attitudes are a state of mind about something.

1. An attitude is the composite of the way we think and feel about:
 - a. something (an event, circumstance, or situations of life)
 - b. someone (what, why, when, where, how come, etc.)
2. Attitudes are built by:
 - a. What we think about,
 - b. how we think,
 - c. and what controls those thoughts.

B. Attitudes reveal what we have “put into” and “who controls” our hearts.

1. They are formed in the inner being by how we responded to things about us from the time we were small children.

2. The heart is what we really are and includes:

- a. our emotions,
- b. conscience,
- c. thoughts and intents,
- d. imaginations,
- e. and will or volition.

C. We note the attitudes of others by:

- 1. their words, and emotions
- 2. actions, and reactions

D. Our attitudes reveal:

- 1. our purpose in life, priorities, and value system,
- 2. our surrender to the Word of God, and God's will or the lack of it.

Considerations for the Counselor:

- 1. In data gathering he should note the attitudes of the counselee.
- 2. Attitudes are produced by something. They are a revelation of the state of the mind, the thoughts and intents of the heart of the counselee.
- 3. Behind bad attitudes are patterns of sinful actions, and sinful thoughts or self-talk lies. Consider this in your data gathering.

IV. EMOTIONAL FACTOR IN THE COUNSELEE'S LIFE:

A. Emotions are like smoke detectors:

- 1. They alert us that something is wrong.
- 2. They are a warning system that we are programming things in our lives that are not for our good.
- 3. They tell us that our thinking has been bad, that we need to do something about our *stinking thinking!*
- 4. They are not our primary problem but are warnings about the primary problem that is taking place, right now.

B. Emotions reveal what is going on .

- 1. There are the good emotions of the heart produced by:
 - a. the Holy Spirit,
 - b. our yieldedness to the Word of God,
 - c. the Lordship of Christ within us.
- 2. There are the sinful (damaging) emotions of the heart produced by:
 - a. guilt over sin,

- b. bitterness, resentments we hold on to, anger, etc.
 - c. immoral thoughts, desires and appetites we have built,
3. There are the inciting emotions of the heart produced by:
- a. watching immoral stories whereby we build an appetite for the same thing in the personal life.
 - b. looking (eyes), tasting (mouth), hearing (ears), feeling (touch),
 - c. pride of life, desire for things -- wealth, power, covetousness, idolatry

Considerations for the Counselor:

1. What data collecting do you need to do as seen in the counselee's emotions?
 2. What emotional factors do you notice in the life?
 3. Emotions are powerful, so what emotions are effecting the counselee? What are the thoughts behind these emotions?
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V. BEHAVIOR AS SEEN IN THE COUNSELEE'S LIFE:

A fifth area to consider in gathering data would be the actions or behavior of the counselee. What he does and does not do! The Bible makes a close connection between our actions and other aspects of our lives. Actions have a pronounced effect on our spiritual, emotional, and physical health as well.

A. What are the predominate present actions of the counselee?

1. What sinful actions (or reactions) are being taken by the person?
 - a. Is it anger or the thirty some other words that denote an angry person?
 - b. Is it bitterness and resentment?
 - c. Is it envy, jealousy, strife, irritations impatience, etc.?
2. How are they reacting to life in general?
 - a. negatively with despondency, in doubts, fears, depression, etc.?
 - b. positively, feeling they are right, maybe with a false assurance that all is okay?
 - c. Possibly immovable, defending themselves, projecting blame, using defensive mechanisms?

B. What are they neglecting? (James 4:17; Deut. 30:15, 19)

1. Prayer life? (Luke 11)
2. The Word of God and obedience? (Luke 6:46-49; James 1:22-25)
3. A quiet time (meditation on the Word of God) ? (Psa. 1:1-3)
4. The house of God? (Heb. 10:25)

C. What are their thoughts?

1. Thoughts (self-talk practices) are behind actions. (Prov. 23:7; Jh. 8:32)

2. See study above about self-talk practices and its effect on life.

Considerations for the counselor:

1. What data do you need to note in their present actions, and reactions to life?
 2. In what ways is the life out of step with the “*thus saith the Lord*”?
-

VI. THE PHYSICAL ASPECTS IN THE LIFE OF THE COUNSELEE:

Physical problems can both contribute to and proceed from spiritual problems. The success of our counsel will sometimes be dependent upon understanding a particular aspect of some ones’ health. We cannot say that everything is spiritual and that the organic or physical has little bearing upon someone’s life.

