

BIBLICAL COUNSELING **GIVING GODLY COUNSEL AND ADVICE**



For the LORD gives wisdom,
and from his mouth come knowledge and
understanding. Proverbs 2:6

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BIBLICAL COUNSELING

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BIBLICAL COUNSELING

HOW TO GIVE GODLY COUNSEL AND ADVICE

INTRODUCTION

Picture a person traveling with their possessions in a suitcase. The trip is rough and everything in their suitcase gets disorganized. The person needs to stop, open their suitcase, and take everything out one by one so they can refold, restack, and better arrange it. Then piece by piece they put it back in the suitcase in better order than before. That is what counseling does. It helps a person look at the mixed up, disorganized parts of their life so they can make better sense of them. Then they can handle these things in a wise manner as they move ahead in life. Only the owner of the suitcase can repack it, but the counselor can help them sort through everything, decide what to keep and what to get rid of and how to best organize and use what is kept.

Providing Biblical guidance is an important part of shepherding. It's an important part of what a pastor does (1 Peter 5:1-4; Ephesians 4:11-12). Biblical preaching and teaching can help with this (Ephesians 4:11-12), but it is mainly done one-on-one. It can be done during an appointment made for the purpose of giving help and advice, or it can happen informally while having casual conversation.

Anyone who shepherds others, and that includes virtually all believers, is a counselor. As pastors, we are to shepherd the people God gives us in the same way Jesus shepherds us. One of the names for Jesus is "Counselor" (Isaiah 9:6). Jesus did more individual counseling than He did public preaching (to Nicodemus, the woman at the well, His disciples, the man born blind, etc.).

Pastors are qualified to give Godly instruction to people because we study and apply God's Word. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." The Bible is our source of truth ("teaching"). It points out error ("rebuking") and tells us what to do instead ("correcting"). It helps us to prevent problems and issues in the future ("training in righteousness").

Pastors are to feed their sheep so they will be healthy. Included in this is helping spiritually sick sheep heal and become healthy and productive. That is the job of all shepherds - of sheep or of people. We are commanded to equip our people. The word translated "equip" in Ephesians 4:12, "katartizo" in Greek, means "to make something suitable or useful." It refers to making something work as it was designed to function, to make it effective again. This word is also used of mending fishing nets (Matthew 4:21; Mark 1:19). It reminds us that we deal with torn lives, those who aren't functioning spiritually or emotionally as they should (Galatians 6:1). Our job as shepherds is to help them mend their lives through God's healing love and truth. The purpose of this book is to help you be more effective at doing that in the lives of others.

I. BASICS OF BIBLICAL COUNSELING – The Counselor

A. WHAT IS BIBLICAL COUNSELING

DEFINITION OF COUNSELING Biblical counseling is helping people apply Biblical principles to their life. It combines the principles of counseling with the truth of God's Word in order to help people deal with the challenges they face in life. It helps them identify behaviors that are inconsistent with God's teachings so they can learn how to apply God's truth to those issues.

B. WHY IS BIBLICAL COUNSELING IMPORTANT

WHY PEOPLE NEED COUNSEL Sometimes people need counsel because they are facing new situations or decisions and need help making wise choices. If there is a lack of experience, training or maturity in certain areas they may seek help. Perhaps they have taken a wrong path in life and need advice as to how to make corrections. Other times people make choices made based on sinful desires and negative consequences follow. Wise guidance is needed to help them return to the right path God has for them. Sin can be very subtle and deceptive. Those who give counsel should be mature believers who can help others move ahead in their faith and overcome areas of sin. Bible-based counsel can teach people how to accomplish this (Jeremiah 23:22; 2 Timothy 4:2-4).

BIBLICAL COUNSELING VRS COUNSELING THAT IS NOT BIBLE-BASED Those who do not have a Bible-based world view see man as basically good and only needing to change circumstances to find joy and fulfillment in life. They believe that man has all he needs within himself and there is no need for God, forgiveness, salvation or eternal life. Since they believe there is no sin, they see no need for God, and if there is no God, the Bible is not their guide-book. To them, it is just an old book of history and opinions. I heard of a Christian man who was having problems getting along with his wife. He said she would nag and criticize him all the time. The counselor's advice was that he should leave his wife and find another woman instead. That worldly advice is not based on God's Word, for it says we must forgive and get help to try to work through marriage problems.

Biblical counseling relies on having the truth of God's Word and a Biblical perspective of man and his problems. That is the only way to accurately give correct direction and advice. Psalm 119 says: "9 How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. ... 24 Your statutes are my delight; they are my counselors. ... 98-100 Your commands make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever with me. I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on your statutes. I have more understanding than the elders, for I obey your precepts." We know that "the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight" (1 Corinthians 3:19-20; 1:17-30; 2:4-7, 13).

C. WHO NEEDS BIBLICAL COUNSELING

Everyone has problems and can use godly counsel and advice at times, but often people won't admit their need. They don't want to face their sin or failures. That started when Adam and Eve passed the blame for their sin (Genesis 3:8-13). All people since have faced problems and difficulties (Job 14:1).

We are born with a sin nature and grow up in a sinful world. Satan and his demons are very deceptive. We often lack examples of godly living and, instead, are influenced in ungodly ways and thought patterns. Anyone struggling, unsure, confused or whose life has gone astray should seek help from a more mature person.

Good input and direction from others can often be very beneficial, even when we haven't strayed from the truth. Everyone, at one time or another, needs godly direction and input from others (Proverbs 1:5; 10:17; 11:14; 13:18; 15:31-32; 19:20). Seeking counsel is a wise, good thing to do.

D. WHO GIVES BIBLICAL COUNSELING

God expects **ALL CHRISTIANS** to help give advice and guidance to each other, and to counsel each other as needed (Galatians 6:1; 1 Corinthians 6:5). Each believer has God's Holy Spirit Who gives wisdom, therefore each believer is capable of giving godly counsel (Romans 15:14). If a child of God knows another child of God doing, saying or thinking something that isn't in line with God's revealed will in the Bible, they are obligated to lovingly and gently help the person see the error of their ways and direct them in the right direction (Galatians 6:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; Hebrews 12:12,15; James 5:19-20). Even when there isn't sin in another's life, we are told to encourage and help each other (Hebrews 3:12-14; 10:24; Titus 2:3-5). My wife is very good at giving helpful advice to young women and encouraging them as wives and mothers. She gives me godly counsel and encouragement as well.

PASTORS AND CHURCH LEADERS are to teach the sheep (John 21:17; 1 Peter 5:2; Acts 20:28) and that includes applying what is taught. Counseling is taking God's truth and applying it to various situations in life. This is the way a shepherd feeds and cares for each individual sheep. Pastors make great counselors because they care about the people as friends, they have trust and respect from the people, and they know the people and their situations. Also, they study, teach and apply the Bible one or more times a week. Counseling is the same. It is teaching and applying the Bible one-on-one. Pastors are available, people know them and trust them, and the advice is free so anyone can come to them.

In order to be a good counselor, the person must have certain **CHARACTERISTICS**. They must be a good listener who shows interest and concern for the person in need. They need to have God's heart of love and compassion (Psalm 78:36-39; Lamentations 3:22-23; Matthew 9:36; Luke 15:20; Hebrews 5:1-2; Micah 7:18-19). They cannot be judgmental or critical. They must be spiritually mature themselves. Of course, they must be trustworthy and not a gossip.

E. HOW TO GIVE BIBLICAL COUNSELING

One of the most important duties of a shepherd is guiding the sheep. A pastor guides his sheep as a group when he preaches and teaches. Sometimes sheep need extra guidance from the shepherd, or they need to have wrong behaviors changed. A pastor does this when he counsels his sheep. Teaching conveys truth; counseling applies truth to specific situations. Teaching prevents error, counseling corrects error. Everyone needs advice from time to time, and the pastor is the one they know and trust to guide them correctly (Ephesians 4:11-12; 1 Peter 5:1-4). Jesus gives counsel through His shepherds, for He is called the Wonderful Counselor (Isaiah 9:6). God's Word will teach truth, point out error, correct wrong beliefs and behaviors and train in godliness (2 Timothy 3:16). The pastor uses God's Word to give guidance and advice when needed.

We all err and are prone to wandering from the truth (James 1:14-15; 1 John 2:15-17) and so we need someone to give wise counsel and advice (Proverbs 1:5; 11:14; 13:18; 15:31-32; 19:20). God will give wisdom to pastors and others who counsel (James 3:17; Ephesians 6:11-17). The words of direction we give must be based on the Bible (Proverbs 19:21; 3:5-6). God's Spirit will help us apply this wisdom to meet the needs of others (Ephesians 1:17; Isaiah 11:2; 1 Corinthians 12:8).

Don't rely on the world's wisdom, what others might say or what is the easiest and most popular solution. Everything you say must be supported by the Bible and led by God's Spirit within you.

When counseling another, pray for patience, compassion, understanding and wisdom. Never be impatient, critical or judgmental. Treat them as Jesus treats you. There will be more about how to counsel later in the book.

Counseling others is a wonderful privilege and great opportunity for pastors to teach and disciple their people. Counseling is really one-on-one teaching which can make a great impact on the lives of others.

II. GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF BIBLICAL COUNSELING

A. DANGER OF IMPROPER GUIDANCE

Many people seek advice from friends or family members when they have need. If the person is mature and can give good advice that is great. Unfortunately, too often people will give advice without really thinking, say what they think the person wants to hear or give their own personal opinion even if they don't understand all the facts involved. Unless the person is a believer who knows God's Word, they will give worldly advice, which can just make things worse.

There are many examples of improper guidance in the Bible. The very first sin occurred because Eve listened to improper counsel, then she gave improper guidance to Adam (Genesis 3:1-6). Although a prophet of God, Balaam gave counsel which caused the Jews to sin and suffer a plague from God (Numbers 31:16). Rehoboam, Solomon's son, took advice from his immature, self-centered peers instead of more experienced advisers, and the kingdom was split in two (1 Kings 12:1-21). Psalm 1:1 says, "Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly." For more examples see: 1 Chronicles 10:13; 2 Kings 21:6; 23:24; 2 Samuel 13:3-5; 16:20-23; 1 Kings 12:28; 2 Chronicles 22:3-5; Isaiah 5:20; Nehemiah 6:7; Job 26:3; 38:2; Psalm 2:2; 71:10; Isaiah 19:11; 30:1; 47:13; Ezekiel 11:2; Hosea 4:12; Habakkuk 2:10; Mark 15:1.

B. COUNSEL COMES FROM THE WORD OF GOD

One of the reasons God gave us His Word is to give us guidance and direction (2 Timothy 3:16). His Word has power to bring about change (Hebrews 4:12; 1 Corinthians 10:11). His Word is our counselor (Psalm 119:24; Isaiah 28:29). It is better than any ideas or plans man comes up with apart from God (Proverbs 19:21). Never give any advice that contradicts God's Word. If you aren't sure what the Bible says about a subject, think about what Jesus would do in that circumstance. How He would act is the way we should counsel others to act. His actions never went against the Word of God. To help find what God says about various subjects, use my "Topical Index of Bible Passages." You can find it at <https://www.christiantrainingonline.org>. Go to India, then to Download Books. Or email me at Jerry@ChristianTrainingOrganization.org and I will email you a PDF copy.

C. COUNSEL COMES FROM THE SPIRIT

Wisdom comes from God (Proverbs 2:6-8; Job 28:23) through His Holy Spirit Who indwells us (Acts 6:9-10; 1 Corinthians 2:12-14). God will give insight and wisdom to understand what is causing a problem and how to solve it (James 1:5). We must learn how to best share God's wisdom when counseling a person. This book is written to help you do that.

Christian counselors need to have the “mind of Christ” and give the advice Jesus Himself would give (Philippians 2:5). Ask yourself, “What counsel would Jesus give in this situation?” Jesus is the “Wonderful Counselor” (Isaiah 9:6). Think of Jesus being with you when you counsel. You are His spokesman. He speaks through you. Be open and sensitive to God’s leading through the Holy Spirit. Never rely on your own wisdom but always humbly seek God’s guidance in all things.

D. HOW TO GIVE GODLY COUNSEL

1. LEARN TO LISTEN

Giving godly counsel starts with **listening**. A good counselor must first of all be a good listener. You should give direct eye contact and focus on what the other person is saying. This enables the counselor to gather the needed information and listen to God’s Spirit give insight and wisdom. It also shows the person being counseled that someone cares about them and their problem. Sometimes you will realize you are not the best person to offer help and can direct them to someone better able to counsel them. Often just letting a person put his thoughts into words goes a long way to helping them work through difficulties.

When you listen, **ask questions** to get more information about relevant subjects. You can use questions to get the person back on track if he gets off the subject or go into too much detail. Some people love to talk and when they find someone willing to listen, they will talk on and on. This isn’t a good use of time and won’t help them, so direct the conversation with specific questions.

Put yourself in the other person’s place when they talk. Don’t let your mind wander or think about what you want to say to them. Listen with your heart, like you would want to be listened to if you were the other person. Listen to them as Jesus listens to you.

If the problem involves another person, **never come to a conclusion just by listening to just one side** of a story. Even if it seems obvious, and the other person is in sin, you cannot know everything just by talking to one person. If possible, talk to the other person as well. When that isn’t possible, realize you don’t have all the facts necessary to come to a sound conclusion. Be very careful not to give advice that makes the situation worse instead of better. Be encouraging and supportive, but be careful not to take sides. Your purpose is to bring wisdom and healing into situations, not to decide who is right and who is wrong. Remember times in your life when someone came to a conclusion about you without knowing all the facts.

A husband once came to me to complain about his wife. He said she was distant from him and didn’t want to be close. He almost convinced me she didn’t love him and didn’t want to be with him. Knowing the importance of always getting both sides of a story, I talked to the wife. She told me her husband often got drunk and was cruel to her. The next day he didn’t remember what he said and did, but she did and she was afraid of him. He was the one who was killing her love for him. Never come to a conclusion until you **get all the facts**, from everyone involved.

When the Gibeonites came to Joshua, it seemed obvious they had come from a far distance and Joshua quickly made a commitment to them (Joshua 9). Upon gathering more information, though, he found he had been wrong and had made a serious mistake. The decision had seemed clear and obvious to Joshua, but he should have waited and prayed to God.

Your goal in listening is to be able to **state the problem** or situation the person is explaining in your own words and do it clearly and accurately. Never make suggestions or draw conclusions until you can do this. It is very dangerous to assume you understand something when you don’t.

Listening is gathering facts, and the more facts you have the better conclusion you can come to. That is true in all areas of life.

Keep the conversation focused on essential information. Don't let your **curiosity** about something cause you to ask for more information unless it is essential to what you are talking about. If you are tempted to listen to or spread gossip, this can be a real temptation when you counsel. Giving in to the temptation is sin and can cause much harm.

Show compassion and empathy for the person as they talk. Let them know you understand. You can share something similar in your life as long as it isn't too personal and doesn't reveal information about any other person. Don't get into details, just say enough so they know you understand. They person came to talk to you about their problem, not listen to you talk about yours.

If the person reveals a sin or failure on their part, **don't show shock**, rejection, criticism or anything but loving compassion. You are representing Jesus to them, and He is always gracious, kind, patient and loving. You can and must evaluate situations, but never judge a person (Luke 6:37; James 4:11-12). Judging means we are making decisions based on their reasons and motives, and we can never know those for sure.

Being a good listener is very important. **Listening well can be 90%** of what you do to help. People don't expect you to have a quick, easy answer and may resent it if you give a solution before they have even felt they have accurately portrayed the problem. That communicates that they, and their difficulty, aren't very important or serious. Never just say simple things like, "just pray about it," "trust God more," or "don't let it bother you." Those may be true, but you need to help the person know how to do them.

When you do give advice, give it based on all the facts and after prayerfully thinking it through. Then you can **say what is best for them in the long run**. Sometimes it won't be what they want to hear. They may even dislike you for saying it, but only the truth will set them free (John 8:31-32). Counseling is not a popularity contest. The goal is not to impress people or have them like you. Don't let your pride or ego get in the way. You are there to serve them, not them serve you (1 Corinthians 9:19). A doctor tells his patients the truth, even if it isn't what they want to hear. The same is true for a pastor and/or counselor. People deserve to know the truth so they can decide if they will follow your advice or not.

In the same way, parents must do what is best for their children, not what is quickest and easiest for them. So, too, godly counselors must say what is best for their clients, no matter how they respond. **Tough love demands doing what is best**, as God does for us. Don't always get people out of trouble. Sometimes they must learn the hard way and be responsible for their own actions. Don't let them manipulate you, or you won't be helping them at all. Hold them accountable. Make them write down suggestions, memorize Bible verses, follow through on advice, etc. Be sensitive to what God's Spirit is leading you to say and do, then faithfully obey, no matter what it is.

Sometimes people just want or **need attention**, someone to listen to them. Be kind and gentle to them, offering encouragement and support. But don't let them take a lot of your time. Be a good steward with your time, it is a valuable resource. Show patience and love without letting them dominate you or your time.

Being a good listener means you **have a plan** when you talk with them. You must have a strategy in mind (1 Corinthians 9:26). Ask God for wisdom and guidance (James 1:5). Approach the counseling time with an idea of what you want to accomplish, and direct the session to that goal (1 Corinthians 9:24). You won't solve every situation the first time you talk to a person. There are usually root problems under the surface issue which must be weeded out and worked on. Just changing behavior or actions doesn't bring lasting change. Only change of the heart does that. You

can point a person in the right direction and help them take the first step, but they must do the hard work of applying God's truth to their lives. Perhaps it will require more counseling sessions, or maybe they can work through it on their own. Either way, continue to pray for them and check up on them from time to time to encourage them and hold them accountable.

2. GIVE ENCOURAGEMENT

I know a young man who is a new Christian and is trying his best to be a good father and husband. His father was very hard on him. He always criticized him and didn't give him any encouragement. The young man felt he was never good enough for his father. Now, when he fails as a father or husband, he gets very discouraged and feels like he did when he was a little boy. I go out of my way to befriend him, to complement him and to encourage him in any way possible. He is like a sponge soaking up all I say. It is much more helpful for him than pointing out his faults. At those times, he needs encouragement more than counsel or advice. He knows what he should be doing, sometimes he just has a hard time doing it.

Along with listening, being able to encourage a person is also important in counseling.

Showing love and compassion without criticism, as Jesus shows us, is very important. This is one of the most important things you can do to help them. Speak the truth, no matter what, but always do it in love (Ephesians 4:15). Give them hope and encouragement to move ahead in life. Don't minimize the seriousness of the problem, even if it seems small to you. It isn't to them, that's why they are talking to you. Put yourself in their place (1 Corinthians 9:22). Remember, except for the grace of God, it could just as easily be you facing what they are facing in life.

3. LOOK FOR THE PROBLEM BEHIND THE PROBLEM

When lumbermen float logs down a river to their destination, they sometimes get jammed up. The only way to get them moving again is to find the key log that is causing the jam and remove it, then the rest will move again. The same is true when dealing with problems in a person's life. Find the root problem and then give advice on what needs to be done first to work through that issue.

While listening, always **look behind what the person says** to see the problem behind the problem, the log that is jamming everything up. Learn from what they don't say, as well as what they do say. Most times people come to talk, they talk about a surface problem, a symptom of the problem. A good doctor does not treat symptoms. He knows healing only comes when the root of the problem is found and cured. The same is true in counseling. You will often find problems with fear, pride, greed, lust, anger, control, feelings of rejection, unforgiveness, hurt or such things is behind the issue being talked about. Work on this issue in the person's life, not just the situation that has arisen from it. Don't give simple, quick answers about the surface problem. Deal with what is behind it.

Fear, pride, greed, lust, anger and similar subjects should be included in sermon preaching and Bible teaching as well. You can counsel everyone who listens by preaching and teaching God's truth on these important issues. Prevention is better than correction. You can save a lot of counseling work later by repeatedly communicating what God says about these issues in sermons and Bible studies.

I once knew a wonderful elderly Christian woman who lived alone. She would often call and ask for prayer or advice about some small detail in her life. She did the same with several other people also. Instead of becoming impatient with her many interruptions, God showed me that she was lonely and afraid of being forgotten by others. She was using her 'needs' to get attention. Her efforts were having the opposite affect because people looked for ways to avoid her and her many

calls. That made her feel more rejection. She needed to turn to Jesus with her loneliness and fears and learn how to lean on Him. She also needed someone to show compassion and care about her. By helping her see her root needs we were able to help her grow in her faith.

In many ways counseling is just like teaching, only our audience is just one person instead of a group. When you feel you know the root issue, you should teach the person what God says about it. You can give them a short, personal sermon or Bible study. Assign them Bible passages to read or assignments to complete. Base all you do on God's Word.

4. CONVEY TRUTH

Your purpose is to convey truth to a person (John 8:31-32), but **always show truth in love** (Ephesians 4:15). Use Scripture as your authority. Don't just give your own suggestions, back it up with Bible verses and truth. Show them where it is in the Bible. Focus on one thing at a time.

One day my wife and I happened to meet a younger mother we knew at a park. She started sharing a problem she was having with her son. Instead of listening and asking questions, we immediately started making suggestions. We gave her many good ideas about how to handle the problem, but later the conversation bothered me. I realized we never tried to get to the root problem, and we gave lots of suggestions instead of just focusing on one or two that would be the best place to start. I don't think we helped her much. Hopefully God sorted it out in her mind and focused her attention on what He wanted her to glean from us. Many times, God has to take our attempts and make them into something useful. After each counseling time, pray and ask God to do that.

When giving advice, it's important to remember to give it in **little doses**. Let them take one step at a time. Don't dump everything on them. Just show them the first thing they need to do: forgive, trust, apologize, ask God for wisdom and truth, etc. A person learns to cook one small step at a time. They can't learn everything in one lesson. The same is true in helping others work through problems in life.

At the end of your time together, **summarize what you have said**. It may be necessary to write it down for them. You should keep notes about the conversation so you remember and follow up with them next time. Let them state what was concluded back to you in their own words.