In II Corinthians 4:15, Paul implies that when “*our outer man is decaying our inner man tends to lose heart.*” There is a close connection between the inner man and the outer man. *Data collecting must take place in all these aspects!*

A. Consider sleep issues:

1. Poor sleep patterns can be cause by:
 - a. illness, and medications,
 - b. spiritual problems seen in anxiety, laziness, or guilt, bitterness, anger, worry,
 - c. workaholic life-style, determination to get ahead at any cost.
2. Poor sleep patterns can impact the person’s:
 - a. spiritual walk, Bible reading, prayer life,
 - b. marriage, direction of children, etc.
3. Poor sleep patterns can produce:
 - a. agonizing fatigue, irritability,
 - b. lapses of attention or memory,
 - c. withdrawal, poor judgment, erratic behavior
 - d. a weakening of moral and ethical standards.

B. Consider diet:

1. Nutritional imbalance can affect behavior.
2. Is the person nervous or hyperactive? Is he using stimulants? Does sugar, caffeine, chocolate, or coke, etc., affect his actions and reactions?
3. Is the person on a “binge-diet” to lose weight? Does the person have allergic reactions to dietary agents or certain foods? Is he or she eating poorly?

C. Consider exercise or the lack of it:

1. In today’s culture most people do not have enough exercise associated with their occupation.

2. The lack of exercise can actually produce or heighten anxiety.
3. The body can be very tense and stressed because of the lack of sufficient exercise.
4. Tension is released, moods change, and the body health is improved when the person exercises adequately to meet personal needs.
5. A homework assignment that requires regular exercise can help the counselee to relax and meet an ongoing need.

D. Consider illness (s):

1. Sometimes sickness is caused by sin. (Psa. 32:3-4; 38:3; Prov. 14:30; I Cor. 11:30)!
2. Sickness (whether caused by sin or not) is an important factor in the struggles and temptations counselee face. *Illness does impact many areas of a person's life!*
 - a. For instance, viral infection, hepatitis, mononucleosis, diabetes, hypothyroidism, and hypoglycemia are all associated with depression.
 - b. Exhaustion and discomfort associated with many different kinds of illnesses can produce problems in every area of the person's life.
 - c. My personal experience with low blood sugar tells me that many people have many different effects associated with this problem.
 - Medical doctors who know tells us there are over 60 different reactions people experience with low blood sugar.
 - Low blood sugar helps to induce irritableness, forgetfulness, dizziness, anger, etc. (The person should never use this for any excuse of personal behavior.)

E. Consider medications:

Many medications, (both prescribed and over the counter) are known to produce side effects that are harmful to one degree or another. These drugs can contribute to ongoing problems -- mild depression, mood swings, withdrawing from life, etc. The counselor must make research about medications taken by the counselee. Maybe he should have on hand the *Physician's Desk Reference* so he can know when some medication is producing an adverse reaction.

Considerations for the counselor:

1. Data in any of the above should be gathered where there is a potential problem.
2. Data gathering is very important to good counseling lest we make poor judgments!

Bringing Hope to the Counselee

People who come for counseling are often in deep heartache. Many have had shattering life experiences from divorce, a death of a loved one, or a loss of a job, or they may have gone through some kind of horrible abuse. Often people have faced the same thing for years and have come to the place of hopelessness. Others have failed over and over again and need hope. Some have had all their hopes dashed repeatedly and have given up, such desperately need hope.

I. GOD OFFERS US HOPE

The need of hope and its role in counseling cannot be over emphasized. Consider what the Word of God says about hope: (Prov. 13:12; Rom. 5:5; Eph. 2:12)

- A. Hope produces confidence.** (II Cor. 3:12; Phil. 1:20).
- B. Hope produces joy that remains even through the most difficult trials** (Prov. 10:28; Rom. 5:2-3, 12:12; I Thess 4:13).
- C. Hope helps us to produce perseverance.** (Rom. 8:24-25).
- D. Hope helps us to produce greater faith and love.** (Col. 1:4-5).
- E. Hope helps us to produce consistency.** (I Thess. 1:3).
- F. Hope will help to bring increased energy and enthusiasm.** (I Tim. 4:10).
- G. Hope will help us to have stability.** (Heb. 6:19).
- H. Hope produces personal purity.** (I John 3:3).

II. HOPE COMES FROM RIGHT THINKING

We self-talk within ourselves as we evaluate everything within our own person. Thinking is at the base of all our attitudes, actions, and emotional responses to life. Much of the lack of hope comes totally and clearly from wrong thinking.

We either think lies or we think truth. Both false hope and a lack of hope springs from an ignorance or misunderstanding of God's truth. (John 8:32; Prov. 23:7; Rom. 12:2; Isa. 23:6; Rom. 8:5-8)

- A. We need to think Biblically about specific situations.**
- B. We need to think Biblically about God's Character.**
- C. We need to think Biblically about the possibilities of victory.**
- D. We need to think Biblically about God -given resources.**
- E. We need to think Biblically about the nature and causes of our problems.**

F. We need to think Biblically about what we say to ourselves.

1. "I can't !"
2. "My wife makes me mad."
3. "Its no use, nothing will change anyway."
4. "I've tried everything and nothing works."
5. "I don't think God cares about what happens to me, anyway."
6. *What do you say???*

G. We need to think Biblically about what we have done.

H. We need to consider Biblically the extent of the impact of our thought life.

III. WE MUST MODEL HOPE TO THE COUNSELEE.

A. By the example from our own personal lives. (Share your testimony.)

B. By the example of hope in others.

C. By having another person (s) have a major part in a counseling situation as they share personally what God has done for them.

1. Hope is a powerful change agent. With hope people are inspired to do positive things, but without it they will flounder and fail.
2. God is the ultimate hope giver and His Word is the basis of all hope.
(Rom. 15:4)
3. Nothing is out of God's control, in fact, if we believe in the sovereignty of our Heavenly Father, then hope is the very center of His work in us.
(Consider the chart drawing of this truth.)

IV. CHARACTERISTICS OF BIBLICAL HOPE

A. True, Biblical hope is based upon the expectation of good. Good that comes from the promises of God.
Rom. 4:20-21; Rom. 10:17; II Cor. 2:10

B. True hope is based upon having salvation.
I Pet. 1:3; Titus 3:5; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:4-5; I Tim. 1:1

C. Biblical hope is always realistic, based upon WHO God is. (Rom. 8:28, 29)
Psa. 61, 62; II Cor. 2:3-5; Psa. 103

D. Biblical hope comes from a diligent and receptive study of the Word of God. Psa. 119:49; Psa. 103:5; Psa. 1:1-3

E. Hope is a matter of the will for it must be received.
I Pet. 1:13; Phil. 2:13; 4:13; Rom. 5:2-3

F. Hope comes from experiencing God's work in our lives.
Rom. 5:5; Col. 1:27; Heb. 6:18-20

V. CHARACTERISTICS OF FALSE HOPE

A. Their hope is built on personal fulfillment of desired ends.

1. They feel their hope is based on the fulfillment of the desirable and the pleasurable.
2. If their problem will just disappear or they will have their needs and desires fulfilled -- then their hope is realized.

B. Their hope is based on expectations of a complete change in another person.

1. They feel God must change the person (s) involved. They have placed their hope on some unrealistic thinking, a fanciful idea with no Biblical substance.
2. They *feel* God will effect immediate change in some person or circumstance.

C. Their hope is based on a denial of reality.

1. They deny the reality of the situation they are in and the seriousness of its effect on life.
2. They deny the reality of the effects of sin and sinful habits and patterns of life.
3. They deny the reality that they cannot bring change to another person.

D. Their hope is based on an unbiblical view of prayer.

1. They pray as a magical cure-all, expecting God to act as they pray. While they do nothing and take no personal responsibility for their problems.
2. God will never do our part; God does His part when we are in the process of doing our part.
3. Consider John 15:5; I Tim. 4:7b;

E. Their hope is based on an improper interpretation of the Word of God.

1. False hope will bring temporary peace, or relief, but it is still false.
2. Many read into Scripture what they want it to say, and by this means make poor decisions that bring great stress, heart-ache, failure, and loss.