Always point them to God. Their hope, their focus and their assurance shouldn't be on you or on themselves, but on God Himself. Pray for them and for wisdom for yourself during the whole session. Ask God to reveal Himself and His truth to you during the time together. Always **pray out loud** for wisdom and guidance before you start talking with the person, and close in prayer when you are done.

Some issues just don't go away no matter what the person does or how well they follow Biblical principles. At these times **SPIRITUAL WARFARE** may be needed. You can find more information about this in my book, "Spiritual Warfare Handbook," or on my web site [https://www.christiantrainingonline.org, then go to Spiritual Warfare, then Learning More \(Books\)](https://www.christiantrainingonline.org, then go to Spiritual Warfare, then Learning More (Books)). If you know someone who is gifted in spiritual warfare, include them in the counseling. You can ask them to help you. You can email me and I will help you with the spiritual warfare in your life Jerry@ChristianTrainingOrganization.org

5. HOLD THEM ACCOUNTABLE

Don't allow someone to keep **blaming others** or making excuses for their behavior. Before growth or healing can take place, a person must admit their problem and need. As Christians, we

must admit our own sins and not blame others or make excuses (1 John 1:9). The same is true in counseling. The problem may not be a sin issue, but whatever it is must be recognized and admitted.

Give them an **assignment** with a time limit and hold them accountable to do it. It could be a passage to read or memorize, a person to forgive or apologize to, a habit to break or something to start doing in their life. If they come to talk again and haven't done what you assigned or suggested, don't waste your time going over the same thing again until they do it. Continue to show love and compassion, but hold them accountable. You can't change their life, only they can change themselves. When they do come back having done what was suggested, give them lots of praise and encouragement. Everyone needs that.

In fact, many times I will tell a husband, wife or parent they must give a daily compliment to the person with whom they are struggling. This is a good assignment to make. I will tell them they have to say something encouraging, something they like about the person, every day. It shouldn't just be about something they do, although that is fine, too. It is better if it is about an inner trait or character quality in the person. That adds value and worth to the person, and that goes further than just affirming their actions.

When you talk with someone always end with two things: **pray with them and give them a Scripture verse to memorize**. This is the best way for them to focus on God's truth and have victory in their lives. When Jesus was tempted, He quoted Scripture to have victory over Satan's temptations. Paul says our only offensive weapon is the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God (Ephesians 6:17). Psalm 119:9,11 tell us that it's through God's Word that we have victory. Say them over and over when these thoughts attack. That is the only way to victory. In the last section of this book, I have included Scriptures that pertain to each subject. You can use them, ones you know, or let the person use favorite verses of their own. You can find verses in the "Topical Index of Bible Verses" I mentioned earlier. Next time you talk, ask them about the Scripture. Hold them accountable to memorize and use it. God's Word is much more effective than your words!

I'll never forget an elderly homeless man who came to our church one day. The people were good to him, giving him food and clothes and letting him stay in their homes. Attempts to find him a job never seemed to work out, and one day we challenged him about avoiding responsibility. We never saw him after that conversation. He was willing to accept our help, but unwilling to do anything to change his problem. All we did was allow him to live without having to help himself in any way, and that wasn't really 'helping' him, it was just **enabling** him. When you do something for someone, make sure it is really **HELPING** them. Any time you do something for a person that they can and should do for himself, you make them dependent on you instead of becoming independent. Parents know this is true. Counselors must realize it as well.

6. REFER WHEN NECESSARY

No one person knows everything or can help everyone. God puts many gifted people in the Body of Christ so don't hesitate to allow someone else to help. Doctors do it all the time. Don't think you never need help. Everyone does. If there is an area of weakness in your counseling, talk to others who are strong in that subject and learn from them. Or you can read books or articles about it. Never take a guess when giving advice, go for help.

7. COUNSELING CHILDREN

When counseling children it is extra important to **listen well** and **show patience and love**. Let them talk. Look at them while they talk. Remember when you were their age. Don't assume you know what they will say. Don't be too quick to give a simplistic solution like "just pray about it," "stop

doing that,” “it isn’t that big a problem” or similar responses. Their difficulty is as serious to them as yours are to you. Look for the root problem, don’t just try to change their outer behavior. For example, a child who is angry and unkind to others usually has hurt or fear in his life that is causing him to act that way. Just changing behavior doesn’t impact the root problem.

With children it is import to try and discern if the behavior is **sinful rebellion or childish immaturity**. Children have sin natures and can allow them to dominate. But they also are young and often ignorant or innocent about the world and the things they do. Ask God for wisdom to discern what is behind their behavior. Knowing this makes a big difference in how you go about correcting them. Don’t just always assume what they are doing is sinful rebellion, it could be childish immaturity or a deeper root problem that is behind it.

Keep your advice and solution simple and easy to understand. Make **one clear suggestion** as to what they should do. Have them repeat it back it back to you to make sure they understand. Pray for them. Follow up with them to encourage them and hold them accountable for what you asked them to do.

8. COUNSELING TEENAGERS

Teenagers and youth may look and talk like adults, but they are really more like children in grown-up bodies. They don’t have the maturity or life experience adults do. In many ways, they are **large children trying to act like adults**. Their life is in transition: they are no longer a child but not yet an adult. They are concerned about fitting in and how their life will turn out. They are often self-conscious of their looks and abilities. They may lack confidence. Communicating their feelings and emotions can be hard for them.

To counsel them it is important to **earn their trust** and respect by listening well and taking their needs seriously. Take time to get to know them as a person. Show concern and empathy. Give them direct eye contact when they talk. Don’t give advice until you really understand them and their situation. Be patient and encourage them. Complement the good decisions they have made.

Again, don’t just try to change their actions, seek to understand **why they act that way**. Sometimes it may be sinful rebellion, but other times there is a root problem that must be dealt with. A teenage girl who dresses for male attention and flirts with boys could be seeking male approval because her own father isn’t affirming her as a young woman.

Be **honest and truthful** with them. They will respect you for it. Remember to get to the root issue, the problem behind the problem. Perhaps they have been hurt by parents or friends. If so, teach them what forgiveness means and how to forgive. They may be struggling with a certain sin. Respond as Jesus would, with grace and forgiveness but also with a firm stand against the sin. Help them to know how to have victory over the sin. Give them simple, specific instructions about what to do or not do. Pray for them afterwards and follow up to see how they are doing. Encourage them but also hold them accountable.

9. FOLLOW UP

Check with the person later to see how they are doing and if they are applying your advice. They may need encouragement or accountability to keep moving ahead. Knowing you remember and care goes a long way tin helping them as well. Make sure they follow the advice you gave before giving further advice.

E. CHRISTIAN COUNSELING SESSION STRUCTURE

God is a God of **organization**. We see it in the universe around us. Organizations bring better efficiency in our lives as well, and that includes ministering and counseling. Our daily lives need structure, so do our churches. Our counseling times should have structure as well.

Start your counseling time with **prayer**. Then **talk informally** to the person so they get to know you as a person. Tell them about yourself if they don't know you. It's hard for someone to open up about their problems to a stranger. This shows you care about them as a person. Don't spend more than a few minutes with this, though. Then start by asking them how you can help them.

Listen as they talk, giving eye contact and showing support and encouragement. Ask questions to keep the conversation on track and to get the information you need. As you gather more and more information silently pray, asking God for wisdom and guidance. Try to find the problem behind the problem so you can get to the source of the issue.

Then **talk to them** about what you see as the main needs in their life and situation. Teach them what God says about the issue. Then apply that to their life by making suggestions as to what they can do to move ahead and have victory over their difficulty. Assign something specific they can start doing to apply what you have said.

Don't lecture or do most of the talking. Ask them questions and let them talk. They will learn more if they come to conclusions on their own. They will better believe and remember that way instead of just hearing you say the same thing.

Ask if they understand and if they have questions. Have them repeat back to you what they are to do and why. If a lot was covered, have them write it down or they will forget much of it. Close by encouraging them in any way you can. If you think it will be necessary to talk again, tell them when you can get together next. Then **pray** for them and the whole situation.

Afterwards **keep praying** for the person. Stay in contact to encourage them and see how they are doing. Lovingly hold them accountable to apply what was discussed.

In my book on "Studying the Bible" (<https://www.christiantrainingonline.org> see [India, then Download Books](#)) I give 3 steps in Bible study. First is observation where all possible information is gathered. Next comes interpretation when the information is evaluated and conclusions are drawn. Finally comes application, when the information gathered and evaluated is applied to their situation. The solution, or cure, is implemented. This is the same procedure doctors use. They gather facts about a patient's symptoms and health, evaluate the facts to see what the problem might be, and then come up with a solution to cure the person. Counselors do the same thing with a person's emotions that a doctor does with their body.

F. MISTAKES TO AVOID

Many of these have already been mentioned, but since they are important, I'll list them again. First, don't give advice without listening (James 1:19; Proverbs 18:13). Don't talk too much, let them do the talking. Always show acceptance, never a judgmental or critical attitude (Hebrews 2:18; 4:15). Instead, do all you can to encourage the person. Don't give worldly advice, only what God's Word supports (Colossians 2:8; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:12). Think of what Jesus would say to them and HOW He would say it. Another mistake to avoid is to not summarize and apply what was said. Make sure they understand the first steps they can take to victory.

I personally think it is a big mistake to charge a fee for counseling services unless you are a full-time counselor and that is how you support your family. For a pastor, counseling is part of what we do as a shepherd. Many pastors receive a salary for pastoring so they shouldn't be paid again for what he is already paid to do. Charging a fee can change the way the person sees you and your service. Everything Jesus gives is free and without charge. We should minister in the same way.

If a Christian insists on giving a gift to your family or ministry, you can graciously accept that. Just make sure they know it isn't required or necessary. If they think it is, they may not seek your help again because of not having money to pay you.

G. DANGERS FOR COUNSELORS

Helping others during difficult times by giving godly advice is an important duty of a church leader. It can bring joy and blessing to the counselor. But we also face dangers of which we must be aware.

DON'T BE PROUD Watch out for pride. It can feel good when someone comes to us for help, but don't take pride in yourself. Sometimes we can be tempted to pride, especially when God uses us to help a person find the truth and change their life. We can start to think we can help anyone, and everyone should talk to us instead of another person or pastor.

Satan seeks to get our focus off God and onto ourself. Pride is a big tool of his and has caused the downfall of many Christians. Spend time with God each day, learning His Word and humbly seeking His guidance in your life. Always give Him the credit and glory for the good He produces through you. After all, where would you be without Him?

BE A GOOD STEWARD OF TIME Make sure you are a good steward of your time. You wouldn't let people take and waste your money, so don't let them do that with your time, either. Never hesitate to say 'no' when your priorities are threatened. God is big enough to take care of people when we can't. Some may try to make you feel badly because you don't do everything they want you to do. Being manipulated by guilt doesn't help their problem, it just creates another one in us.

Remember, your purpose is to teach people to depend on Jesus, not on you. If they are becoming more dependent on you instead of less dependent, it's time to stop spending so much time and energy on them. Let God use you, but do it prayerfully!

Make sure you use time to take care of your body and mind. Get exercise, eat healthy food, get enough rest and keep your body in good physical shape. Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19). It takes self-discipline to do this, but also time (1 Corinthians 9:26-27).

DON'T BE DISCOURAGED

Don't be discouraged when you realized you gave bad advice or when you give good advice that is not taken. You can't change someone who doesn't want to change or isn't willing to pay the price to change. Don't take other people's sins and failures personally. Do your best. The rest is between them and God. It is not a reflection on you. You can't change anyone, only God can. And He doesn't force anyone to change. He helps those who want to change.

DON'T FALL INTO TEMPTATION

Too often godly men or women fall into temptation when they get too close emotionally to the person to whom they are talking. Even if no physical sin occurs, emotional adultery can take place when people get too close emotionally to someone with whom they aren't married. One's mate must always be first in all areas of life.

H. GOAL OF CHRISTIAN COUNSELING

The goal of Christian counseling is to bring spiritual health and maturity. This means the person is able to accept themselves as God made them, with both their strengths and weaknesses (Mark 12:31). With this comes a capacity to love others and accept love from them. It also brings a foundation from which we can forgive ourselves and others. An attitude of servanthood will replace self-centered pride and self-focus.

A spiritually healthy person is able to experience compassion and empathy for others. They are able to label their emotions and therefore better handle them. They can let their mind explain reality to their emotions. Happiness and joy are experienced and spread to others. They will understand their own needs and how to meet them in healthy ways. They recognize their strengths and how to use them. They acknowledge their weaknesses and know how to overcome them. In summary, the goal of Christian counseling is to help the person become more like Jesus (1 John 2:6; Galatians 2:20). That is God's goal for all of us (Ephesians 5:1-2).

I. WHEN COUNSELING DOESN'T HELP

Not everyone you counsel will grow to become spiritually healthy. Some will reject your advice and think they know a better solution. Others may want to stay in their situation and continue to get sympathy and support from it. Never be involved in enabling. Never do anything for someone else which they can do for themselves. This just makes them dependent on you instead of growing to independent maturity. When a parent does things for their child which they should do for themselves, they aren't helping the child grow. Neither is the pastor or the counselor. Parents and counselors aren't to make life easier for the person/child, we are to help them grow to where they can handle life's situations on their own.

Often people aren't willing to pay the price to change. Facing their sin and working through it is often harder than just continuing in the sin. It's not until the pain of remaining in the sin is worse than the pain of change that they will start making progress. Keep the door open so they can come back to you when they are ready and willing to take your advice.

A girl who was a new Christian and excited about her faith came to me to ask me to marry her and her boyfriend. As always, I went through several counseling sessions with them to ground them in their faith and prepare them for the realities of marriage. The young man believed in Jesus and wanted to live for Him (I won't marry a couple unless both are believers living for Jesus as stated in 2 Corinthians 6:14). However, he had a problem with alcohol and drugs. When he used them, he would get angry and abusive. Each time he promised he would never do it again and the girl forgave him and gave him another chance. The day before the marriage he again became drunk so I told them I wouldn't marry them because he needed to get victory over his problem before being married. The girl was furious with me because a big, expensive wedding celebration was planned for the next day. She found someone else to perform the marriage, but in a few weeks, she had to leave him for her own safety. It was a sad, tragic end to their story. She was unwilling to take counsel.

People have a free will and sometimes just don't want to change. When that is the case, God will have to deal with them in His gentle but firm way. God will discipline a child of His who is in sin (Hebrews 12:4-11).

Other times a person may try and try but still struggle. This could be a time spiritual warfare is needed (see above). Or it could be that God wants the situation to remain because it is something

He will use for their growth and His glory, like Paul's thorn in the flesh (2 Corinthians 12:6-7). If that is the case, God promises He will provide enough grace to get through it (2 Corinthians 12:8-9).

CONCLUSION

In the beginning we talked about a person traveling with their possessions in a suitcase. The trip is rough and everything in their suitcase gets mixed together. The person needs to stop, open their suitcase, and take everything out one by one so they can refold, restack, and better arrange it. Then piece by piece they put it back in the suitcase in better order than before. That is what counseling does. It helps a person look at the mixed up, disorganized parts of their life so they can make better sense of them. Then they can handle these things in a wise manner as they move ahead in life. Only the owner of the suitcase can repack it, but the counselor can help them sort through everything, decide what to keep and what to get rid of and how to best organize and use what is kept.

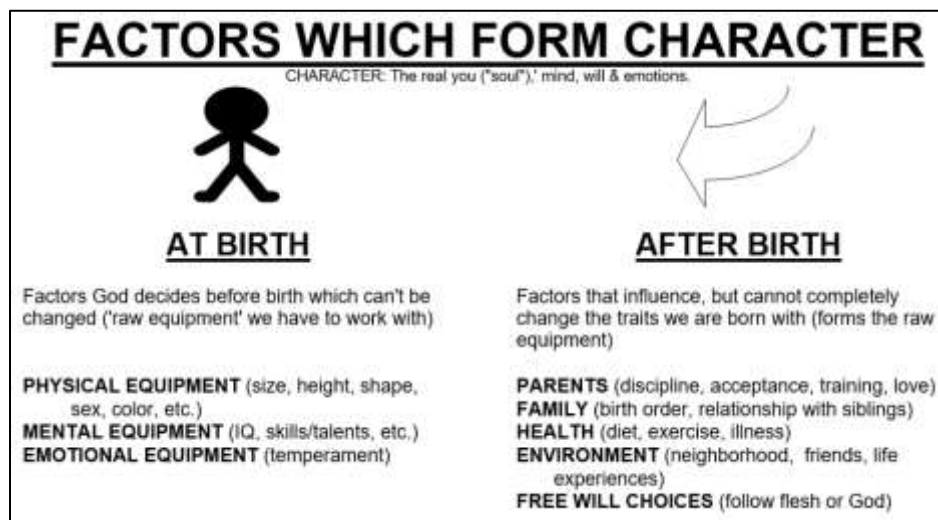
I hope this part of the book has enabled you to better help others repack their suitcases of life so they can move on to spiritual growth and maturity. It is a joy and privilege to be used by God to speak truth into the life of another and help them grow. God will bless you for faithfully serving in this way. I have been blessed when I hear back from those I counseled in the past. They thank me for my help and wisdom and share how God used it to help them become the people they are today. Often, they will quote something I said that greatly changed their whole life. The interesting part is that many times I don't remember saying it. God took what I did say and applied it to their hearts and lives in the way He wanted and used it for His glory. That's what being a shepherd is all about, letting the Chief Shepherd use you and work through for His glory.

If you have any questions or if I can help you in any way, please contact me at Jerry@ChristianTrainingOrganization.org and I'll gladly do what I can to counsel and advise you!

III. SPECIFIC ISSUES IN BIBLICAL COUNSELING – The Counselee

INTRODUCTION

When counseling, it is very important to get to the root problem and not just deal with symptoms. When you have a hurting tooth, you go to a dentist. He could just give you pain medicine, but a good dentist will look for the cause of the pain so he can remove it for good. When you break a bone, you go to a doctor. He doesn't give you a crutch so you can get around with the bone still broken, he fixes it so it will heal and be as good as new. They must find the root cause of the pain before they can fix it. It is the same with counseling. Don't just try to deal with the symptoms of the problem, look behind them to



see what is causing them. In this section of the book, I will try to give you some help in understanding and treating root causes for common problems. First, there is some information about people that is helpful for counseling.

A. UNDERSTANDING PEOPLE

1. CHARACTER

God creates each of us with certain traits and basic 'equipment.' Physically He decides what size, sex and nationality we will be. He chooses our mental equipment (IQ, skills, talents) and our emotional equipment (introvert/extrovert, temperament). That is what forms us into the unique creation of God we are. But then these basic traits are influenced (but not completely changed) by such things as parents (discipline style, training, love), family (birth order, relationship with siblings), health (diet, exercise, illness), environment (friends, life experiences) and the free will choices we make.

2. EXTROVERT - INTROVERT

Everyone is basically either an introvert or an extrovert. They may have some traits of each, but they are mainly one or the other. By knowing if a person is an extrovert or introvert, you can better understand them and the way they act. Extroverts are optimists, make friends easily, talk fluently, and are people-persons. Introverts are shy, have few close friends, express themselves better in writing than talking, may be more pessimistic and are loners.

If a person likes to be with other people, is comfortable meeting new people, likes variety in life, enjoys lots of activity, speaks a lot and often without thinking about what they'll say, then they are an extrovert. If they prefer to relax alone or with a few close friends, get worn out by spending too much time with other people, would rather listen than talk, seem calm and self-controlled and don't like feeling rushed, they are introverts.

In a crisis, extroverts immediately take action without even thinking while introverts often feel shut down and are slow to respond. Introverts tend to feel inferior and can be fearful of what others think of them, while extroverts have lots of self-confidence and don't worry about what others think. Introverts can be very analytical, sensitive and gifted people. They are deep thinkers but aren't quick to share their thoughts. Introverts are usually steady and dependable. They don't have the emotional highs extroverts have, but neither do they have the lows.

Introvert/extrovert is to your personality what male/female is to your body. It is the basic way God created you. There is no right or wrong way to be, no one is better than the other. They are different, but not superior or inferior. Most people have a blend of these two, but one will be dominant over the other. Understanding them can help the counselor understand the person and his strengths and weaknesses.

See also: C Premarital Counseling for more information on introverts, extroverts and marriage.

3. TEMPERAMENT

The 4 basic temperaments were first recorded by Hippocrates (460-370 BC), the father of medicine. Recently they have been popularized by Tim LaHaye (and to some extent Gary Smalley). I strongly, strongly, strongly recommend you get a book on the temperaments by Tim LaHaye and study it! By temperament I am referring to inborn traits that subconsciously affect man's behavior. It differs from character (the real you: mind, will & emotions) & personality (the 'face' you show others).

Two of the temperaments are extroverts and two are introverts. The two extrovert temperaments are Sanguine and Choleric. The introvert temperaments are Melancholy and Phlegmatic. Everyone has one basic temperament and also a secondary temperament. These create a unique blend for each one of us. God uses three colors (red, blue and yellow) in various blends to create all the different colors and shades today. He uses four temperaments in innumerable blends to create the various temperaments of all the people in the world today.

Sanguines respond to their environment. They are popular, optimistic, friendly and talkative. But they can also be weak-willed, changeable and undisciplined. They are popular because they are outgoing and need others' approval, but they can be insensitive to the needs of others and easily led astray. Peter is a clear example of a person with a sanguine temperament.

Cholerics are strong willed. They are confident and determined but also can be self-sufficient and controlling. They are strong leaders and accomplish much but aren't always easy to get along with. Paul is a good example of a choleric.

Melancholys are sensitive perfectionists. They are gifted and talented, can analyze and organize well, are insightful, creative, sacrificial and loyal. But they can be very insecure, negative and moody. They have special gifts but often see themselves as inferior to others. Moses is a great example of a melancholy.

Phlegmatics are easy-going. They are flexible and conservative but often unmotivated and fearful. They get along with everyone and don't cause problems, but can be slow to initiate and make charges when needed. Abraham is a fine example of a phlegmatic.