3. For many the Word of God is not read or is not applied personally to the daily life. Their walk with Christ is not real.

True, biblical, God-honoring hope is based on the promises of good. This kind of hope has its foundation in the promises of God. This is a believing hope that rests in, relies upon, and totally accepts the providential working of God in the daily life. (I Thess. 5:24; 5:18; Eph. 5:20; Phil. 4:6-8; Phil. 2:13; Rom. 8:28)

Interpreting Counseee Data

Here are some examples of potential areas to consider when interpreting data.

- **Conflicts - confrontations:**

(James 4:1-2) Is there fighting, selfishness, are they dissatisfied and angry because they want their own way and are not getting it? Do they view others as merely helps or hindrances in accomplishing what they desire, so they misuse others to get what they want?

- **Instability -- double-mindedness**

(James 1:8) Is the person trying to serve two masters? Self, their own gods, and the Lord? Are there things that have priority over Christ? Does the person have a split focus that results in an unstable life?

- **Lying -- dishonesty**

(Gen. 18:1-15) Abraham lied because he was ruled by fear and many counselees who struggle with lying have the same root problem

They are controlled by fear of being hurt, fear of rejection, fear of failing, fear of losing the response of people, etc. But merely telling those people to stop lying is a superficial and ineffective way of dealing with their problem. In such cases, we need to address the controlling fear before their problem can be solved.

- **Confusion -- disorganized**

(James 3:16) It says here that where certain sins exist, there is disorder and every evil work.

If we are working with a counseee who seems confused or disorganized, one of the possibilities is the person is committing the sins of jealousy or selfish ambition.

Dealing with a counseee's confusion or lack of organization may not be sufficient; we may have to go deeper and address issues of the heart before we can help that person.

- **Fears**

(I Jh 4:18) Here it says, *“There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.”* When people struggle with inordinate fears, it may be because they lack love for others.

Fear is often caused by selfishness. We experience it when we focus on ourselves rather than on serving the Lord and ministering to others. But fear disappears when we become more concerned about the good of others than about what happens to us.

- **Insecurity**

When people exhibit behavior that we would call insecurity (or even paranoia), we often tend to think that is because they have been mistreated by others or because they lack self-confidence.

But Proverbs 28:1 provides an interesting insight into that behavior. It says, "The wicked flee when no one is pursuing, but the righteous are bold as a lion."

Some who exhibit insecurity do so simply because they have been involved in sin and bear guilt from it. Those who make a practice of deceit, for example, will often be extremely guarded and hesitant in their speech -- because they have to be careful not to contradict lies they have told.

However, those who always speak the truth will generally be more confident and secure in talking to others, because they do not have to worry about being found out.

- **Worry or Anxiety**

When we encounter people who claim they have so much going on in their lives that they cannot cope with it all, we can remind ourselves of Martha in Luke 10:38-42 and ask if their situation might be similar to hers.

Martha interpreted her problem as having too much work to do, but Jesus pointed out that her problem was that her priorities were not right. She should have been worshiping Him rather than worrying about temporal things and judging her sister.

- **Judgmental Actions**

III John 9-10 mentions an extremely critical and schismatic man named Diotrephes. And in those verses John tells us the root cause of Diotrephes's behavior, saying that "*he loves to be first,*" or to have the preeminence. This man's pride needed to be dealt with before he would stop creating factions in the church.

- **Bizarre Behavior**

Scripture contains examples of bizarre behavior that lend insight into why some people act the way they do. For instance, in I Samuel 21:10-15 David deliberately feigned insanity to deceive others.

Some people today do so for the same reason. They do not want to be held responsible for their actions, and they know that if they act in a bizarre manner, others will expect much less of them. They may have found that they are cared for and catered to when they act that way.

In my counseling I experienced many people who exhibited bizarre behavior and told me later that they did so intentionally to get attention. In some cases, they had practiced this kind of behavior so often that it had become a habit pattern that was basically unplanned, automatic, a reflex reaction -- it had become a way of life.

Another Scriptural example of bizarre behavior is king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon who was transformed into a raving lunatic and acted more like an animal than a man (Dan. 4:28-33). This occurred as part of God's judgment upon him because of his pride. And notice that the solution to his bizarre behavior was a divinely granted repentance.