BASIC TEMPERAMENTS

	SANGUINE	CHOLERIC	MELANCHOLY	PHLEGMATIC
Ext - Int	Extrovert		Introvert	
Summary	Respond to Environment	Strong Will	Sensitive Perfectionist	Easy-Going
Careers	Salesmen, Actors	Businessmen, Police	Art/Music, Computers	Accountant, Diplomat
Strengths	Friendly Talkative	Confident Determined	Gifted (talent, analyze, organized, intellect) Sacrificial/Loyal	Flexible Conservative
Weakness'	Weak-willed Changeable, Undisciplined	Self-Sufficient Controlling	Insecure Negative, Moody	Unmotivated Self-protective (fearful)
Bible ex	Peter	Paul	Moses	Abraham
Color	YELLOW (sun)	RED (fire)	BLUE (ocean)	GREEN (grass)
Animal	Rooster	Lion	Beaver	Turtle

Understanding the temperaments is very helpful in counseling and in everyday life and ministry. The better a pastor or counselor understands the people he is working with, the better he can serve them. Knowing a person's areas of strength helps know what they are good at doing. Understanding their problem and weak areas shows where growth is needed. We can better tell what to expect, or not expect, of them. By knowing the temperaments of a couple, you can more accurately understand where their conflicts come from and how to help them. They are very useful counseling parents about

raising children (Proverbs 22:6). You can help introverts better understand and use their strengths. You can warn extroverts of their weaknesses and how to overcome them.

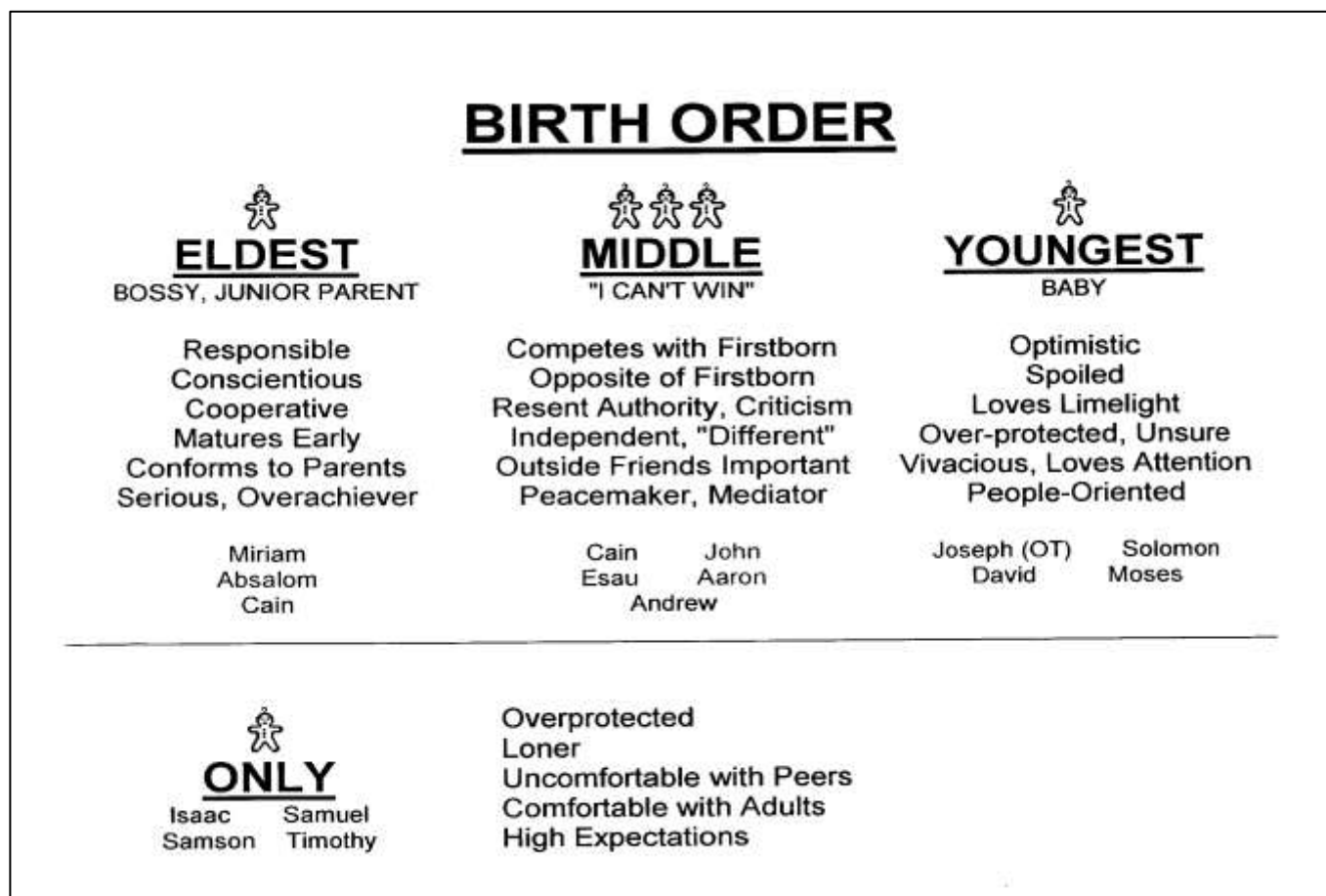
Understanding these 4 temperament types is extremely helpful for everyone, especially counselors of those working with people. It helps you know what to anticipate from them. Read what Tim LaHaye has written about the temperaments.

See also: C Premarital Counseling for more information on the temperaments and marriage.

4. BIRTH ORDER

One more factor to consider in understanding people is the birth order in their family.

ELDEST / FIRST BORN (the "bossy" one, the junior parent) Miriam, eldest sister of Aaron and Moses, is a typical firstborn: responsible, cooperative, willing to do unpleasant tasks for the parents, studious and serious. Reuben, the first-born in Joseph's family, was the same way. He was conscientious (protected Joseph from death). He was also the family boss, even when they were all grown. Because parents treat first-born in a more adult manner and give them more responsibility, they seem to mature more quickly. Firstborns need (demand) approval, especially from parents. First-born Absalom is a case in point, as are Cain and Esau. They strive for excellency and tend to become type A over achievers (James, Peter). They most closely identify with parents and their values. (A middle child who is the first child of their sex can also show characteristics of a first-born. Also, the first of two or more children born after a long gap will be like a first born.) It's not unusual for first-born boys to have problems growing up. Just as God claimed the first-born male of Israel for His own, so it seems Satan works extra hard today to oppress first-born males, and through them the whole family.



ONLY CHILD ("ruling the roost," the lonely only) Only children like Isaac, Samuel, timothy and Samson are in many ways similar to first-borns. They are treated as if they are the center of the universe and feel that way. They are often over-protected and more comfortable being with adults than peers. Judging himself by adult standards all the time makes him try to grow up quickly and often causes perfectionistic standards. (A single baby born long after others in the family will also show characteristics of an only child.)

MIDDLE CHILD ("I can't win") Middle children, especially second-borns, compete against the first-born for dominance, as Cain did to eldest Able. They often become the opposite of the first-born because, being younger, they can't beat the first-born at his/her strengths. They often are full of contradictions: shy but outgoing, impatient but laid back, competitive but not competitive, rebel but peacemaker, aggressive but avoiding conflict. They have more freedom to develop as themselves for they aren't working so hard to be adult-like and get adult approval. They tend to have lower expectations and don't expect things to always be fair. They are more likely, however, to rebel against authority (and parent's values) later in life. Out-of-family friends and peers are important and they are often more open to peer pressure. We see these traits in Andrew, John and Aaron. They are often not motivated to be very studious but can be good peacemakers and mediators. (Middle children who are the youngest of their sex take on some of the qualities usually seen in youngest. Remember, the closer children are in age the more emotional impact they will have on each other, especially if they are of the same sex.)

YOUNGEST CHILD ("baby") Last-born children often have the least expectations to meet and can become spoiled (over-protected, assuming others will take care of him). He can thus be unsure of himself and lack confidence. Last-born Joseph lost all of this during his imprisonment in Egypt (one of the reasons God allowed it). Youngest get less spontaneous joy from their parents at their accomplishments (it's no longer new and parents are busy with other siblings) Therefore they often become the clown of the family for it give him attention. However he can have trouble being taken seriously. Last-born are perceptive people persons and often end up in people-oriented vocations. David, Moses and Solomon were last-borns. (If other children are born after a long gap, the original 'baby' still continues to have last-born characteristics even though others are born after him/her.)

See also: C Premarital Counseling for more information on birth order and marriage.

B. UNDERSTANDING PERSONAL PROBLEMS

(Getting along with yourself)

This section of this book is about understanding personal problems and how to handle our emotions. Many of these, like anger, can affect how we get along with others. When you counsel someone with one of the issues listed below, first read the information about the problem and solution. Then you can teach it or read it to the person you are counseling. Use the Scriptures included. God's Word has more power and authority than our words. Quoting Scripture has power (Psalm 119:11). It is how Jesus overcame Satan's temptations in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11). To find more Scriptures to use, go to my "Topical Index of Bible Verses" book.

1. EMOTIONS

First, let's look at the place and purpose of emotions. God created emotions to add zest and enjoyment to life, but often they bring misery and defeat. Controlling our emotions is the key to emotional maturity (2 Timothy 1:1-7). We must learn to have our mind explain reality to our emotions,

not let our emotions determine our direction (1 Peter 5:8). God wants us to control our emotions, not have them control us

God is the source of our emotions (2 Timothy 1:7), but Satan and our sin nature cause us to misuse them. The fruits of the Holy Spirit are actually emotions (Galatians 5:22-23). Jesus became emotional at times: crying for Lazarus, laughing at other times, grieving in Gethsemane, and chasing out the money changers in anger (twice!). We can't deny or suppress emotions, for they are God-given and must be handled correctly or they will cause other problems (including physical ailments). Some people feel it is a weakness to feel or express emotions, and because they don't really get in touch with their own emotions, they run from them. Others can be over-emotional, using their emotions to manipulate and control others. They make all their decisions based on how they feel, no matter the facts. Both extremes are unhealthy.

Our emotions have a God-given purpose: to provide joy and variety in life, to connect with other people and to motivate us to action. Emotions can be healthy or sinful. Sometimes the same emotion can be either of these. For example, fear has a good purpose when it protects us from real danger, anger motivates us to right a wrong when it is 'righteous indignation,' guilt and shame are to cause us to repent, jealousy is to motivate us to right a relationship going wrong, stress and anxiety are to cause us to take action, etc. The Bible talks about God being angry and jealous. However, often we misuse and abuse these emotions. God-given emotions are like dessert after a meal -- really an enjoyable experience, but not the main course! They can make your trip through life much nicer, but aren't to be in the driver's seat.

People must learn to become familiar with their emotions and feelings. To do this they must be able to give them a word label such as 'fear,' 'anger,' 'jealousy,' 'insecurity,' etc. If you can't correctly label what you are feeling, you can't handle it, and that means it will handle you. Learning to identify and label emotions should start in childhood.

What does an emotionally healthy person look like? One trait is to **accept your emotions as from God**. A mature person controls his emotions instead of letting them control him. He doesn't go to the opposite extreme and ignore them, either. He understands himself and lets his mind explain reality to his emotions. He knows emotions are to enrich us, not control us. He doesn't make decisions based on his emotions. He realizes God heals our emotions by working inside us, not by changing our circumstances.

Second, an emotionally mature person knows how to **dispose of negative emotions**. He accepts them as a real emotions and doesn't repress or express them. If sin is involved, he confesses the sin, then replaces it with God's positive counterbalance by prayer. Worry is replaced with trust, anger with love, fear with faith, pride with humility, shame and guilt with forgiveness, etc. If unable to have victory on his own, a mature person goes to another mature person for counsel and prayer.

Third, an important part of emotional maturity is **separating what we DO from who we ARE**. It is what we are that matters most in understanding ourself and others. We must have a realistic view of ourselves and others: not too high and not too low. We need long-range goals, not just of what we do, but more important of what we are to become as Christians and people.

What steps can a person take to grow emotionally? First, the past must be forgiven by God, and we must be cleansed from its influence. If not, it will be like a rubber band constantly pulling us back to it. Second, we must be convinced that emotional hurts and immaturities can best be dealt with at the cross. No change in environment or outer circumstances can bring change within. Don't treat symptoms, get to the real inner problem. We must develop a wholesome self-image, seeing ourselves as God sees us and accepting ourselves as God accepts us. Part of the way this happens is by taking risks and being open to fellow Christians. As we experience their acceptance, we will be better able to

accept ourselves and God's, too. Remember, joy is a byproduct of obedience. Obey God no matter what your feelings say!

The art of living a self-controlled life consists in knowing which impulses to obey and which must be made to obey. Remember, emotional maturity is a process, one we never complete in this lifetime. However, we are to be moving in that direction as we grow. That makes us more like Jesus, and that is our goal in life -- to be Christ-like. Who better is there to help us in that process than Jesus Himself, who will fill us with His Spirit and help conform us to His image if we let Him? The process may be painful at times, so we must keep our eyes on the product – Christlikeness in our lives.

2. FEAR, WORRY,

Root: fear

Fruit of the Spirit that is needed (Galatians 5:22-23): joy, peace

Everyone faces fear. It was man's first reaction to sin - Adam and Eve hid from God because they were afraid (Genesis 3:10). Fear can be crippling emotionally and socially. It can cause many physical ailments, too. It is the opposite of faith. It hides under different names but their root is fear: hesitancy, depression, cowardice, inferiority, haughtiness, withdrawal, over aggression, shyness, timidity, indecision, doubt, worry, stress and anxiety.

Fear, can be sinful or sinless. **Sinful fear** doesn't come from God (2 Timothy 1:7), instead it separates us from God. There is no peace, and peace is a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). On the other hand, **sinless fear** motivates us to do something positive (keep from fire or poisonous snakes, be careful when up high, respect and obey those in authority, etc.). You can tell the difference when you analyze what the fear motivates you to do: draw closer to God and be alert to the danger, or panic and lose your peace and faith in God.

Fear can make life miserable, but when we realize God is in control of everything and does what is best for us (Romans 8:28ff) we have nothing to fear. We fear that which we can't control, that which can cause us pain. We know God is in sovereign control of everything and is motivated in all He does by love for us. This should make us trust Him more. We can either have fear or faith - not both. One drives out the other.

The only cure for sinful fear is faith in God. When Peter was afraid the boat, he was in would sink, he got his eyes on Jesus and, in faith, walked on the water to Jesus (Matthew 14:22-33). Then when he got his eyes off Jesus and onto his surroundings, he started to sink because fear replaced his faith. He got his eyes back on Jesus and reached out to Jesus to lift him back into the boat. That same pattern is true of us as well. Quoting Scripture when faced with fear will help keep your eyes on Jesus.

The best way to have victory over fear is to quote Scripture whenever you sense fear in any form. Some good verses to memorize and use are: Psalm 34:4; 91:5; 27:1; 56:3-4, 11; Joshua 1:9; 10:8; 23:9-11; Leviticus 26:8; Exodus 14:13; 1 Samuel 17:45-47; 2 Samuel 22:33-35,40-41; Romans 8:28-31; Proverbs 1:32-33; 3:25; Jeremiah 17:7-8; John 14:27; 1 John 4:18; Philippians 4:6-7, 13; Isaiah 12:2; 14:3; 41:10; 54:17; 2 Timothy 1:7; Revelation 1:17-18.

WORRY Worry is one of the most common forms of fear. Worry is a sense of uneasiness or anxiety about a present or future event. We may call it concern, burden, care or distraction, but it is still worry. Changing names doesn't change what it is. It is letting fear control, not faith.

Worry can undermine our health. There is something to the phrase 'worried sick.' No one likes to be around people who are always worried about something. Worry uses up tremendous amounts of emotional energy without doing any good. Our word 'worry' comes from an old English word meaning 'to strangle, to choke.' Worry deprives us of joy and enjoyment.

Worry is sin because it shows lack of faith in God. It hinders God working in our lives. It is a terrible spiritual testimony to others. Unfortunately, we often label people who worry as people who care and are concerned about others. It's as if worry can somehow change things! The Bible forbids us to worry (Ephesians 5:1; Matthew 6:25-34). There is no positive side to worry, no such thing as sinless worry.

The cause of worry is lack of faith. It's not the greatness of our troubles but the smallness of our faith that magnifies our fear. If we worry, we can't trust. If we trust, we can't worry. Worry is actually saying "My problem is too big for God" or "I don't trust what God will allow to happen."

The cure for worry is found in Matthew 6 where Jesus attacks it point by point. 1. Be more concerned about spiritual things than earthly cares (v. 19-21). Things of this world are only temporary, only eternal things will last. Jim Elliot once said, "He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." 2. We can only live life correctly if we put eternal things before earthly things (v. 22-23). 3. Put God before material things (v. 24). When we become preoccupied with material comfort and security, we can't be loyal servants of God. 4. Don't worry (v. 25) - that's a command, not a suggestion! 5. Reason #1 to not worry: God will provide all our needs (v. 26-31). He doesn't always provide our wants, but He promises to provide our needs, as He does the birds and flowers. 6. Reason #2: worry doesn't do any good (v. 27). Worry is letting a creative imagination picture the worst, assume it will happen and believe God won't be there to help. 7. Reason #3: God knows our needs and will provide them (v. 28-32). When has He failed you in the past? He won't in the present or future, either. 8. Make serving God your number 1 priority (v. 33). Don't focus on getting God to serve you, you serve Him! 9. Live life one day at a time. God will provide for tomorrow's needs when tomorrow comes (Leviticus 19:17-18; 2 Corinthians 4:16; 12:9; Deuteronomy 33:25). While we try to avoid larger sins, we often let something seemingly as small as worry in our lives. It is sin and separates us from God's power as quickly as any 'big' sin. Watch out for it.

Victory over worry comes from focusing on God's promises in the Bible. Read them or say them from memory when worry starts. Psalm 46:1; 55:22; 37:7; 62:1-2, 8; Proverbs 12:25; 3:5-6; Jeremiah 17:7-8; John 14:1, 27; Romans 8:28; 15:13; 2 Thessalonians 3:16; Philippians 4:6-7; 1 Peter 5:6-7.

See also: 3 Insecurity, 4 Inferiority, 5 Poor Self-Image, 14 Anxiety, 15 Stress

3. INSECURITY

Root: fear

Fruit of the Spirit that is needed (Galatians 5:22-23): joy, peace, love

Everyone needs to feel secure. God designed us to grow up in a family where we are unconditionally loved and accepted for who we are. When that doesn't happen, we become insecure. Ever since Adam and Eve left Eden and God's presence, man has and will be insecure. People do almost anything to find and have security. We use money, possessions, insurance, career prestige, job advancement, personal achievements, relationships, even religion, to somehow find a substitute security. These won't bring real security, though.

Those who are insecure often feel inferior to others. They don't act with confidence; they are unsure of themselves and they don't have peace or joy. They may be angry, critical of others and unpleasant to be around. They fail at what they try. They blame themselves for everything.

Each one needs to have security in three areas of life: with God, with self, and with another human beings. We only find security with God through salvation, not through anything we can do to impress or earn His love (Ephesians 2:8-9). That is the only place we can have total, unconditional security. How unfortunate (not to mention unbiblical) it is when some try to take that away and say we

can lose our salvation (or maybe we never had it to begin with). The second area of security is security with self. Since we live with ourselves 24 hours a day, we must be comfortable being ourselves. We must have a proper self-image, accepting our strengths and weaknesses as God-given. We must have a balanced view of ourselves, not seeing ourselves as better than or inferior to others.

Finally, we must have security with other human beings. We must have someone who will love and accept us no matter how we look or act, no matter how sick or miserable we are. Finding acceptance and security with another human being can help us transfer that trust to God. Other emotional problems come from insecurity in one of these areas. Then we have a firmer basis to reach out to others as well as accepting ourselves. It takes risk, breaking down walls, allowing others to get close to us. But it is worth the effort.

Colossians 1:19-23 is a good passage to help with insecurity. We are secure in God's love (v. 19) because He proved it to us on the cross, loving us so much He left heaven to take all our sins in His body before we could do anything to earn or deserve that love. God forgives us unconditionally every time we ask for it (v. 20). We never have to doubt our security in Him (v. 22). This is our confidence assurance ("hope" - v. 23). There is no insecurity for those in Christ, and there is no real, lasting security to be found apart from Him. Accept Him as your Savior and Lord. Allow Him to love you and accept you as He created you (Psalm 103:1-14). Rely on Him for every need. Find your security in His acceptance, not in the acceptance of others. Then you won't be controlled by what others say or do.

Scriptures to combat insecurity include 1 Samuel 2:9; Psalm 37:23-24; 94:18; 121:3-8; Proverbs 3:26; 14:26; Isaiah 26:4; Romans 8:37; Ephesians 1:3-6; 2:10; 3:20; Philippians 1:6; 4:6, 7, 13, 19; 2 Timothy 1:7; 1 Peter 1:3-5; 1 John 5:14-15.

See also: 14. Anxiety; 15. Stress

4. INFERIORITY

Root: fear

Fruit of the Spirit that is needed (Galatians 5:22-23): joy, peace

Recent studies have shown that as many as 90% of all people have feelings of inadequacy. It's something we all struggle with. However, some have allowed these feelings to become so strong that they are controlled by them. That is an inferiority complex. This person often has his feelings of inferiority so repressed that he doesn't even recognize them anymore. He is so convinced he IS inferior he takes it for granted. It is rooted in a terrible self-image. It results in habitually feeling inferior to everyone, feeling helpless and fearful, and shrinking from people, responsibility, challenges or decisions. It is normal to have feelings of inferiority at certain times, but not all times about all things. The cause of this usually starts in childhood: overprotection, rejection by parents or others, too high expectations or being dominated by parents.

It's impossible to live a normal, healthy life with an inferiority complex. Instead, people find ways of compensating. Some become overassertive and overaggressive, others go to the opposite extreme and become oversensitive and withdrawn. Sometimes people compensate by throwing themselves into something they can succeed at, or escaping to a fantasy world in their minds. None of these are cures, only ways of temporarily masking the symptoms.

The only real cure is found in Jesus. Accept His unconditional love, that He created you the way He wants you to be (Psalm 139:1-24) and doesn't expect as much from you as you expect from yourself (Psalm 103:1-14). God has a plan and purpose for each of us (2 Corinthians 17:17; Ephesians 1:11; Philippians 2:13; Psalm 32:8; 37:5; 1 Peter 2:9; 2 Timothy 1:9). It is very helpful for a person with an inferiority complex to counsel with someone who is able to help draw out the problem and present a

solution. In order to reach out and take this risk the person must be motivated to want to change. They must stop feeling they deserve the misery they put themselves through. As long as that feeling persists, there will be no lasting change.

There is a way out of the bondage and misery that feelings of inferiority bring (1 Corinthians 10:13). It is found in Jesus. It takes faith in Jesus to have victory over this. Believe He really does love you and cares. Often this has to be modeled first by another human being who shows unconditional love and acceptance to the one struggling. The person must allow someone close enough to get to know and love them. That is a hard but important step for them to take.

Scriptures to help are Psalm 37:5; 55:22; Proverbs 16:3; 2 Corinthians 12:9-10; Ephesians 2:10; Philippians 2:13; 1 Thessalonians 2:4; 5:24; Isaiah 26:4; Philippians 4:6-7, 13.

5. POOR SELF-IMAGE

Root: fear

Fruit of the Spirit that is needed (Galatians 5:22-23): joy, peace

How we view ourselves, our self-image, is basic to how we act to others and to God. If you have a poor self-image, you get terribly hurt if someone criticizes or scolds you, you find it hard to talk when meeting new people, you don't like competition and you fear trying new things. Your focus is mainly on yourself and what people think of you. Since sin entered the world, everyone has a faulty self-image. With some it shows. Others hide it behind a mask pretending to be in control of everything. The prideful, conceited bully is just as insecure about himself as is the fearful, cowering shy person. Both stem from a poor self-image, both focus on self instead of God and others and both keep a person from being the person God created them to be. Never mistake a poor self-image (rejecting what God created) as humility. Humility comes from comparing ourselves to God, a poor self-image is from comparing ourselves to others, something we should never do!

What causes a poor self-image? Usually introverts suffer worse, for they are extra sensitive, perfectionistic and analytical. When they feel any kind of rejection from parents or others as a child, they assume they are at fault. If a parent labels them as a failure, they carry that label the rest of their life. It becomes a terrible bondage, a prison they carry with them.

What is the cure? First, we need a balanced awareness and acceptance of our strengths as well as our weaknesses. That's what Jesus means when He says we are to love our neighbors as we love ourselves (Matthew 22:36-39). We can't accept the strengths and weaknesses in others if we can't accept ours in ourselves. Remember, you are made in the image of God, and God doesn't make any junk! God planned the person you were to be before the world was created (Psalm 139:13-16), and He isn't wrong in how he makes us. It's our comparisons with others, our unrealistic expectations and our inability to accept our failures and faults that cause the problem. We expect more of ourselves than God expects of us (Psalm 103:14). Psalm 103:1-14 is very good to memorize. Ask yourself how Jesus would describe you if He were introducing you to a friend?

If you are down on yourself, it is something that **MUST** be corrected to be the parent, friend and Christian God wants you to be. If not, it will undermine all your relationships and drain all your joy. Confess it as sin, ask God to forgive and restore you and develop an objective view of your strengths as well as weaknesses. Open yourself up to someone you trust. It might seem risky and bring fear of rejection, but it is important to give others the opportunity to accept and love you as you are (something you should have gotten from your parents). Then you will better be able to accept yourself and allow God to accept you, too.

Scriptures to reflect on include: Proverbs 3:5-7; Luke 9:23; Romans 12:3; 1 Corinthians 1:26-31; 4:6-7; Philippians 2:3; 1 Peter 2:9.

6. PERFECTIONISM

Root: insecurity, fear of failure

Fruit of the Spirit that is needed (Galatians 5:22-23): joy, peace, love

We all want to do the best we can. We don't like failing or making mistakes. That is natural for all of us. But some people go way beyond that. They have a compulsive need to always be perfect in everything they say and do. They can settle for nothing less. They feel their worth as a human being is determined by what others think of them, so they need to have everyone think they are perfect. Anything less is unacceptable. This is taking insecurity and inferiority to the extreme. It is trying to overcome our insecurity and inferiority feelings by always being right and perfect in all we say and do. That can't happen.

Several elements today tend to contribute to our perfectionism. We live in a very competitive culture. Children have to look just right, have perfect school work, get top grades in school and do better than others their age. When we become Christians we learn the Bible tells us to be sinless and perfect. This is especially hard on introverts, but affects everyone. The tough thing is that the harder we try to be perfect, the more imperfect we become!

There is nothing wrong with striving to be godly and not sin, but thinking we have to be perfect for God to accept us is wrong. It comes from insecurity, from feeling we have to be perfect before we or anyone else can love and accept ourselves. It takes maturity to realize we aren't nor will be ever be perfect (1 John 1:8-10). It takes balance to know our strengths and weaknesses.

Paul faced this same drive to be perfect. He writes about it in Philippians 3:10-14. He kept the whole law and lived as good a life as anyone could (Galatians 1:14). What he learned about overcoming perfectionism he summed up in v. 13 - forgetting past failures while continuing to strive to do his best. Paul learned to accept his weaknesses as well as his strengths as from God. Affirm your worth in God and find security in God's love, not in meeting the standards of self or others. Focus your thoughts on Jesus, not yourself.

When the Bible says we are to be 'perfect,' the best translation of that word would be 'mature, stable.' God knows we will never be sinless (1 John 1:8-10) and isn't demanding that. God doesn't expect us to be perfect (Psalm 103:14-16), only He is perfect. But He does expect us to grow more mature and Christlike. Being a perfectionist actually moves us in the opposite direction of that.

Scriptures to help: Psalm 27:3; Proverbs 3:26; 14:26; Isaiah 30:15; Galatians 6:9; Ephesians 3:11, 12; Philippians 1:6; 4:13; Hebrews 10:35; 1 Peter 2:9; Matthew 10:26-42.

7. GUILT, SHAME

Root: insecurity, fear

Fruit of the Spirit that is needed (Galatians 5:22-23): joy, peace, love

Guilt. Even the word brings misery. Guilt is a very crippling emotion. It causes many other emotional problems. Everyone must deal with guilt in order to mature. Guilt is a state of awareness of accountability for violating a law of God or man. Sometimes guilt is from God to convict of sin, other times it is unwarranted and unhealthy because the guilt is false.

TRUE GUILT Guilt isn't always bad. God uses guilt as a warning light on the dashboard of our conscience. It is to get man to turn from sin. Ignoring true guilt is like ignoring the oil light on the dashboard of your car. You can cover it with tape and pretend it's not lit, but you'll suffer worse consequences for doing so. The same is true for God-given guilt. All men stand guilty before God because of inherited sin (guilt from Adam's sin - Psalm 51:5; Ephesians 2:3; 4:18), imputed sin (born

with a sin nature from our parents - Romans 5:12), and individual acts of sin (1 John 1:8-10; Romans 3:23). Thus, guilt is ever present, reminding us of our sin and failure.

People today try all kinds of false ways to remove their God-given guilt. Some, like Sigmund Freud, deny there is any such thing as guilt. Many rationalize their guilt, just explain it away (1 Samuel 15) or convince themselves it is someone else's fault (Genesis 3, Adam blamed Eve and Eve blamed the serpent). In addition, people may try to compensate for it by paying for the past wrongs with present good (like Jacob giving gifts to Esau). Ignoring or denying our accountability to God can't keep it hidden forever (Psalm 32, 51). The worst response to guilt is giving up, accepting guilt as inevitable. This leads to hopelessness and suicide (Judas - Matthew 27:3-5).

What is the right cure for true guilt and shame? Admit your guilt and confess the sin that caused it (1 John 1:8-10). If you have confessed it or there is no sin to confess, then there is no reason to feel guilty. Accept Jesus' forgiveness (2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 5:1; 8:15; Ephesians 1:6). Remember, all sin is equal in God's sight (Psalm 85:2; 103:3; Isaiah 55:7). God does not keep a record of past sins (Psalm 130:3). When we confess a sin, God completely forgets and removes it forever (Micah 7:19; Jeremiah 31:34; Colossians 2:13-14). You can't go by your feelings, but you must believe God's promise of forgiveness. Remember, let your mind explain reality to your emotions. God says it is forgiven, and how you 'feel' about it doesn't change this fact (Romans 12:1-2). Feelings are not our final determining factor in understanding reality. We must rely on God's written word. God says your guilt is forgiven if you confess, and so it is!

Scriptures to help overcome false guilt are: Isaiah 1:18; 43:25; 38:17; Micah 7:18-19; John 8:36; Leviticus 5:5; Romans 7:18-25; Philippians 3:13-14; 4:13; 1 John 1:9; Psalm 32; 103:12; 51.

FALSE GUILT True guilt is a state of awareness of accountability for violating a law of God or man. False guilt is a feeling of condemnation for violating a law that has been inaccurately imposed on your conscience (Romans 14:14, 23). True guilt is spiritual, from a violation of a true law of God or man. False guilt is emotional and comes from the way we have been conditioned in the past. While true guilt focuses on one particular sin, false guilt is a generalized sense of guiltiness in all things. When we experience true guilt, we are motivated by the Holy Spirit to confess the sin and be restored to God. False guilt just motivates us to punish ourselves.

TRUE GUILT, SHAME	FALSE GUILT, SHAME
Spiritual	Emotional
From violation of a true law of God or man	From one's emotional training in past
Focuses on one particular sin	Generalized sense of guiltiness in all things
Brought by conviction of Holy Spirit	Brought by our maladjusted emotions
God-centered	Self-centered
Brings positive results: confess & restored	Brings negative results: self-punishment
From sin	From improper early conditioning
Holy Spirit works through conscience	Own over-critical conscience
Cured by God's forgiveness	Cured by counseling & understanding truth

While true guilt is good in that it brings us to God for forgiveness, there is no good that comes from false guilt. Instead, false guilt can lead to many physical, social, emotional and spiritual problems. It causes a constant drain on your emotional batteries and keeps you from having energy for other things in life.

The leading cause of false guilt comes early in life, when we are told things are bad or wrong that really aren't. Unless we renew our mind in Jesus (Romans 12:1-2), we spend our whole life feeling guilty for things we shouldn't. We can't forgive ourselves for not being perfect in all we say and do.

Some examples are: not washing the kitchen floor each week, taking a rest when there is work to be done, spending money for our own enjoyment, having problems and needing help from others, feeling sexual urges and desires, etc. We believe that sin/guilt means punishment (steal a cookie and your hand gets spanked). Thus, as adults when we feel guilt, we often punish ourselves (physically or emotionally) in an attempt to remove the guilt (masochism). The ultimate self-punishment, Satan's goal for us, is suicide (as with Judas).

What's the cure? Reprogram your conscience by studying God's Word, getting godly counseling and by prayer. The goal is to have your conscience line up with God's will and not all the false guilt that was built into you in the past. Live by grace, not legalism. Accept God's grace, forgiveness and love in your life. Don't allow Satan to put false guilt into your mind to defeat you. Rebuke it. It's a battle to change this in your thinking (Romans 12:1-2), but a battle well worth fighting and winning! Begin now!

Scripture to quote to overcome false guilt includes: Job 2:10; 19:25-26; Lamentations 3:17-26; Jonah 4:3-4, 8-11; 1 Corinthians 4:11-13; 2 Corinthians 6:3-10; Philippians 2:4-8; 4:11-12.

8. PRIDE

Root: Cover up for Insecurity or fear; or self-centeredness

Fruit of the Spirit that is needed (Galatians 5:22-23): kindness, goodness, gentleness

Humility is needed: 1 Peter 5:6-7

Pride started with Satan. It is what motivated Satan to sin and rebel against God (Isaiah 14:13-14). It is still one of his best tools against us today (1 Timothy 3:6). God exalts those who humble themselves (James 4:10; 1 Peter 5:6). He humbles those who exalt themselves (Luke 18:14).

Satan tempts with pride. When Paul gave Timothy guidance about whom to choose for church leadership, one of the important traits was to not be a new believer, "or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil" (1 Timothy 3:6). "Conceited" refers to someone who is self-centered and focused on themselves.

Pride is self-centeredness. It is usually seen as thinking one is better than others, but it also manifests as someone thinking they are worse than others (see 5. Poor Self-Image above). In both cases the person thinks God has made them different than others and their focus is on themselves instead of God. The self-centeredness of thinking we are worse than others is often hard to identify as pride and sometimes masks as humility. True humility is focusing on God and not ourselves. We see ourselves as having strengths and weaknesses the same as others but in total need of God's help in all we do.

Scriptures to quote to overcome pride include: 1 Samuel 2:3; Proverbs 30:32; Romans 11:20; 1 Corinthians 5:6-7; James 3:14; Micah 6:8; James 4:10

Scriptures which talk about humility include: Proverbs 27:2; Romans 12:3, 16; Philippians 2:3; Colossians 3:12; 1 Peter 5:5-6

9. JEALOUSY, ENVY

Root: pride, insecurity, control

Fruit of the Spirit that is needed (Galatians 5:22-23): peace

Haman was jealous of Mordecai (Esther 5:13). Joseph's brothers were jealous of him (Genesis 37:4). Saul was jealous of David (1 Samuel 18:8). The elder brother was jealous of the prodigal son (Luke 15:28). Cain was jealous of Able (Genesis 4:5). Jealousy is common today as well as in the

Bible (Matthew 20:12; 27:18; Judges 8:1; Genesis 26:14; 37:11; Numbers 16:3; Psalms 73:3; Daniel 6:4; Acts 13:45).

God forbids jealousy (Psalms 37:1; Proverbs 3:31; 23:17; 1 Corinthians 13:4; Galatians 5:26), yet God Himself is often jealous (Exodus 20:5; 34:14; Deuteronomy 4:24; 29:20; Joshua 24:19; 1 Kings 14:22; 1 Corinthians 10:22). Jealousy is one of those emotions like anger, fear and guilt that God created for a good reason but man misuses for sin. It is to motivate us to positive action. When a husband finds someone trying to steal his wife from him his reaction should be one of jealousy. That's how God felt about Satan trying to steal His chosen people. That's why God as being 'jealous' and 'zealous' go hand in hand. Jealousy motivates one to be zealous for a godly cause. However when it is from a lack of contentment, envy, greed, or insecurity, it is sinful. God's Spirit will reveal to your spirit just what kind of jealousy you have if you ask Him and listen to his answer.

A pattern of jealousy often starts in childhood. A new baby, excessive competition or parental favoritism can bring on jealousy. Often it starts as legitimate jealousy that isn't sinful, but as it spreads and grows it becomes sinful. In adulthood jealousy is caused by insecurity, feeling inadequate, rejected, criticized or disappointed. It springs from our sin nature (Mark. 7:21-23; Galatians 5:19-21; 1 Corinthians 3:3). Satan can also feed into a person's jealousy and magnify it, using it to control and defeat a person. People get jealous of other's possessions, privileges, positions and personalities/appearances.

How to cure jealousy? First, you must admit your jealousy. Pride makes that hard. Confess it as sin. Then you must understand the forces in your life that cause feelings of jealousy. Let your mind explain reality to your emotions. Make a free-will choice to put off the old and put on the new (Colossians 3:9-10). Honestly admit to yourself what you get jealous of and why. Ask God to heal you of this and fill you with His peace and contentment. Learn to be content with what God has provided for you (Philippians 4:11-13). Remember, don't love the world or the things in the world -- and that is usually what causes our jealousy (1 John 2:15-17). Seek God's approval, not the world's recognition, accomplishment or pleasures. Accept your own weaknesses and limits. Don't have unrealistic expectations of yourself.

Remember, having victory over emotions like jealousy is a process. Even Paul had to 'learn' to be content (Philippians 4:11-13). Make sure you are making progress in that direction, though! With God's help you can do it!

Scriptures to help overcome jealousy: Romans 13:13-14

10. DEPRESSION

Root: fear, physical illness

Fruit of the Spirit that is needed (Galatians 5:22-23): peace

Depression is universal (Psalm 42:5-6). It is as old as mankind itself. It hits everyone. No one is immune. Job, the oldest book in the Bible, speaks of Job in depression (Job 7:3-11). Moses got depressed (Numbers 11:11-15). So did Jonah (4:3) and Jeremiah (15:10-18). Depression affects all areas of life and being. At its root, depression is self-pity. We feel sorry for ourselves, thinking things are too hard and God isn't fair to us. It is a self-imposed pity party! Elijah is a perfect example.

Elijah was a tremendous man of faith and power. More miracles are associated with his ministry than anyone else in the Old Testament. God ended a long, terrible drought when the people turned back to Him after Elijah defeated the prophets of Baal on Matthew Carmel (1 Kings 18). Elijah responded by running away and asking God to take his life. Why? What caused this? 1 Kings 19 is an interesting account of depression: its time, trigger, tortures and treatment.

The **time** of Elijah's depression is quite surprising (v. 2-4). He wasn't depressed when fed by a raven or widow, nor when facing Ahab or the prophets of Baal. It wasn't until after it was over, when he experienced an emotional let-down, that he got depressed. After high points in life the only direction is down. If we go by our emotions we'll let our feelings control, as did Elijah. Sometimes our depression comes when we are emotionally or physically drained, like with Elijah. Depression comes when we focus on ourselves instead of God, when we look at our circumstances and feel they are too much for us because we don't trust God's help.

What **triggered** his depression was the single threat of a defeated woman. Queen Jezebel said she'd kill him for what happened. She was powerless, everyone had turned back to God. There was no reason for him to get depressed. The immediate cause of depression seldom is valid. It's just the timing of it more than anything else. The conditions for depression build inside us and often a seemingly small event triggers it.

Elijah's **tortures** were the same as ours (v. 4). He ran away from his friends and responsibilities, he was disgusted with life and prayed for death, he felt all alone, as if no one cared about him.

The most important part, though, is God's **treatment** for Elijah. Physically Elijah had to eat and sleep (v. 5-7). Our physical being must be healthy in order to overcome depression. Take care of your health! Psychologically, God let Elijah talk about how he felt (v. 9-10), and God just quietly listened. Spiritually God revealed Himself to Elijah in a still, small voice (v. 11-15), not in a powerful, supernatural way as Elijah wanted. Then God gave Elijah work to do (when depressed stay faithful to your responsibilities). He explained that Elijah wasn't alone. Knowing we aren't alone is very important. When we focus on God's love and promises instead of our circumstances, depression should lift.

Sometimes it doesn't. There may be physical causes so a physical checkup with a medical doctor should be scheduled. For some, depression that stays no matter what the person does may be demonic. (See my book, *Spiritual Warfare Handbook*, for more information.) When you face depression make sure you take care of your health, talk to a trusted, mature Christian and don't neglect your daily responsibilities.

Still, there was always a **trace** left, for victory over depression is seldom permanent. It can always come back. Final **triumph** comes only by faith in God and His Word (Romans 8:28; James 1:2-3; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:18). Read and memorize these verses to help have victory. Remember Elijah and learn from him about how to avoid and defeat depression.

Other Scriptures to help have victory over depression include: Psalm 27:13-14; 37:3-7; 42:5; Proverbs 3:5-6; Romans 12:2; 1 Corinthians 15:58; Philippians 3:1; 4:4

11. HOPELESSNESS

Root: fear

Fruit of the Spirit that is needed (Galatians 5:22-23): peace, joy

Feeling hopeless is one of the most awful feelings a person can have. When there is no hope, life loses meaning. God is hope, without God there is no real, lasting hope. The Bible defines hope as 'confident assurance,' not wishing something would happen. Satan uses hopelessness to defeat and destroy us. What causes hopelessness? It's not the size of our problems, for some with the greatest burdens have complete faith and trust in God. If it's not our circumstances that cause hopelessness, it is how we face our circumstances.

Hopelessness is seeing the present and the future as unmanageable, uncontrollable and unchangeable. That means the person either rejects God and the promises of His Word entirely, or has such a distorted view of God and the Bible that they don't see God's love, mercy, grace, forgiveness

and sovereignty. When we look only at the smallness of our own resources and abilities and the greatness of our difficulties and obstacles, there is often reason to feel hopeless. However, we can't go by our feelings. If we feel it or not, the fact doesn't change that God is still in sovereign control of everything and all is done based on His love for us (Romans 8:28-29). Hopelessness can be made worse or even brought on by fatigue (Elijah), unresolved sin and guilt (Psalms 66:18) or feelings of unworthiness, insecurity and fear.

The cure is to let your mind tell your emotions that God is still on the throne! Focus on the Bible promises, not your own feelings (2 Timothy 3:15; Hebrews 4:12). Confess any guilt, insecurity or poor self-image you may have. Further counseling may be needed to accomplish this. Remember, no one is worthy of God's love, but we don't need to be worthy for Him to love us (Matthew 11:28-30). His love is freely given to all. Keep your eyes on Jesus, He is the object of our confident assurance (Psalm 31:24; 33:18; 39:7; 42:11; 71:5; 146:5; Jeremiah 17:7; Joel 3:16). Don't keep your eyes on your limited resources or ability, nor on the greatness of the problem.

Hope is necessary for living a godly life (1 Corinthians 13:13). Putting our hope in God means putting our confident assurance in Him and Him alone. This hope enabled Abraham to become the father of the faithful (Romans 4:18; 5:5). The Bible is the source of hope (Romans 15:4). We are to share our hope with others (1 Peter 3:15). Hope inspires us to live a clean, holy life (1 John 3:3).

If we stay in hopelessness, we become weary of life (Genesis 27:46; Job 3:20; Ecclesiastes 2:17; 4:1-2; John 4:8). This despair leads men to death (Numbers 11:15; 1 Kings, 19:4; John 3:21; 7:15; Jeremiah 8:3; John 4:3; Revelation 9:6). Hopeless makes death looks attractive, the only way out! Thus, Satan's plan for hopelessness is to bring premature death by suicide (1 Samuel 31:4; 2 Samuel 17:23; 1 Kings 16:18; Matthew 27:5; Acts 1:18). Of course, suicide is no cure, only Jesus is. If you, or someone you know, is feeling hopeless -- turn to Jesus. The hope He gives lasts forever (1 Corinthians 13:13).

Scriptures to help find hope include: Psalm 16:8-9; 31:24; Romans 12:10-12; Hebrews 10:23; 1 Peter 1:13

See also: 12. Suicide

12. SUICIDE

Root: fear, hopelessness

Fruit of the Spirit that is needed (Galatians 5:22-23): joy, peace, hope

Suicide is purposely ending one's own life. Behind every suicide there is a personal history of pain and hopelessness. It may have been life-long or recent, but the misery or guilt is so bad the person feels death is the only way to find release.

Usually when we think of suicide, we think of someone doing something to end their life, but it is broader than that. It also applies to someone who takes unnecessary risks with their life, such as unsafe driving, not caring if something happens to them. They often feel like they want to be dead, but don't want to actually commit suicide. Others commit slow suicide by undermining their health and bringing on a premature death. This can be done by alcohol and drugs, overeating, smoking or other habits that are self-destructive.

If you are counseling someone who is suicidal, try getting them to talk about their feelings. Listen carefully. Don't try to correct them or tell them they are wrong in their thinking. Show compassion and understanding. Offer a word of hope and encouragement. Make sure they know you are taking their feelings seriously and not making light of them. A suicidal person is often highly emotional so using rational arguments won't go far. Love them and show them you care. Share

God's promises of hope and peace. Invite them to events or activities where they can get involved with others. Encourage them to see a doctor if there are medical issues. Pray with them and stay in close touch. Let them know someone cares about them.

SUICIDE AND SATAN: It is unnatural for a person to want to harm or kill themselves. Everything normal in us pushes for self-protection. When a person inflicts pain on themselves by cutting (Mark 5:5; 1 Kings 18:28), tattoos (Leviticus 19:28) or taking their life we can be sure something has caused them to go against what is normal and natural, and usually that is demonic influence (Mark 9:20).

Suicidal thoughts are usually motivated or encouraged by demons (Matthew 17:14-19; Luke 9:37-45; Mark 9:14-29). This is also the case with Judas who was indwelt by Satan (Luke 22:3; John 13:27) and then committed suicide (Acts 1:18-19). If you or someone you know has these thoughts, pray against them. The person with the thoughts must confess them and take back any ground they have given to demons. These kinds of thoughts are like 'prayers' which Satan and his demons seek to answer. Demons cannot force a person to take their life. It is always with the person's free will choice.

Scriptures to use with unbelievers which show their infinite worth to God include: Romans 5:8; Luke 12:15; Hebrews 9:27. For Christians, use verses such as 1 Corinthians 3:11-18; 2 Corinthians 4:17; 12:9-10; Isaiah 43:2; Psalm 23; 62; Hebrews 4:14-16; 12:1-3; 2 Peter 1:10; Romans 8:18, 28; Job 1:21; 2:10; John 14:27; 16:33; 1 John 3:4-5; Philippians 4:13, 19

See also: 10. Depression, 2. Fear, 7. Guilt, 13. Cutting and Self-Mutilation and 11. Hopelessness for more help.

13. CUTTING, SELF MUTILATION

Root: fear, hopelessness, emotional pain

Fruit of the Spirit that is needed (Galatians 5:22-23): joy, peace, hope

Some today explain cutting and other self-mutilation activities as purely psychological. They say it is a way of refocusing pain, of using physical pain to alleviate emotional pain. While there may sometimes be some truth to that, I believe there is a deeper cause to these things. From my experience and the Bible I am convinced that self-mutilation is contrary to our natural desire to 'love' ourselves and the natural drive to protect self and survive at every cost. Mark 5 talks about a demonized man who was continually cutting himself (Mark 5:5). Then there is the demonized boy who keeps throwing himself in the fire to burn or water to drown (Matthew 17:15).

Satan loves pain and death. They are his tools of trade. He would have all of us dead if God would not forbid it. So the best he can do is to try and get us to harm ourselves. The ultimate of this is suicide. The prophets of Baal regularly used cutting as a means of appeasing their demonic gods, as seen in their encounter with Elijah on Mt. Carmel (1 Kings 18:28). Accounts of suicide in the Bible also show close association with demonization. Saul killed himself after his encounter with the witch of Endor. Judas' suicide came after being indwelt by Satan and betraying Jesus.

See also: 11. Hopelessness or 12. Suicide

14. ANXIETY

Root: fear

Fruit of the Spirit that is needed (Galatians 5:22-23): peace, self-control

Do you get irritated about petty things? Do you find yourself critical of others? Do you often feel sorry for yourself? Do you have trouble falling asleep and staying asleep despite being very tired? Are you distracted? Do minor disappointments deeply affect you? Have you lost joy and peace in life? Do

you feel trapped? If you answer “frequently” to several of these, the reason could be anxiety. Anxiety refers to inner turmoil, feeling pulled in two directions. While fear consciously recognizes the object to which it is attached, anxiety is vaguer, like a free-floating fear. Anxiety has become so common today we often don't distinguish it from other feelings.

Left untreated, anxiety can cause many physical, social, emotional and spiritual problems. When our emotional battery is drained, we don't have enough emotional energy for normal activities of daily living. This leads to more problems and difficulties and the cycle grows.

What causes anxiety? It could be childhood conflicts that have been repressed. It could be unconscious inner conflicts which build like a volcano until they explode, causing destruction on everyone nearby. A person who is around others who are anxious find themselves becoming anxious, too. Problems in life can make us feel anxious unless we trust God with them. Guilt can contribute to this, so can fear or feelings of inferiority.

There is a sinless anxiety which motivates us to get serious and do what needs to be done when it needs to be done (to not lose a job or relationship, etc.). The anxiety we usually face and which defeats us is sinful anxiety, though. Instead of making us more alert and productive, it makes us less so. The world uses various medications, drugs, music, entertainment or enjoyable activities to combat anxiety. At best all they do is mask it.

So what is the cure? Philippians 4 explains how to overcome anxiety. 1. Praise God no matter what (v. 4). We know in our mind God loves us and does everything for our best, it is just our emotions that say differently. Which should be go by? Our minds, of course! Knowing God loves and cares for us no matter what is certainly something to praise Him for (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)! 2. Keep your poise at all times (v. 5a). "Gentleness" in v. 5 means moderation, balance, stability, maturity, self-control. Let your mind explain reality to your emotions. Don't let your feelings run your life, but have self-control to let your mind run things. 3. Pray to God about it (v. 6) Take any and every anxiety to God and leave it there! 4. Rely on God's perfect peace (v. 7). Don't look to circumstance to give you peace, trust God to give it to you despite circumstances. 5. Think about positive, good things (v. 8). Get mentally tough. Only let thoughts God would want you to have into your mind. 6. Focus on Godly behavior (v. 9). Make sure there is no sin, however small or unrelated, in your life. 7. Focus on others, not yourself (v. 10). Don't be self-centered. 8. Be content in whatever circumstance God has you (v. 11-12). We don't have to be anxious; God has provided a way out. Read Philippians 4 over and over, for there you'll find the key to victory over your anxiety.

Don't let your emotions rule, instead go by your rational judgment. Let your mind explain reality to your emotions. See FEAR for more information about this subject.

Scriptures to help overcome anxiety include: Proverbs 3:5-6; Philippians 2:1-5, 14-15; 4:4-9, 19; 1 Peter 5:6-7; John 6:43; 13: 34-35; 14:1, 27, 21; Matthew 1:31-32; 5:38-39; 6:25-34; 10:19; 11:25-30; 13:23; Romans 8:28, 37-38; 12:17-21; 18:8-10; Ephesians 4:27, 31-32; 6:22

See also: 2. Fear, Worry; 15. Stress

15. STRESS

Root: fear

Fruit of the Spirit that is needed (Galatians 5:22-23): peace, self-control

Did you know that among the best-selling medications in the USA are those to treat stress? That's because stress is such a big problem today. Time magazine called it a national epidemic. Two-thirds of all office visits to family doctors are prompted by stress-related symptoms. Stress has become such a part of life we often don't even realize we have it. Do you eat or talk too rapidly? Do you rush

people to hurry up and say what they are going to say? Do you think of your problem, even when talking to someone about theirs? Do you feel guilty when you sit down to rest? Do you try and pack more and more activities into less and less time? Are you easily irritated by little things? Do you lash out at people whom you love? Do you feel a separation from people and God? Do you have nagging physical ailments (colds, indigestion, diarrhea, viruses' headaches, tiredness, etc.)? These are all signs of stress.

Stress drains us. Think of a car battery. When more is being drained out of it than is put back into it there is only one ultimate result: emptiness. Our batteries can be drained emotionally or physically. Often it is both at once. Some short-term stress can be helpful because it causes extra adrenaline which helps us focus our attention and motivate us to meet the stress-producing situation. Long-term stress, though, results in burnout.

Some stress is inevitable. Not all stress is bad. It can serve to motivate us in times of special need. Good stress brings out the best in us. Bad stress actually makes us less productive. Good stress is something we control, bad stress controls us and we can't stop. We become driven. Impatience and anger become our daily companions. Peace and joy flee. Little things become big things and truly big things fade to lesser priorities. Our work list takes priority over our relationships.

Stress simply means we feel under pressure. Some times that pressure comes from within, what we demand of ourselves. Other times it comes from without, what we feel (real or imagined) that others look for us to produce. We are to follow Jesus and live as He lived. Stress was never part of His life.

How do you know if you are suffering from stress? Usually, you'll know. Do you feel guilty when you sit down to rest; pack more and more activities into less and less time; become easily irritated by little things; lash out at the people you love the most; sense a loss of self-esteem and intimacy with others; and feel a sense of loss of spiritual presence in relationship with God? These are all signs of stress.

Moses is an example of this. When the Jews left Egypt, he did all the work himself (Exodus 18:13-26). As a result He saw the Jews as a burden - His burden (Numbers 11:4-15; Deut. 1:9-13). He lost energy and patience and struck a rock twice instead of speaking to it (Numbers 20:1-12). He was suffering from burnout.

How can we overcome stress? Know your limits and live within them. Don't try to do more than you have time or energy to do. Jesus knew how to say no to things, we need to learn that as well.

Strive for balance. In Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, Solomon lists things that all have a place in every life. A good life has enough time for every worthwhile activity under heaven, including leisure. Do something that is nonproductive 'fun' every day.

Pursue peace. It's not a by-product of wealth or good health; it's an end in itself. You can find peace in any circumstances, even when it makes no earthly sense to have it. Peace brings contentment and long life (Philippians 4:11, Psalms 34:12). God gives peace to those who ask Him for it and then are willing to make the necessary changes in their life so they can recognize and enjoy it.

Learn to enjoy. Many successful people feel a sense of accomplishment, but no enjoyment of their work or talents. The ability to enjoy yourself is a gift from God (Ecclesiastes 5:19). He has given us all things to enjoy freely (1 Timothy 6:17). Ask Him to help you stop striving and accept His blessing.

Paul faced stress. He said he was "hard pressed/afflicted, perplexed, persecuted, struck down" (2 Corinthians 4:7-9). He went through all kinds of physical, social and emotional suffering, yet calls it all "light and momentary troubles" (2 Corinthians 4:17). How can he call it that? Because he trusts

God knows what He is doing! He doesn't second-guess God, but trusts God will help him through anything and everything. He knows God won't give him more than he can handle with God's help. Stress that comes from lack of faith (worry, fear, etc.) or us trying to do more than God wants must be confessed as sin. Stress from the responsibilities and pressures of daily life must be taken to God.

While suffering unjustly in prison, Paul wrote several New Testament books, Philippians among them. Still, the theme is joy (16 times in the short book). Philippians 4 is a good antidote to stress. Paul says stress is handled by having a proper perspective of God. Praise Him no matter what (v. 8). Focus on God's greatness, not your circumstances. If your God is big, your problems will seem small. But if your God is small, your problems will seem big. You cannot have a big God and big problems at the same time. You have either one or the other. To combat stress you must focus on the greatness of God, not the greatness of your problems.

Secondly, to handle stress you must have a proper perspective of self (v. 13). You must have a good self-image, a balanced evaluation of your strengths and weaknesses. Thirdly, a proper perspective to life is needed (v. 6), giving thanks to God no matter what. That means use the glance-gaze method. Glance at the problem, then gaze at Jesus. Doing the opposite brings stress. Fourth is a proper perspective to problems (v. 4), rejoicing in God no matter what (James 1:2-4). That doesn't mean we are to enjoy misery, but realize despite it God loves us and has a plan and purpose for it all. Fifth, you need a proper perspective on people (v. 1-2), seeing them not as obstacles or roadblocks, but as opportunities to minister, to edify and help. Finally, you need a proper perspective to time (3:12, 14). That's how Paul knew what he was going through was a "light and momentary trouble" (2 Corinthians 4:17). Life is short and temporary. Keep things in an eternal perspective. What will matter most 20 years from now? What will matter most 100 years from now? Let that set your priorities and determine what you try to accomplish in life. Focus on eternal and lasting things, not temporal and temporary things. You can't do it all, so do what matters most! Don't expect to do it all -- that is a leading cause of stress. Do what you can with the resources you have and leave the rest to God. After all, HE is God, not you!

Think of it like this. God is like a warehouse and we are warehouse workers. Each burden that comes along we unload on Him. When we become the warehouse ourselves, placing each burden on ourselves, it will weigh us down and crush us. Don't be the warehouse, that is God's job. Just transfer the burdens to Him!

The second most stressful day in Jesus' life was when John was killed (Matthew 14:1-36; Mark 6:30-44; Luke 9:9-17). Jesus received the news, along with the report Herod was after Him. Jesus knew what happened to the forerunner would also happen to Him. Before He could handle His grief, the disciples returned from their missionary journeys anxious to fill Jesus in on all the good things that happened, but crowds gathered so they couldn't talk or even eat. They sailed across the Sea of Galilee to get away and have time to think about all that had been happening. But the crowds followed and Jesus spent the rest of the day teaching, healing and feeding the people. The disciples felt neglected so Jesus sent them home by boat. The people wanted to make Him king by force for more free food so Jesus hid from them. He spent the night in prayer and intimacy with God the Father. Many times Jesus withdrew, hid, or slipped away to pray. Often, He stayed up all night praying. That was His only way to keep stress from overwhelming Him.

Perhaps expecting to have a totally stress-free life isn't a realistic expectation, but certainly for all of us there is plenty of room for improvement. Jesus certainly experienced stress, but it wasn't from overwork or too high expectations. He didn't start more than He could finish, He knew how to say 'no' and He certainly paced Himself. We can too.

Scriptures to turn to when stress gets high include: Romans 5:1-5; Philippians 4:4-9

See also: 2. Fear, Worry, 14. Anxiety

16. ANGER, BITTERNESS

Root: hurt, pain

Fruit of the Spirit that is needed (Galatians 5:22-23): peace, patience, self-control

Anger is a basic emotion. It is something everyone experiences on a regular basis. Some of it is good and necessary, but most is sinful and wrong. How can we tell the difference and have victory over sinful anger?

SINLESS ANGER Not all anger is sinful. We are often commanded to be angry. "You that love God, hate evil" (Psalm 97:10) "In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold." (Ephesians 4:26-27). These verses tell us to be angry but not sin.

Anger is a God-given emotion which we are to experience. God Himself gets angry but doesn't sin. In the Old Testament God's anger is referred to 375 times. Jesus got angry at hypocrites (Mark 3:1-6), the moneychangers twice (John 2; Mark 11), the disciples for forbidding children to come to him (Mark 10:13-17) and for not praying with Him (Luke 22). Jesus didn't get angry when He was insulted, falsely accused, spit on, rejected, mocked, deserted or hurt. He handled the pain as pain and didn't turn it into anger at the ones causing the pain.

Anger is created by God to motivate us to act. Like other emotional motivators (guilt, fear, jealousy, etc.) it can be used either for good or evil. It can be sinful or sinless. Godly anger, often referred to as righteous indignation, is a God-created emotion to cause us to act. The action can be to right a wrong or defend ourselves or someone else.

When should we get angry? When God's Word and will are knowingly disobeyed. God got angry at Solomon when he let his wives lead him into idolatry (1 Kings 11:9). We should get angry when God's enemies assume positions of jurisdiction outside their rights. God got angry at the nations for trying to destroy Israel (Isaiah 5:22-23) and at Saul (1 Samuel 11:6). We are to have righteous anger when children or others are taken advantage of or dealt with unfairly. Nehemiah got angry at the unjust oppression which resulted in children being harmed (Nehemiah 13:25), Elihu at the 3 men who criticized Job (Job 32:2-4) and Jonathan at his father Saul for trying to kill David (1 Samuel 20:12-36).

SINFUL ANGER Anger, like other emotions we have seen, can be both sinful or sinless. Anger is a strong feeling of displeasure or hostility caused by a real or perceived offense, injury, or unmet desire to one's self or others, usually accompanied by a desire to retaliate or seek revenge. Anger is a result of judging an action or word. It weighs something and finds it wrong, lacking, or displeasing. Then it moves into the action it feels is appropriate, although it is always wrong action if it is based on sinful anger.

Sinful anger is a secondary emotion, coming from a deeper emotion that isn't being handled correctly. These are hurt/pain, not getting our own way, or fear/insecurity. Let's look at them one at a time. **1. HURT, PAIN.** When we hit our finger with a hammer, we feel pain, but instead we often get angry. Anger is an easier emotion to handle than pain. When someone hurts us, we get angry. Instead of allowing us to admit, recognize and handle pain, we often get angry and try to pass the pain on to someone else by hurting them back. Examples are Balaam hitting his donkey when it hurt his leg (Numbers 22:21-39) and Simeon & Levi murdering the man who raped Dinah (Genesis 34:25).

2. NOT GETTING OUR OWN WAY. When someone cuts off on the road or we don't get a promotion at work we often respond with anger. This comes from our pride. Examples are Cain killing Able (Genesis 4:1-16), the brother of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32), Ahab killing Naboth to get his vineyard (1 Kings 21:1-25), Ahasuerus banishing Vashti (Esther 1:10-21) and Moses striking the rock two times (Numbers 20:10-13).

3. FEAR, INSECURITY. When someone proves you wrong, when you lose your job or something threatens you, it is easier to respond in anger than facing the underlying fear or insecurity. Examples are Saul trying to kill David (1 Samuel 18:17-27), Paul killing Stephen (Acts 7:54-8:2), Peter cutting off the soldier's ear in Gethsemane (John 18:10-11), Herod killing the Bethlehem babies (Matthew 2:16-18) and the Jews trying to kill Jesus (John 5:16-18).

If you have a problem with anger, carry a paper and pencil and every time you feel tempted to anger, write down what happened and the reason for it: 1 hurt or pain, 2 not getting your own way or 3 fear, insecurity. You will see a pattern and can then head the anger off and handle the underlying emotion the correct way.

The following are all forms of anger. We must see them as such so we can correctly deal with them as what they are – anger.

Sarcasm is anger verbally expressed

Jealousy is rooted in anger (Proverbs 6:34) and comes from hate. The Bible is full of examples of jealousy based on anger: Pharaoh of Moses, prodigal son of his brother, and Saul of David.

Envy is a form of jealousy but can be extra dangerous because it is hidden inside and not admitted to. Esau envied Jacob's getting the blessing.

Revenge is anger acting out to hurt another back. We must leave that to God (Hebrews 10:30). Cain tried to get revenge on Abel and the disciples on the Jews who rejected them.

Criticism of another is nothing but revenge caused by jealousy or hurt.

Bitterness is an advanced form of anger

Intolerance results from being threatened by those who are different, not having love for others, like Nebuchadnezzar to the 3 Jews or Darius to Daniel.

Resentment is composed hatred and jealousy, as Jonah felt about Ninevah.

Unforgiveness is from anger. Grudges, like babies, grow larger when we nurse them.

Gossip is a subtle form of anger and jealousy. God considers it as bad as murder.

Attack comes from insisting on one's own way. It is a self-centered win at any cost attitude seen in King Asa (2 Chronicles 16) when he attacked a prophet for bringing God's message.

Malice desires harm to come to another.

Hate is a gun that bursts and kills the gunman. When you hate someone, they control you. Ahab hated Naboth for not selling his family vineyard to him, so he had him killed.

Wrath is another form of anger expressed outwardly.

Fury is anger so strong emotional control is lost.

Rage is a loss of control involving acts of violence.

Passive-Aggressive Behavior refers to a negative, albeit unconscious way of getting back at someone. It is suppressed anger coming out in another way: forgetfulness, lying, stealing, chronic lateness, not doing the assigned work or carrying out responsibilities, etc.

All these go back to a common root: anger. Unless that is seen and admitted, they will be allowed to remain and grow. They must be seen for what they are: anger. Until this happens, we won't be able to have victory over it. Victory comes from admitting our anger and discovering the real root behind it.

Scripture has much to say about anger: Ephesians 4:26-32; James 3:6 ; Proverbs 14:17, 29; 10:12; 12:16; 15:1, 18; 19:11; 29:22; 22:24-25. The Bible says anger is as bad a sin as murder, for they share the same motive (Matthew 5:21-22; Job 5:2; 19:29; Proverbs 19:19; 25:28; Ecclesiastes 7:9). The Bible consistently warns against being angry (James 1:19-20; Romans 12:19; Ephesians 4:31; Psalms 37:8)

17. JUDGING OR EVALUATING, CRITICAL ATTITUDE

Root: hurt, pain

Fruit of the Spirit that is needed (Galatians 5:22-23): peace, patience, self-control

There's a fine line between having a critical attitude and just being discerning. It all depends on the inner motive behind it. How can we know if we are being sinfully critical and judgmental or just being discerning and evaluating? The Bible says to judge (Matthew 18:15-18; 7:16; 1 Corinthians 5:12-13; John 7:24; Luke 12:57) and not to judge (Romans 14:3-13; 1 Corinthians 4:5; Matthew 7:1; Romans 2:1). The same Jesus who said not to judge then judged the religious rulers (Matthew 5:20; 6:2, 5, 16; 15:1ff; 23:1ff). Just what kind of judging is a right? What is of God and what is of the flesh? When is it alertness and when is it a critical attitude?

There is a big difference between passing judgment by evaluating another's actions and thinking we know their heart motives. Sometimes we are critical and judgmental and don't withhold opinions until we have all the facts (as of Eli judging Hannah, 1 Samuel 1:13; David to Nathan, 2 Samuel 12:1-7).

While looking for things to criticize in others is sinful and often comes from insecurity and a poor self-image in ourselves, evaluation/discerning is something important to do. The capacity for forming an opinion is one of the most valuable faculties and the right use of it is one of our most important duties. The Bible commands us to use our mind to separate between sin and righteousness, truth and error.

If we think someone needs correcting, how can we know when to say something? If it is painful to criticize someone you are safe doing it, if God wants you to. But do it in love! If you take the slightest pleasure in it, don't do it. Decide never to reprove another person unless it helps show you failures in your life, too (Matthew 7:3; John 8:7) and helps you live closer to God. Even if others are wrong, forgiveness is still important (Deuteronomy 32:35; Romans 12:19; John 13:12-15; Ephesians 4:32; 5:1-2; Colossians 3:13). Remember, it's much easier to destroy a building or a reputation than to build one. When others unfairly criticize you, that is no reason to criticize them back. In all things we are to be Christ-like. That means to act, talk and respond as He would. He is our perfect example. Think what He would do and then, with His help, do it.

Scriptures which tell us to stop judging include: Matthew 7:1-5; Luke 6:36-37; Romans 16:17-18; 1 Corinthians 11:30-31; Philippians 2:3; 2 Timothy 3:5. A Bible example is given in 2 Timothy 2:16-17; 4:14. Scripture which speaks of evaluating and discerning include: Matthew 6:2, 5, 16; 7:1-12, 16-17; 18:15-18; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; John 7:24; Luke 12:57; 2 John 7-11

18. UNFORGIVENESS

Root: hurt, pain

Fruit of the Spirit that is needed (Galatians 5:22-23): peace, patience, self-control, love

Suppose family members you loved cruelly mistreated you and ruined your family, separating you from your loved ones for 20 years. Suppose that during that 20 years as you tried to serve God things went from bad to worse. You were accused of something you didn't do and imprisoned for it.

People you helped said they'd help you in return but instead forgot about you. Then all of a sudden you were face to face with the very people who started and caused all this misery in your life. How would you feel? How would you treat them? Would you forgive them? This is the situation Joseph in the Old Testament found himself in, and with God's grace he could forgive them (Genesis 45:4-8). He realized God was in control of everything and had a plan and purpose for it all. All things do work together (Romans 8:28).

Forgiveness is hard, because when someone hurts us, our natural tendency is to want to hurt them back. In our pride we want to see them punished. We somehow feel that by withholding our forgiveness we are making them suffer for what they did. In actuality we don't hurt them, just ourselves. The Bible clearly says that unforgiveness is opening a door in our hearts that allows Satan's demons access (Ephesians 4:26-27; 2 Corinthians 2:10-11; Matthew 18:34). Satan whispers his lies into our minds: "They don't deserve to be forgiven!" (of course not, who does?), "It's not fair for you to let them off free." "If you forgive them, they'll just do it again." "They hurt me too much for me to forgive." These are all Satan's lies! God commands us to forgive no matter how badly or how often they hurt us (Matthew 18:15-35; Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13).

What does it mean to forgive? It doesn't mean pretending it never happened, forgetting about it, ignoring the hurt or explaining it away. Forgiving means absorbing the cost yourself and giving up any right you might feel to see the other person suffer. When a husband is unfaithful and his wife forgives him, she is saying she is giving up any right she has to see him suffer for what he's done but that she'll carry the hurt and pain herself, not make him 'pay' for it. Isn't this just what Jesus did on the cross, paying for our sins? He absorbed the price Himself and never passed it onto us. He bore the cost Himself. When we forgive someone, we say that we, with God's help, will absorb the hurt and not try to pass it back to the offender by revenge, anger or withholding forgiveness. This is what it means to be Christ-like. How we 'feel' about it doesn't matter, this is a decision of the will. You make a free will choice to absorb the cost yourself, live with the consequences and allow God to exact revenge if necessary (Romans 12:19). That's what God does when He forgives us.

Remember how God has forgiven you. Think about what Christ did for you on the cross, and recall the times God has answered your prayers. Thank God for His great love for you, and ask Him to help you forgive others through the power of His love. To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable in others because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you.

Pray about a particular hurtful incident soon after it occurs, seeking to forgive. Forgive others as quickly as you expect God to forgive you. Remember that God has warned that your own prayers will be blocked if you don't forgive others, and that evil will gain access to your life (1 Peter 3:7). Don't wait until you feel like forgiving; that may never happen. Instead, act out of obedience, and God will gradually send you peace.

Forgive them even if they're not sorry. Don't make your forgiveness conditional on whether the offender responds positively to your efforts. He or she may even be hostile, but God still wants you to forgive, and you can still benefit greatly from doing so.

If the person doesn't know you have forgiven them, you must also tell them so. Remember, too, that God says that if we don't forgive others, He won't forgive us (Matthew 6:12-15). Forgiving isn't an option, it's a command. God commands us to do it for our own good (Matthew 18: 21-23).

Pray and ask God to bring to mind anyone you haven't forgiven (Matthew 18:35). Then forgive them, with God's help!

Scriptures that speak of forgiveness include: Matthew 5:44-47; 6:12-15; 18:15-17, 21-27, 32-35; Ephesians 4:32; Mark 11:25-26; Colossians 3:13; ; Proverbs 24:17-19; Romans 2:23-24; 12:1-21;

Matthew 5:44-47; Ephesians 4:32; Leviticus 9:17-18; Luke 6:37; 11:4; 17:3-4; John 20:23; James 2:8, 10-13; 1 John 3:10; Exodus 23:4-5

19. MEN'S ISSUES

Root: fear, pride, sin nature

Fruit of the Spirit that is needed (Galatians 5:22-23): all of them

The breakdown of our society today is rightly blamed on the breakdown of the family. The breakdown of the family today is rightly blamed on the breakdown of the role of the man of the family. Many families are trying to reverse this trend and re-establish the family as the central unit in society with the man as the head of the family. However, men are having a very hard time knowing exactly what God expects of them and then being able to carry that out. How can we be the Christian men, husbands and fathers God wants us to be when we aren't sure just what that is?

Unless you had a mature, secure father who was able to communicate what a man was and to affirm you in your growing manhood, you are probably like many men: filling a role but not always sure of exactly what that role is. Mark Twain said, "A male is someone who starts pretending he is a man when he turns 12 and keeps doing it the rest of his life." Many of us keep pretending we are men, but down inside we don't know what it really means to be a man. We assume a "man" is whatever our father was, and that we aren't a man until we are just like him. Unfortunately, too many of our fathers didn't exemplify Godly manhood and weren't able to make us feel accepted by them as men. Surveys show that less than 1% of males have or had at one time what they would call a 'close' relationship with their father.

Without a father to show us what a man is like or affirm the growing maleness in us when young, where do we turn? Often men start doing the sinful things the world does to prove they are men. Some turn to work and earning money to prove their worth. Or they struggle with filling their God-given role for the rest of their lives.

None of these false substitutes satisfy. Fortunately we have a Heavenly Father who is perfect and accepting and Whom we can turn to for acceptance and a male role model. It is only as a man turns to God that our inner needs can be met and filled in.

If you feel hurt or rejection from your earthly father, or an empty place where you would have liked to have unconditional acceptance and affirmation, you have to admit that to yourself and let the hurt, pain and anger from it come to the surface. You must turn all of that over to God your Heavenly Father and forgive your earthly father. After all, he is a product of his own father's failings as well. Let Jesus fill the empty places in your life. He suffered the ultimate Father-rejection just so He could heal you of those very things. He is the only solution. Pray about these things and allow God to do His perfect work in you as you grow spiritually to become more Christ-like.

To learn what God's Word says, read about Absalom, David's son (2 Samuel 3:3; 13:20 - 14:33). How did David fail as a father? How did this effect Absalom? What should he have done differently? Why did David feel so guilty (II Sam 18:33)? Did he ever show this love to Absalom?

Read about Joseph, Jesus' father (Matthew 1:18-25). What kind of a man was Joseph? What kind of a father do you think he made to Jesus? What did he do to help Jesus be secure to be His own person when He turned 12 (Luke 2:49)? How can you do that for your sons?

For more information see my articles "For Men Only" and other articles for men on my web site: <https://www.christiantrainingonline.org/our-ministries/family/articles-books/>

See also: III. C. Marriage Problems, below

20. ADDICTIONS, ALL

Sex, Gambling, Alcohol, Drugs, Overeating

God created us with needs in our lives only He can meet. When man doesn't find love and acceptance from God, he looks for something to substitute for it. Without God, man has no way to deal with the pain in his life and find meaning and significance. Instead, people find substitutes. They turn to various substances and activities to cover their hurt and bring them comfort. These things quickly become addictions. They include alcohol, drugs, food, sex, materialism, work, gambling, social media, exercise, shopping or other things. Many of these are not bad in themselves, but when they are used to meet needs that can only be met by God, they fail. Then the person tries harder and harder to make them work. They become dependent on them as a substitute. This makes them an addiction.

Addictions are reactions to gaping holes in a person's life. These are caused in childhood when proper love and security isn't given to a child. Babies are born with a great need for unconditional love and security. They need to be loved and cared for. We all have a deep inner need to be held and told we are special and important. We need our parents to hug us and let us know they are proud of us; that we are unique and will have a great future. We need to have this happen over and over and over. If we don't get that message, we assume we are inferior and unlovable. Children assume it is their fault that they aren't loved and cared for. They feel something must be wrong with them for their parent or guardian to be unable to love them in the way they need. As we mature, we discover that this isn't true – often the adult had their own issues that made it difficult or impossible for them to show unconditional love. By the time we are old enough to realize that, the damage has been done, the messages have been sent and believed and patterns of behavior to compensate have become firmly established.

When a person is unable to have real intimacy with another, to really give one's self without reservation, to overcome feelings of rejection or failure, addictions are used as a substitute. They are a way of escaping pain and seeking a substitute form of comfort.

COMMON TRAITS IN ALL ADDICTIONS & COMPULSIONS There are some traits all compulsions & addictions have in common, be it gambling, drinking, drugs, overeating, sex or whatever. These include:

1. Using this to escape the root problem instead of working it through. The escape deadens the pain of rejection, loneliness, insecurity or anxiety. It masks the pain and provides a quick escape but never gets to the cause of the pain.
2. The compulsion progresses, getting stronger instead of staying the same or weakening.
3. It takes greater levels or amounts of the stimulation to produce gratification. Tolerance to lower levels is built, like the alcoholic who can drink a lot without getting drunk.
4. Withdrawal symptoms occur when the 'drug' is unavailable.
5. Thoughts become so obsessive the person finds themselves doing things they didn't want to do and promised they would never do again. The same pattern of seeking the substitute addiction, obtaining it and using it follows like a ritual.
6. Shame and guilt result afterwards -- blaming others, God or self. The anticipated relief is short-lived, if it comes at all. The person feels dumped, trashed, miserable. They need to escape the pain, so 1. Starts all over again.

GENERATIONAL SIN PATTERNS Often addictions run in families. Children seem to follow in their parent's sin patters. Parents have a great effect on their children. This happens in two ways. One is by example and influence. Children learn sins from their parent's example and that gives opening to demonizing. The second way is when demons who have access to a parent claim access to the child, too. When a demon has access to a person, he also claims right to all that person has, including their

children. The Bible says God "punishes the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation" (Exodus 20:4-5; Deuteronomy 5:8-9; Exodus 34:6-7). The Bible says that children are affected by their parents' sins (Ezekiel 18:2) and this is one of the ways. In fact, this is one of the most common reasons people are demonized.

This is especially true of first-born males, for Satan seeks to claim them just as God does (Exodus 34:20). If you notice some of the same problems in your life as in your siblings, parents, aunts, uncles, or grandparents it could very well be ancestral demonizing. The same demons have access to those in the family and do the same work in various members (not all members, that would be too obvious). They claim the blood line and use that as access. If you see some patterns in the symptoms or characteristics of demonizing that were covered previously in others in your family that could show ancestral access. That is why so often a boy who hates his father for beating his mother grows up to beat his own wife, or a child of an alcoholic becomes an alcoholic themselves.

Generational bondage is often discerned by the sin patterns that repeat from generation to generation. It is not uncommon to observe generations of abuse, addiction, hatred, superstition and fear, pride, control and manipulation, rejection, sexual sins and perversions, aberrant religious beliefs, witchcraft, and rebellion etc.

Generational bondage can be broken by personally repenting of and confessing the sins of past generations. Claim the blood of Christ as stronger than your blood line and put that access under the blood of Jesus (Romans 5:15). Claim that you are a "new creation, old things have passed away, all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17). Ask God to turn curses into blessing (Deuteronomy 23:5). There still is a battle to be fought with the addiction, but without demonic influence making everything worse, victory will come more quickly. For more information see "Spiritual Warfare Handbook" by Rev. Dr. Jerry Schroyer.

The Bible says we are not to let anything control us except God's Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:12). Verses which can help to have victory over addictions include: John 8:34-36; Romans 8:12-15; Proverbs 23:20-21; Romans 6:1-2, 11-13, 16; 12:1; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 2 Corinthians 7:1; 1 John 1:8-9

See also: 21 Sexual Addictions; 20 Adultery & Fornication; 24 Substance Abuse and Addiction

21. SEXUAL ADDICTIONS - IMMORALITY & PORNOGRAPHY

Root: lust, fear of rejection

Fruit of the Spirit that is needed (Galatians 5:22-23): self-control

One of the fastest growing addictions is to sexual sin. As moral values decline and the influence of the internet grows, more and more people are turning to sex as a substitute for real intimacy and love. It's important to understand how this works.

THE ADDICTION CYCLE First there is a PREOCCUPATION WITH SEXUAL THOUGHTS. Thoughts start running through the mind, bringing a mild rush of adrenaline (James 1:13-14). The adrenaline rush gets addictive, as does the escape from reality the thoughts bring. We assume acting on our thoughts will be the solution to our problems. If we don't bring our thoughts captive (2 Corinthians 10:5) to God, they will grow and we will start acting on them.

The RITUALIZATION stage of the cycle is when one starts acting on their thoughts. This usually takes a similar pattern each time. For Samson it was going to Gaza, a Philistine town where prostitutes were readily available. For men today it may include surfing the internet late at night, hanging around a certain magazine stand or book store, walking past an immodestly dressed secretary's desk or many other things. Thoughts of sin are conceived (James 1:15a) and grow.

ACTING OUT usually follows the ritualization pattern. The sin is committed, in action or in the mind. Then comes the GUILT & SHAME. As James says, sin gives birth to death (1:15-16). Instead of life we get death. Instead of joy there is sorrow. Short-lived pleasure is replaced by a long time of pain. Emptiness fills us. We end up feeling trashed afterwards. We promise we'll never do it again. But before long the cycle is repeated.

This addiction cycle must stop at the very start -- what we do with the first thought (Matthew 5:28).

CAUSES OF ADDICTIONS & COMPULSIONS The cause starts in childhood, especially in abusive or dysfunctional families. When a person is unable to have real intimacy with another, to really give one's self without reservation, to overcome feelings of rejection or failure, then often sexual or other compulsions compensate. Sex becomes a way of escaping pain and substituting reality with a fantasy world. Society conditions us to this, for everywhere around us we see lust replacing love and substituting for real closeness. Satan works with this, too. His demons magnify openings we give him and keep working on them, putting thoughts and desires into a person's mind. Often this follows family lines, going from grandfather to father to son. (For more information see my Spiritual Warfare Handbook or Generational Sin Patterns in 20 Addictions, All, above.

THE SOLUTION TO SEXUAL ADDICTION & COMPULSION The solution is in Jesus, and Jesus only.

1. Remember, sex itself is not sinful. There is nothing wrong with nudity (Genesis 2:22-25) or sex in marriage (Hebrews 13:4; Song of Solomon 7:1-11). Any and all sex outside of a married man and woman, is wrong (Exodus 20:14; Deuteronomy 5:10; Leviticus 20:10). However, that doesn't mean sex is innately wrong or sinful. It's like money, it's our attitude to it and use of it that makes it right or wrong.

2. Also, sex starts in the mind. Mental lust leads to adultery (James 1:13-16), and in fact IS adultery already (Matthew 5:27-28). It's not the tempting thought or the unexpected sight that is sin, but what we do with it. Sin starts in the mind, so does victory over sin. Sin starts there, so it must stop there. What a person does with the first thoughts determines the whole direction of the sin pattern. That is the place for bondage to sin to be broken. You can't stop half way down a slippery sliding board, you have to stop before you even start. The first rung of the ladder is our thought life -- that's where it must stop!

3. Take a stand for purity in thought and actions with Jesus' help. Make sure you think only of what is noble, right, pure, lovely and admirable (Philippians 4:8). Flee the desire to entertain sinful thoughts (1 Corinthians 10:13) or commit sinful actions (Genesis 39:12-13). Resist sin and Satan (James 4:7) by running to Jesus in prayer. Use the Bible, memorize verses, sing Christian songs, call a friend to pray for you -- do whatever is necessary when sinful thoughts hit.

4. Get to the root cause. Work through childhood pain which makes real intimacy difficult. Ask God to show you what you need to realize and remember. It doesn't have to be a childhood of overt abuse, any kind of rejection hurts! Forgive those in the past who have hurt you. Confess your bitterness and hate and ask God to remove it. Pray for God to heal you, forgive you and restore you from the results of past hurt. Learn to develop true intimacy with your mate and God. Allow others to get to know the real you and make an effort to get to know them better. Ask God for wisdom so you will see how your compulsion substitutes for real intimacy and so you can clearly see the difference between lust and love. Renew your mind by memorizing Scriptures such as Psalm 25:3-4; 101:2-3; 103:8-14; 119:9-11; Matthew 4:4; 18:3-11; John 17:19; Ephesians 6:10-16; Hebrews 2:12; 1 John 3:8; 4:4 and others.

5. When you do fail and sin, confess the sin and accept God's forgiveness. Confess (1 John 1:9) it when you entertain wrong thoughts, do wrong things, put your pleasure before your mate's or withhold pleasure from your mate. Admit it as sin. Don't blame, excuse, justify, punish yourself, etc. Then make sure you forgive yourself by accepting God's forgiveness (Psalm 103:8-14).

6. It is very helpful to become accountable to a Godly person. The 12-step programs success is based on two things: admitting one has a problem they can't beat alone and allowing themselves to be accountable to others for help in overcoming their addiction. This is successfully used by many Christian 12-step groups who deal with sexual addictions, too. Find a mature Christian of the same sex to hold you accountable by regularly asking you questions about how you are handling your temptations to sexual sin and praying with you. Your mate can't do this, you won't be honest because you don't want to hurt them. Find someone you can talk to, who will accept and love you no matter what. This is an important part of the healing process and of learning true intimacy with another person. Professional counseling is often necessary and very helpful.

Using an accountability program on your computer like Covenant Eyes (<https://www.covenanteyes.com/>) is a great way of holding yourself accountable. It does not block pornographic sites but records each one you visit and sends the information to your accountability partner so they can hold you responsible. The shame of someone you respect knowing what you've done can be a tremendous deterrent to going to the sites. Their web site had many helpful articles and resources as well.

See also: 20 Addictions, All; 23 Adultery and Fornication; 22 Sexual Self-Stimulation; 25 Homosexuality

12 STEPS TO VICTORY OVER SEXUAL ADDICTION (based on 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous)

1. Admit I am powerless over my compulsiveness and that my life had become unmanageable (Romans 7:17-18; Psalm 116:1-9; Jeremiah 9:23-24; 2 Corinthians 12:9)
2. Come to believe that Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit could restore me to sanity (Philippians 2:13; Proverbs 28:26; Romans 5:8; Palms 30:2-3; Matthew 8:1-3; Mark 9:24)
3. Made a decision to turn my will and life over to the care of Jesus Christ (Romans 12:1; Proverbs 3:5-6; Galatians 2:19-20; Psalms 40; Matthew 11:28-30)
4. Made a searching & fearless moral inventory of myself. (Lamentations 3:40-41; Psalms 139:23; Matthew 7:1-5)
5. Admitted to Jesus Christ, to ourselves and another human being the exact nature of my wrongs. (James 5:16; 1 John 1:9; Psalms 32:1-5; Galatians 6:2-3)
6. Am entirely ready to have Jesus Christ remove these defects of character. (James 4:7-10; Jeremiah 10:23; Hebrews 12:1-2; Hosea 10:12; Micah 7:18-20)
7. Humbly ask Jesus Christ to remove my shortcomings and sins. (1 John 1:9; Isaiah 1:18-19; Isaiah 662; Psalms 32:1-2)
8. Make a list of all persons I had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all. (Luke 6:31; Matthew 5:23-24; 6:14-15)
9. Made direct amends to them all except when to do so would injure them or others. (Matthew 5:23-24; Mark 11:24; Hebrews 12:1; 2 Corinthians 5:19; Colossians 1:20-21)
10. Continue to take personal inventory and, when I am wrong, promptly admitted it. (1 Corinthians 10:12; Psalms 19:12; Psalms 26:2-3; Galatians 6:4-5; 1 Timothy 1:19)

11. Seek through prayer and meditation to improve my conscious contact with Jesus Christ, praying for the knowledge of His will for me and the power to carry that out. (Colossians 3:16; Proverbs 2:3-5; Psalms 1:2; James 5:13; Romans 8:26)
12. Have a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps and try to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all of life (Galatians 6:1; 1 Peter 3:15; Isaiah 61:1; Psalms 96:1-4; Galatians 6:1; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

SCRIPTURE TO USE AGAINST LUST LIES

"Lust is no big deal." Job 31:11-12

"A little sinful fantasizing won't hurt." Romans 8:6; Galatians 6:7-8; Romans 13:

"Sexual sin isn't that bad." Matthew 5:29-30; 2 Timothy 2:22

"God won't mind if I sin just a little." Colossians 3:5-6; Ephesians 5:3

"It's my body, I can do what I want with it." 1 Corinthians 6:18-

"I can't control my sex drive." 1 Thessalonians 4:3-6

"Looking at a few pornographic pictures won't affect me." Proverbs 6:25-27; Psalms 101:3

"I won't experience any consequences for indulging in my lust." Romans 14:12; Hebrews 12:6; James 1:15

"People get away with adultery all the time." Proverbs 5:3-5; Proverbs 5:8-11

"God is keeping something good from me." Psalms 84:10-12

"The pleasure lust promises is better and more real than God's pleasure." Psalms 16:11

"Fulfilling my lust will satisfy me and bring me joy." Lamentations 3:24-26; Proverbs 19:23

VERSES TO MEMORIZE FOR VICTORY OVER SEXUAL SIN:

Accountability is necessary: Hebrews 10:24-25; James 5:16

Attitude to sexual immorality: Romans 13:13-14; Colossians 3:5-7; 1 Peter 2:11

Consequences of sin: Proverbs 5:7-14; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Hebrews 13:4

Flee sexual sin: Genesis 39:12; 2 Timothy 2:22

Forgiveness of sexual sin: Psalm 32; 51; 1 John 1:9

Resist the sexual sin and Satan: Matthew 4:10; James 4:7-8

Restoration from sin: Psalms 51:10; Luke 22:31-32

Temptation: Luke 4:13; 1 Corinthians 10:13; James 1:13-15

Thoughts must be kept pure: Romans 8:5-7; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 3:1-2

See also: 20 Addictions, All; 21 Sexual Addictions, 22 Self-Stimulation

22. SEXUAL SELF-STIMULATION (MASTURBATION)

Root: desire for pleasure, escape pain

Fruit of the Spirit that is needed (Galatians 5:22-23): Self-Control

Our bodies are created to bring sexual pleasure to our mates (1 Corinthians 7:2-5). We were not created to bring sexual pleasure to ourself only. The wrong thoughts that accompany self-stimulation are sinful (Matthew 5:28). It makes sex an end in itself (one's own physical joy) instead of a means to an end (show love to mate). Our bodies don't belong to us to use for ourselves, but to our mates to use for their pleasure (1 Corinthians 7:4). Plus, anything not of faith is sin. It's inconceivable to think of Jesus doing or approving this. God promises to never send more temptation than we can resist with His help (1 Corinthians 10:13).

See also: 20 Addictions, All; 21 Sexual Addictions, 23 Adultery & Fornication

23. ADULTERY, FORNICATION

Root: insecure male, lust, fear

Fruit of the Spirit that is needed (Galatians 5:22-23): self-control

THE ADULTERER or FORNICATOR

God's Word says any sex outside of marriage is sin. If one or both of the people are married it is called "adultery" (Hebrews 13:4; Proverbs 6:32). If neither are married it is called "fornication" (1 Corinthians 6:18, Ephesians 5:1-4). Many who do not see the Bible as God's absolute authority on morality do not admit these are sin, but for the child of God they are totally forbidden. Sex is God's gift to a husband and wife (Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:5, Mark 10:8; Ephesians 5:31). God looks down on married love and is pleased (Song of Solomon 5:1). God says sex in marriage is totally acceptable (Hebrews 13:4). Marriage is a picture of Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:21-33). Sex is very powerful and appealing, and often people misuse it. Sex outside of marriage is a great temptations for Christians a well. How can we protect ourselves against it?

GUARDRAILS Just as dangerous roads have guardrails to protect drivers from plunging over the edge, so God has provided guardrails for Christians to be able to safely navigate the curves and dangerous portions of life. These can keep us from plunging into sexual destruction.

1. A Strong Relationship with The Father is the first guardrail (Proverbs 5:1-2). A solid spiritual relationship with God is the surest protection against destruction. Invite God to examine your thoughts (Philippians 4:8-9; Psalm 139:23-24). Take captive any thoughts that aren't pure (2 Corinthians 10:5) before they grow. Study and memorize Bible verses to help with the battle over lust (1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; Job 31:1; Proverbs 6:27; Mark 9:42-47; Ephesians 5:3-7; 2 Timothy 2:22; 2 Corinthians 10:5; Psalm 139:23-24). God promises to never send more temptation than we can resist with His help (1 Corinthians 10:13).

2. An Extreme Caution with the Opposite Sex is the next safeguard. Do whatever is necessary to keep yourself from being tempted in action or thought (Matthew 5:29-30). Don't even allow yourself to look at another man or woman and lust (Job 31:1). Be careful, too, of any relationship with someone of the opposite sex where you enjoy and look forward to their company equally to or more than your mate. Sexual relationships start as good friendships, but any male-female relationship that isn't totally brother-sister in all aspects can easily lead to sin.

3. A Wide-open Relationship same sex Friends is another guardrail. We all need someone who loves us enough to challenge us to total purity (James 5:16). We need accountability, encouragement and prayer support which can only come from a close brother in the Lord who understands and cares.

4. A fulfilling Relationship with Our Mate is the final essential ingredient (Proverbs 5:15-19). If your relationship with your husband or wife isn't what you'd like, do your best to change that. Be the husband or wife you need to be no matter how they respond. Pray and fast for your mate to be the person you need. Pray daily for God to give you a love for your mate like you had in the past. Treat them as if you have that love, and God will quickly put it in your heart. Learn to develop a close intimacy with them. Go to God with your unmet needs. He understands and will help you.

Scriptures about adultery (sex not with the one to whom you are married) include: Matthew 5:27-32; 15:19-20; 19:9; 1 Corinthians 5:9; 6:9-11, 18-20; Hebrews 13:4; Exodus 20:14; Deuteronomy 5:18; 24:1-4; Luke 18:20; James 2:11; 2 Peter 2:14; Ephesians 5:3; Leviticus 20:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; Proverbs 5:20-23; 6:23-25; 7:4-5; Mark 7:21-23; Galatians 5:19-21; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; John 8:10-11

Scriptures about fornication (sex before marriage) include: Deuteronomy 22:13-23; 2 Samuel 12:14; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Corinthians 6:16

THE MATE OF THE ONE COMMITTING ADULTERY

The mate of the one who is guilty of committing adultery also needs to be counseled. He or she will be full of pain, anger and rejection. Let them talk about these things. Do not minimize them or make excuses. The pain is very deep and they must be able to feel it and express it. Do not push them to forgive or be restored. To be complete, that must come after time in prayer and spiritual growth.

The adulterer needs to go through a time of counseling, repentance and growth on his own. Then there needs to be marriage counseling for both of them. He needs to prove to his wife that he will be faithful and she can trust him. Until that happens, she may want to live separately from him. That is Biblical (1 Corinthians 7:15).

When getting back together, it is often good to have a wedding ceremony where they make new vows to each other. Having a new start is important. The new relationship can't be based on the old one that failed. The offended mate cannot feel forced to have to stay. There must be healing and growth between them.

See also: 21 Sexual Addictions; 20 Addictions, All; Section C , 6 Sexual Abuse and 7 Abuse

24. SUBSTANCE ABUSE & ADDICTION, ALCOHOL, DRUGS

Root: medicate self to remove pain

Fruit of the Spirit that is needed (Galatians 5:22-23):

The Bible does not forbid all use of alcohol. It is acceptable for medical use (1 Timothy 5:23) and celebration (John 2:3-22; Psalm 104:14-15). God does forbid drunkenness (Ephesians 5:18; Romans 13:13; Galatians 5:19-21; 1 Peter 4:3). If even moderate use offends or tempts another to sin it is not to be used at all (Romans 14:15-21; 1 Corinthians 8). We are not to do anything that will hinder the gospel of Jesus (1 Corinthians 9:19-23). Still, the Bible does not completely forbid any and all use of alcohol. Jesus probably drank a mild wine with meals. The danger comes in keeping it under control.

Those who become controlled by alcohol instead of controlling it are called "alcoholics". This is a person who becomes dependent on or addicted to alcohol. It impairs their senses and judgment. The same is true of drug addiction. In both cases the substance is used to escape reality and pain in life and to bring a sense of peace and comfort. Peer pressure can also cause a person to become involved with alcohol or drugs. Tobacco and smoking are also drugs.

Those involved must take responsibility for their own actions and the results. Often their family or others have to bail them out of the consequences they face because of their use. This just enables them to keep indulging. Instead of helping the person, it allows them to continue in their addiction. They must be made to face the consequences of their sin and reap what they sow (Galatians 6:8). An addict must want to be free more than they want the substance. They must be willing to pay the price to be free for it often takes an extended time of emotional and physical withdrawal that can be painful. There must be a commitment to be free no matter what, and there must be a support system to help the person through this adjustment period.

It is very hard to overcome these substances without surrendering your life to Christ and depending on Him for hope, strength and help. Even then, the combination of physical and emotional dependence can be quite difficult to break. Special counseling or intercession programs that specialize in these addictions can be very helpful. So can accountability programs like AA. Even

after stopping the addiction, accountability, fellowship and support are necessary to keep the person free.

The goal is not just to get the person to stop drinking or using drugs, though. Sometimes these addictions are just replaced by other addictions, like drinking coffee, smoking, overeating, gambling, sex, overworking or many other behaviors. (See 20 Addictions, All above.) Freedom from alcohol or drugs is just the first step. The person must then grow and mature, facing the issues that first led to their involvement. A medical doctor doesn't just treat symptoms, he gets to the root cause. The same is true in working with those addicted to alcohol or drugs.

Scriptures about alcohol include: Leviticus 10:8-9; Numbers 6:2-4; Proverbs 23:31; 31:4; Jeremiah 35:5-8; Daniel 1:5, 8; Amos 2:12; Luke 1:15; 7:33; 1 Timothy 5:23. Scriptures that can help have victory over alcohol include: John 7:37-38; 8:36; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Proverbs 23:20-21; Luke 21:34; Romans 13:12-14; 1 Corinthians 5:11; 6:129-20; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Ephesians 5:18-21

Scriptures that apply to having victory over drugs include: Revelation 22:14-15; Ephesians 5:18; 1 Corinthians 6:12; Revelation 9:20-21; Psalm 16:11; 23:1-6; Matthew 11:28; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Corinthians 12:9; 2 Timothy 1:7; Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 5:7

See also: 20 Addiction, all

25. HOMOSEXUALITY (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender)

Root: emotional pain, rebellion against God

Fruit of the Spirit that is needed (Galatians 5:22-23): joy, peace, self-control

The Bible clearly says that participating in sexual acts with someone of the same sex is sin (Romans 1:24-32; 2:8; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Leviticus 18:1, 22; 20:13). This sin has become quite common in the world today. Many accept it as normal behavior, but it is not God's way and only brings guilt, shame and bondage.

CAUSE OF HOMOSEXUALITY Often when a person has a disappointing relationship with their same-sex parent they seek to have that need met through a sexual relationship with a person of the same sex. If a child doesn't feel loved and secure or if they feel rejected, they often turn to a substitute to meet those needs. Statistics show that a high percentage of homosexuals come from an abusive family. When a female is sexually abused by a male, she may so hate males that she totally rejects them and turns to females for sexual love instead. A boy who is sexually abused also feels shame and guilt, but the pleasure that also comes (the physical climax) confuses him. Without a mature male showing him love in godly ways, he may find himself drawn to same-sex love since it is the only 'love' he has known. Satan's demons take an experience like that and put thoughts, ideas and desires in his mind and opportunities in his path. This is especially true in a culture that has turned from God (Romans 1:24-26).

To make matters worse, the substitute love and acceptance gives temporary relief. Many find it an easier path than having to face the pain and hurt from the past and work through them. Also, the anger that masks the pain is often taken out on parents and the world in general by their turning against society by their homosexual behavior. Today homosexuality has become so common that there is often strong peer pressure to practice that behavior.

We must remember that we all have a free will and, while some sins may be more easily overcome, there is no excuse to remain in any sin. The Bible does clearly call homosexuality a sin (see verses at end of article). If God says it is wrong, He must also provide a way out for those caught in its trap.

CURE FOR HOMOSEXUALITY First, it must be confessed as sin (1 John 1:9). There can be no excuse or justification, no blame or self-pity. God does not create anyone homosexual. It is their free will choice, just with any other sin. It must be confessed (1 John 1:9 - admit it is sin) and the person's desire must be to not remain in that sin but be willing, with God's help, to never commit it again. Also, God's forgiveness must be accepted (Psalm 103:8-14). Accepting God's cleansing and forgiving one's self can be hard. Temptation to return to homosexual or lesbian sex may still come, but that must be totally resisted. The same is true of a heterosexual man or woman who is tempted to have sex outside marriage. Both must resist and turn to God for help.

Second, the person must depend on God's strength to overcome the sin and grow in victory. Spiritual warfare praying when tempted, close contact with a prayer partner, regular fellowship with other Christians, meaningful daily devotions, memorization of Scripture -- all of these are important factors. One must depend moment by moment on the power of the Holy Spirit to bring victory.

Third, understand the causes from the past that opened one up to the sin. Forgive any who have caused pain or feelings of rejection in the past. Turn to your Father-God ("Abba" Mar 14:36; Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6) and ask Him to heal you from that and meet your unmet needs.

Finally, learn right relationships to the same and opposite sexes. Reach out and open yourself up, trusting God and others to show you acceptance and love. It takes time, but learn to rightly relate to others.

OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD HOMOSEXUALS As with all in sin, we are to love and reclaim the person while rejecting the sin. While that is often easier to say than to do, we must remember that sin is sin. No sin is worse than any other. Jesus paid for every sin. God forgives and forgets, so must we. We are not to judge or condemn but to love. While humbly warning about the consequences of the sin of homosexuality (in this world and the next), we must show love and acceptance to the people themselves. More rejection is NOT what they need. God can and does forgive any sin. They are no worse than us and need the love of God as much as we do!

Ask God to help you have the right attitude to these people so that you can show God's love to them. Then pray for opportunities to practice that and be sensitive to chances to reach out in love with the GOOD news of Jesus.

Scriptures that say homosexuality is sin include: Romans 1:24-32; 2:8; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Leviticus 18:1, 22-23; 20:13-16; Deuteronomy 23:17; Genesis 1:27; 2:18-24; 5:2; 19:5-8; Judges 19:22; 1 Timothy 1:8-10; Ezekiel 16:4-50; Proverbs 16:5; 18:12; 21:4; Isaiah 3:9; Obadiah 1:3; Matthew 19:4-5; Ephesians 5:31; Jude 4, 6-7.

God's promises to overcome homosexuality include: Psalm 138:6; Proverbs 11:21; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 10:13; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 2 Timothy 1:7; 2 Peter 2:4-10; Ephesians 4:20-24; 1 Peter 5:5

See also: 20 Addictions, All; 21 Sexual Addictions

26. OVEREATING, GLUTTONY

Root: lust, fear, anxiety

Fruit of the Spirit that is needed (Galatians 5:22-23): joy, peace, self-control

God desires we be a good steward of all He gives us, and that includes our bodies. Yet many times people overeat and are guilty of gluttony, which is a sin (Philippians 3:19; Proverbs 23:2, 21; 28:7). Gluttony is a bad testimony to others and a slow form of suicide. It takes away from the quality of life as well as the length of life. It undermines a person's feelings of worth and value. It is destructive, yet very common. If over eating is so harmful, why do so many people do it?

Some people overeat because of a problem with their genes. That can make it easier for someone with other issues to turn to food as a substitute. That is especially true if you watched your parents overeat. Bad habits can be formed and passed from generation to generation.

A common cause of overeating is anxiety and stress. The taste of food can bring comfort, especially when food was used to comfort the person as a child. They turn to food to feel better. The benefit is very temporary, but the weight they gain stays.

Food can become an addiction when used as an escape from pain or a substitute for other healthier responses in life. If a person is depressed or feels low self-esteem, they often turn to food to help them feel better. That, too, is temporary. Instead, overeating will make them feel shame and guilt. The shame from weight gain can cause them to want to eat more to again escape. It becomes a vicious cycle.

To break the cycle, one needs to be controlled by God's Spirit. We need His power to help with any kind of lust, and that includes a lust for food. A visit to a doctor for a physical can also be helpful to make sure there aren't physical causes involved in weight gain.

You must have a plan in order to not over eat. You must stick to the plan you make. Plan out regular meals and snacks that are healthy throughout the day. Eat smaller portions of food. Don't nibble on unhealthy foods throughout the day.

Ask God to help you discover what role food is playing in your life that you are tempted to eat more than you need. Find more emotionally healthy ways of handling stress and pain then by overeating.

If overeating does run in your family, it could be a generational sin that is influenced by demons to defeat you and your health. For more information, see my book *Spiritual Warfare Handbook* or *Generational Sin Patterns in 20 Addictions*, All, above.

Bible verses that deal with overeating include: 1 Thessalonians 5:6-8; 1 Corinthians 6:12; Deuteronomy 21:20; Philippians 3:19; Proverbs 23:2, 21; 28:7

See also: 20 Addictions, All

27. EATING DISORDERS

Root: pride, fear, self-destruction

Fruit of the Spirit that is needed (Galatians 5:22-23): peace, joy, self-control

Some who struggle with overeating may turn to bingeing and purging. That means they will eat a lot and then vomit it up so they don't gain weight. That is no solution to overeating. It is very dangerous to a person's health and can have long-term negative effects.

Another form of eating disorder is found in those who think they are overweight when they are not. They have a distorted image of themselves and feel they are fat when they are not. They undermine their health by not eating, thinking that if they lose weight, they will feel better about themselves. This person needs to see a medical doctor and a perhaps professional counselor to help them overcome these feelings.

The cure for both of these is the same as is found in 26 Overeating, Gluttony.

See also: 20 Addictions, All above.

Scriptures to help find a healthy balance in eating include: Leviticus 11:45; Psalm 136:25; Matthew 4:4; Luke 12:29-31, 40-46; John 6:35; Romans 14:12; 1 Corinthians 6:12, 19-20; 9:24-27; 10:23, 31; Deuteronomy 28:1-6; Daniel 1:8-14

28. STEALING

Root: greed, discontent

Fruit of the Spirit that is needed (Galatians 5:22-23): self-control

Stealing is a sin because we take something that is not ours but belongs to someone else. There are numerous examples of this in the Bible (2 Samuel 12:1-7; 1 Kings 21:1-4,7-10,19; Psalm 50:18-23). It shows greed, discontent, lack of respect for others' property and disobedience to God's law written in our conscience.

People steal for different reasons. For some, it is greed. They want more than they have. They think that happiness lies in possessions and so they want to have more so they feel better. That never works, though, and so they steal more and more. These people need to realize that happiness does not come from the things they have.

Other steal for the thrill and excitement of getting away with it. It's not that they need what they steal but they have a compulsion for excitement and the danger of stealing something meets that need. These people need in-depth counseling to find why they need that excitement and to replace it with healthier responses in life

Others steal because they are angry. They want to harm someone or get revenge on them. Sometimes it is a specific individual and other times it is the world in general they hate. Stealing becomes their way of getting revenge. This person, too, needs counseling to discover what motivates them to steal. They need to get to the root of their anger and heal from it.

Another reason for stealing is that it is a quick, easy way to obtain something. Those are too lazy to work or save money resort to stealing to get something quickly and easily. For them, the sin of laziness needs to be explored and defeated as well.

Victory from stealing comes when we learn to be content with what God has given us (Philippians 4:11-13). We must trust in His provision as sufficient. Learning patience to work and attain what we feel we need is important as well.

Bible verses that deal with stealing include: Ephesians 4:28; Exodus 20:15-17; 21:6; Leviticus 19:11,13; Deuteronomy 5:19-21; 24:7; Habakkuk 2:6; Zechariah 5:3-4; Matthew 19:18-19; Luke 12:15; Romans 2:21; 13:8-10; 1 Peter 4:14-15; Micah 6:8; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Ephesians 4:28; Titus 2:9-10

29. LYING, DECEPTION

Root: pride

Fruit of the Spirit that is needed (Galatians 5:22-23): self-control

Lying and deception are accomplished by what is said, by what is left unsaid or by implying something is true when it isn't. Anything that is the opposite of truth is a lie. Lying started in the garden of Eden (Genesis 3:4). Satan is a liar and the father of lies (John 8:44; Acts 5:3). God is truth, so lying is the opposite of all God is. It goes against the nature and character of God (Numbers 23:19; 1 Samuel 15:29; Romans 3:4; Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18). Ananias and Sapphira lied and God's wrath came down on them because of it (Acts 5:1-11).

Lying has terrible negative consequences. God hates lying. The Ten Commandments say bearing false witness against another person is a malicious sin (Exodus 20:6; Deuteronomy 5:20; 19:18-19).

People lie for various reasons. It is helpful to understand the reason when counseling so that the person can grow and overcome their sin. One of the main reasons people lie is because they feel

the truth is not acceptable. They want to have someone think better of them, not be responsible for something they have done wrong or convince someone that something that is not true is true. Other people lie when there isn't a good reason for lying. It is a compulsion inside of them. This person needs counseling to help them discover why they lie and to find better ways of responding instead.

The most dangerous kind of liar is the one who convinces himself that his lies are true. That way they do not feel guilt or shame at the lie and feel what they are saying is right. This person needs God's power to see the truth and help overcome untruth.

Bible verses with speak about lying include: Proverbs 10:18-19; 11:13; 12:19, 22; 14:5, 25; 17:20; 19:9; 24:24; 29:12; 26:28; Matthew 5:33-37; Exodus 20:16; Leviticus 19:11-12; Numbers 32:23; Isaiah 63:8; Jeremiah 9:3; Zechariah 8:16-17; John 8:44-47; 14:6; 1 John 1:6-10; Revelation 21:8; 22:14-15; Ephesians 4:17-32; Colossians 3:9; 1 Peter 2:21-22

30. WORKAHOLISM, OVER WORKING

Root: pride, fear, escape pain

Fruit of the Spirit that is needed (Galatians 5:22-23): peace, self-control

God created people to work and says work is good and important (Genesis 3:19). Paul said that if anyone won't work others shouldn't feed him (2 Thessalonians 3:10). It is necessary to work. But, like with many other good things God created, it must be kept in balance. Taking it to an extreme is wrong and sinful. Overwork is common today! It is really a problem. But it is a problem others applaud. Many today see overwork as what is expected to 'get ahead' and be successful.

One reason we people overwork is the example and training we receive growing up. We see our parents always being busy. We equate success with busyness in the home, workplace and even in the church. In school and college we are rewarded for being productive perfectionists and devalued when we are not. The busiest people we know are looked up to as the most successful. People often care more about how much money a person is earning than the kind of person they are inside.

Another reason we overwork is that our ego is closely involved with our work and activity. Men identify themselves by what they do. We are "Ken, the salesman," or "Bob, the banker." The first thing men wonder about each other is what they do, for we evaluate each other (and ourselves) on this basis. A man without a job (unemployed, sick, retired) often doesn't feel like a full, functioning man. A man whose wife has to work (or earns more than he does) often has a hard time accepting this. Thus our identity is too closely tied up in what we do. If you don't think this applies to you, ask yourself how you would feel if you were paralyzed in bed and your mate had to take care of you for the rest of your life? How would that affect your ego and self-worth?

Still another reason for our tendency to overwork is that we get our feelings of accomplishment from our work. We get a 'high' from a completed project. In fact, workaholism is like other addictions in that work is the drug of choice, and the adrenaline flow from pressure or accomplishment gives us a high. Our 'drug stash' is our list of work, projects started at home, things in mind that need doing, etc. Thus in overwork a person feels successful and gets a high from his accomplishments.

The workaholic's family often feeds into their overwork for they appreciate and depend on the material things provided. Also, the workaholic's busyness is an escape from thinking about other things in life: personal relationships, fears, mortality, struggles and difficulties, etc.

Not just men are workaholics. Housewives and mothers can be workaholics as easily as a man. There are cleanaholics (always keeping the home perfect), careaholics (always doing for others), busyaholics (running around with a tight schedule), rushaholics (over committed), and others. This is

done for the same reasons: insecurity, guilt if not doing, earning other's approval or self-identity by what one does.

Signs to look for that show overwork include denial when others say you over work (rationalize it with various excuses), poor self-esteem (productivity becomes our identity), inability to relax (feel guilty when relaxing, need the adrenaline high from accomplishing something), perfectionism (expects too much of self) and isolation (works alone so not held accountable). Too much work brings physical symptoms, too. In Japan 10% of the deaths of working men are from "karoshi" (death from over work). In America this is called Epstein-Barr Disease, or chronic fatigue syndrome. The immune system is suppressed and a man becomes open for infections and various diseases. His high adrenaline flow masks the problem for a while, but then depression, forgetfulness and mood swings enter. When hospitalized, the first thing a workaholic asks for is his brief case (his drug of choice)!

What can we do to prevent this epidemic from claiming us? What should we do if we think we might have some of these symptoms? The cure is two-fold. First, ADMIT TO THE PROBLEM. The surface problem is overwork, but the root problem is what makes us turn to work: insecurity, fear of failure, unsure of ourself as a person, etc. Admit it as sin for it breaks God's principle to rest one day out of seven. It is idolatry, for we are to have no other gods before Him and work has become a god. The other part of the cure is to PLAN OPTIONS TO HELP YOU STOP OVERWORKING. Find someone who can and will hold you accountable. Your mate probably won't do well at this. They aren't in a position to hold you accountable. Also, they helped allow it to get to this point.

Each addict needs an "enabler" to keep his addiction going, and without knowing it many wives fill this role with their husband's work addiction by bailing him out, making excuses for him, accepting his excuses and doing things he should be doing. Wives often are more part of the problem than of the solution. With a person who can hold you accountable, write down your goals and plan your hours to meet those goals. Spend time praying and meditating. Seek to understand why you overwork -- what need does work meet in your life? Commit yourself to make some hard choices, to say "no" to things and to put your priorities into practice in your life.

Remember, Jesus Himself only had seven 24-hour days in a week. He just had 3 years to complete His mission, and He was never rushed, never overworked, never too busy for God or people. God doesn't give you or me 25 hours of work to do in a 24-hour day, and He doesn't expect us to shortchange our family or our health to force more work out of ourselves. Spending time enjoying and relaxing are legitimate and necessary. Let's do what we can to come in line with God's expectations for us!

WHAT CAN WIVES DO TO HELP THEIR HUSBANDS?

Pray for them, specifically and in detail. Pray that the need work is meeting in their life be met in other ways. Pray for yourself, that God would show you how you enable your husband to continue in his addiction and what you should do instead. Pray that God would use you instead to help meet his needs so he can be free from the compulsion to overwork.

Talk with him about this in a loving, accepting way. Keep in mind that his work is the rope he hangs onto to hold up his male ego. Don't go cutting that rope unless you first give him something better to replace it. Build him up as a person apart from his work. Taking away a cripple's crutch without teaching them to walk without it isn't helping them!

Bible verses that talk about our use of time include: Genesis 2:2; Psalm 31:15; 23:2-3; Matthew 11:28-29; Mark 6:3; Ephesians 5:15-18; Colossians 4:5; Ecclesiastes 2:24

See also: 20 Addictions, All; 31 Priorities

31. PRIORITIES

Root: Self-centeredness, laziness

Fruit of the Spirit that is needed (Galatians 5:22-23): self-control

Imagine there is a bank that credits your account each morning with \$86,400. It carries over no balance from day to day. Every evening it deletes whatever part of the balance you failed to use during the day. What would you do? Make good use of every cent every day, of course!!!! Each of us has such a bank. Its name is TIME. Every morning, it credits you with 86,400 seconds. Every night it writes off, as lost, whatever of this you have failed to invest in good purposes. It carries over no balance. It allows no overdraft. Each day it opens a new account for you. Each night it deletes the remains of the day. If you fail to use the day's deposits, the loss is yours. There is no going back. There is no drawing against "tomorrow." You must live in the present on today's deposits. Invest it so as to get from it the utmost in health, happiness, and success! The clock is running. Make the most of today. Today is a gift. That's why it's called the "present."

Time is our most valuable resource, much more so than even money. If we don't handle it wisely, we won't be able to handle anything else in our lives as we should. There are many demands on our time today. Despite all our 'labor-saving' devices, we are busier than ever.

How many people wish they had more time? Time for devotions, time for work, time for family, time for self? We always need more time. Yet we know God doesn't give us 25 hours of work in a 24-hour day. We have the same amount of time in a day that Jesus did and He was never rushed. It is important to find and do the things God wants us to do and nothing else. Then we won't be rushed.

Still, it seems everyone needs our time: mates, children, extended family, friends, job and of course our ministries. That's why proper priorities are so important. Here is my personal priority system. You may see it differently, but I think this is Biblical:

1. Self - basic maintenance If we don't take care of ourselves, we won't have anything to give to others. That doesn't mean we spend most of our time on ourselves, but that we do make sure basic maintenance is covered. It's like taking care of your car. You must put gas in its first or you won't go anywhere. However you don't spend all day putting gas in – you do it and then get on to other things. Likewise we must make sure we are filled spiritually at the start of each day (Galatians 2:20; 5:22-26). We must make sure that emotionally we are healthy and growing as well (Mark 12:33). If we are controlled by fear, anger, lust, pride or any other negative emotion we won't be able to relate to others around us as we should. We also need to take care of ourselves physically (1 Kings 19). Healthy bodies come from proper exercise, diet, sleep and relaxation. Our physical health affects all we are and do as. Thus our first priority is to make sure we are healthy and growing spiritually, emotionally and physically. Jesus had these priorities – that's why He would slip away from the crowds, and even His own disciples, to spend time alone in prayer and reflection. He knew He had to take care of His own needs or He wouldn't be able to meet the needs of others. This doesn't mean that He indulged Himself or just lived for Himself, but He did know that basic maintenance had to be done first. This is where we often steal time for other things, but the cost soon catches up for us.

2. God When our basic maintenance is taken care of, then our first priority can be God. Anything before Him is an idol. That means having time for devotions, worship, learning the Bible, spiritual growth and serving Him in whatever way He wants. This partly overlaps with our basic self-maintenance (above). Remember Mary and Martha? Jesus commended Mary for putting spiritual things before work and daily activity.

3. Mate Our third priority, after only our own basic maintenance and then God, is our mate. They rate before children, job or anything else (1 Timothy 3:4-5). Husbands and wives need time to focus on each other and the relationship, not just time working together in the same house or room.

4. **Children** Before outside activities, hobbies or work come our children. No one ever lays on their death bed and says they wished they would have spent more time on their career and less on their family! NOW is the time to make sure your family gets priority over your work.

5. **Work** Work is a definite priority in our life, for God told Adam and Eve they would have to work to make a living on this earth (Genesis 3:19-24). The woman in Proverbs 31 is an example of the blessing and joy that work brings. It does come before self-serving pleasure, but not before children, mate or God.

6. **Self** – pleasure, indulgences There is nothing wrong with wholesome activities that are done just for joy and pleasure. It is legitimate to enjoy the world around us. God made it for our pleasure. We don't always have to be working. He told us to take 1 day in seven for rest and refreshment. He also established periodic festivals and rest periods. One year every seven years was to be work free for people, animals and the land. God knows that this is important. A bow won't work to its best if it is taunt all the time. It needs to be relaxed until needed. The same is true of us. Using our time is similar to using our money. If we waste it, we will regret it. Most is to be spent in a worthy way. Some is to be invested for future benefit. We do this with time when we get away, relax, do things that are pleasurable and refreshing to us. That's an investment in the future because it paces us and assures us there will be resources available in the future.

Determine to line your priorities up with God's priorities. Pray about this. It's one thing to say it but something entirely different to actually do. Getting our priorities right sounds great, but the price can be high for it means saying "No" to some things that are very hard to say no to: overwork, self, laziness, doing things to impress others, greed, etc. If we find our value and worth in the work we do, it can be very hard to do less. There is a price to be paid but it is well worth the price. Time is our most valuable possession, and it can only be used once – so please use it wisely.

Scriptures which help define godly priorities include: Proverbs 3:1-35; Matthew 6:25-34; Ephesians 5:17; James 4:17

See also: 30 Overwork

32. MULTIPLE PERSONALITIES

Root: demonic influence

Fruit of the Spirit that is needed (Galatians 5:22-23): spiritual warfare deliverance

If you are counseling with someone who shows various personalities, you are dealing with spiritual warfare. If there are different voices coming from the same person, or if their personality changes drastically from trying to time, that is a sign of demons working against them. Whenever Jesus was confronted by someone like this, He commanded the demons to be gone and the person was free.

Jesus is our example in casting out demons. At the start of His ministry He cast out many demons (Matthew 4:23-24; Mark 1:34, 39). In the Gadarenes He cast demons out of two men (Matthew 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-17; Luke 8:26-36). He cast demons out of the daughter of a Canaanite woman (Matthew 15:22-28; Mark 7:25-29), and cured a demonized man (Mark 1:21-28; Luke 4:33-36). He healed a boy with seizures and demons (Matthew 17:14-20). He cast seven demons out of Mary Magdalene as well as out of other women followers (Luke 8:2; Mark 16:9).

How did Jesus cast demons out? Before casting them out He rebuked them (took their power away) (Matthew 17:18; Luke 9:42). Then He "drove" them out (Mark 1:39). He did it verbally (Matthew 8:16), not by a certain ritualistic procedure. He didn't let the demons speak (Mark 1:34; Luke 4:41), except Legion and that was just to give his name so others would know what was happening (Mark

5:9). He never let them say who He was (Mark 1:25; Luke 4:35; Mark 3:11-12). He told them to "be quiet and come out" (Luke 4:35; Mark 1:25). Other times He told them to "go" (Matthew 8:32). Sometimes He was quite far from the person whom He was delivering (Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30). When He cast them out, He forbid them to ever return again (Mark 9:25).

We have many examples of the disciples casting out demons, too. Jesus gave them power and commanded them to use it (Matthew 10:1; Luke 10:17; Mark 6:7; 16:17). They cast out demons as a regular part of their ministry (Mark 9:38; Luke 10:17). Paul cast out demons (Acts 16:16-18; 19:12) and so did Philip (Acts 8:7). When trying to do it in their own strength (without dependence on God) they failed (Mark 9:18, 28-29).

How did the apostles cast demons out? Paul brought deliverance by a word, too (verbally). He said, "In the name of Jesus I command you to come out" (Acts 16:16-18). When God was showing that Paul was His spokesman there was a time when just touching a cloth that Paul had used brought deliverance (Acts 19:12). That was a special event, not a pattern to follow! When directed by God, Paul defeated the demons in Elymas (an unbeliever) by making him blind so he'd stop interfering with God's word (Acts 13:6-12).

Satan is a defeat foe. He was cast out of his original position in heaven because of pride (Ezekiel 28:16; Luke 10:18; Isaiah 14:12). His judgment was pronounced in Eden (Genesis 3:14-15). He was defeated by the cross (John 12:31). He will be cast to the earth in the tribulation (Revelation 9:1; 12:7-12), bound during the Millennium (Revelation 20:1-3) and then cast into the lake of burning sulfur forever (Revelation 20:7-10; Isaiah 27:1; 40:23-24; 2 Thessalonians 2:8).

See my book *Spiritual Warfare Handbook* for more help. Contact someone who is familiar with spiritual warfare and deliverance from demonizing.

Other Scriptures that speak of spiritual warfare include: 1 Corinthians 16:13; 1 John 5:5; 1 Peter 3:21-22; 5:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:8, 7; 2 Corinthians 10:4; 2 Timothy 2:1-5; Colossians 1:16; Ephesians 1:21; 6:10-20; Galatians 5:17; Hebrews 2:8; James 4:7; Matthew 6:24; Philipians 4:6; Revelation 12:11; Romans 8:5-6, 38-39; 13:12

C. UNDERSTANDING RELATIONAL PROBLEMS **(Getting along with others)**

These issues basically have to do with the dynamics between two individuals. The root cause often stems from one of the issues covered above, but a new dimension is added in close relationships with others. For more information on marriage see my book, "Marriage and Ministry."

1. PREMARITAL COUNSELING

Root: self-centeredness

Fruit of the Spirit that is needed (Galatians 5:22-23): submission, service

The second most important decision anyone has to make is whom to marry (the first is to accept Jesus as Savior). It's a very difficult decision for many, especially if God's will isn't being sought. Mistakes in this area have far-reaching consequences. Consider Samson's decision to marry an unbelieving Philistine (Judges 14), David to marry Michal (1 Samuel 18), and Dinah's wanting to marry Shechem (Genesis 34). Those who left the choice to God, like Ruth & Boaz (Ruth 3), Isaac and Rebekah (Genesis 24) and Joseph and Mary (Matthew 1; Luke 1) certainly were glad they did.

JOSEPH & MARY, are special because they both put God before their mate, and their mate before themselves. Mary was willing to give up Joseph to have God's Son, for she had no guarantee he would

believe the source of her pregnancy, or even if he did would still want to marry her (Luke 1:26-38). Joseph also obeyed God by deciding not to marry her when local gossip reached him informing Him of her pregnancy (Matthew 1:18-25). His choice was to suffer financial and social loss instead of allowing her to be publicly ridiculed for being pregnant before marriage. No wonder she could trust him and defer to him, obeying him when he said to move to Egypt in the middle of the night (Matthew 2:13-14). We must put God first to have a successful marriage.

Let's look at the elements that go into being and finding the right mate:

STAGES OF ADOLESCENCE Before adolescence starts, children go through a time when they really dislike the opposite sex and don't want anything to do with them. They all but ignore their existence, except to be disgusted with them. While their backs are turned to each other, God changes them from children into adults. All of a sudden, they start noticing each other, and are amazed and impressed with the change that has taken place!

At first adolescents need affirmation of their maleness/femaleness by acceptance by those of their same sex, but after a couple years this expands to include those of the opposite sex. Friendships with the opposite sex are very important for what an adolescent learns about themselves as well as how to relate to the opposite sex. This is important for them to discover what traits they like and don't like in the opposite sex, as well as how to communicate.

TEMPERAMENTS AND MARRIAGE (See section III. A. in this book, Understanding People.) Sanguines are natural charmers and can easily win others, but usually do it for selfish reasons (so they will be liked). They need to develop deep moral principles from when they are young and stay close to the Spirit for their own self-control is weak. They need a loving, responsive and affectionate mate who responds well.

Cholerics are so goal-oriented they will do all the right things to win a mate, but when they win their heart, they can stop trying to please them and focus on their work instead. They need to mature emotionally (instead of ignoring and stuffing their emotions) and have a mate who is secure, mature and can speak the truth in love.

Melancholies have high expectations of themselves and others. They are sensitive and sacrificial enough to win a mate, but then often become introverted and self-focused. They need God's help to have unconditional love. They need to marry a person not easily offended, who can encourage and reassure them.

Phlegmatics attract others because of their gentleness and acceptance. They don't get pushy, but often manipulate without noticing it. They need Jesus' help to put other's first, show love, and have victory over fear. They need a mate who will understand and accept their seeming lack of motivation without resentment and will bring out the best in them.

Introverts tend to marry extroverts. Seldom will two introverts or extroverts marry, and rarely will two of the same temperament marry. Opposites attract, for we see another's strength where our weaknesses are and admire that. We must be aware of the weakness', too. Usually mates will share one temperament (predominate in one, secondary in another) and that will be the 'glue' that gives them something in common, a place to start building.

BIRTH ORDER AND MARRIAGE (See section III. A. in this book, Understanding People.) Firstborns like to be in charge and seldom marry other first born or only children. Middle children make good mates for they know how to compromise and avoid difficulties, but usually don't marry each other because they tend to avoid difficulties. The babies of the family need a mate with patience who will reassure them.

BIBLICAL BOY-GIRL RELATIONSHIPS The world says "marry the one you love." The Bible says "love the one you marry" (Ephesians 5:25; Titus 2:4). The world says you are to go from one relationship to the next until you find the 'right' one. The Bible says you don't give your heart away until you do find the right one. God says you should save your body for the right person (physical virginity), but you should also save your heart for the right person (emotional virginity).

"Treat younger men as brothers and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity" (1 Timothy 5:12). While Paul wasn't talking about boy-girl relationships, the principle set down here certainly does apply. Boys and girls should treat each other like brothers and sisters in all their relationships and dealings until God has clearly shown them the person they are to marry.

God's Word clearly says a Christian is only to marry another Christian (2 Corinthians 6:14-16). Both must be believers who are living for Jesus and growing spiritually (1 Corinthians 2:3). They must be the person God has for you (1 Corinthians 7:39). Both must share an unconditional love for each other (1 Corinthians 13) and be committed to God's priority of putting each other and their family before everything but God Himself (Deuteronomy 24:5). This kind of marriage relationship has a strong friendship at the core. Each must be pursuing the same goals and objectives in life. Of course, there must be physical and emotional attraction as well.

Scriptures which emphasize the importance of only marrying another growing believer: Exodus 34:12, 16; Deuteronomy 7:3-4; Joshua 23:12-13; Ezra 9:1-2; Nehemiah 13:23-27; Proverbs 15:1; Amos 3:3; 2 Corinthians 3:2-3; 6:14-16; 7:12-16.

Scriptures to help with choosing a mate include: Exodus 34:16; Deuteronomy 7:3-4; Proverbs 12:4; 18:22; 19:14; 22:24-25; 31:10-11, 30; 1 Corinthians 5:11; 7:39; 15:33-34; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; James 4:4; Ezra 9:12.

2. MARRIAGE PROBLEMS

Root: sin nature, selfishness, fear, pride, anger

Fruit of the Spirit that is needed (Galatians 5:22-23): all of them

In order to know how to solve marriage problems it is important to understand how a godly marriage should work. A good auto mechanic must have a thorough knowledge of how an engine is to run before he can try fixing ones that need repair. Let's look at marriage from God's perspective, since He is the one who invented and created it. For more information on marriage see my book, "Marriage and Ministry."

GOD'S ORIGINAL BLUEPRINT FOR MARRIAGE

Growing a marriage is often like building a house. You don't just start building, you need a **BLUEPRINT** to follow. God's blueprint for the family is set forth right in the beginning of the Bible: Genesis 2:18-25.

Genesis 2:18 The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. This is the first time God says things AREN'T good, and it's because man is alone. Even though Adam walks and talks with God, he is missing a basic need - companionship. Man is not made to be alone. God didn't give him a pet, a TV or even another man – He gave him Eve.

I will make a helper suitable for him." A "helper suitable" is literally someone to "fill up the empty spaces." This same word is used of God who fills all our needs (1 Samuel 7:12; Psalm 22:11,19; 46:1). Woman is created to fill man's empty spaces. Men have strengths where women have weaknesses and women have strengths where men have weaknesses. As a whole, most men innately have objectivity and hard rationalization but often lack subjectivity and soft emotion. Women are just the

opposite and balance out men perfectly, as God had planned. Men and women are to be completing each other, not competing with each other. Therefore, in a marriage, each mate must do their part for the relationship to work.

Genesis 2:23 The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." Matthew Henry wrote that "Eve was not taken out of Adam's head to top him, neither out of his feet to be trampled on by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected by him, and near his heart to be loved by him."

God made the right woman for Adam and gave him to her – God gave the bride away! With a rib gone, Adam is no longer complete in himself. Man is not complete without woman. Someone once said that most marriages are made in heaven. They come in kits and you have to put them together yourself. That's very true. God wrote the blueprint, but man must do the assembly work. The next verses show how the parts fit together.

Genesis 2:24 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. This very important verse was probably added by Moses as a commentary when he wrote Genesis. God inspired him to write these words. Jesus (Matthew 19:5-6) and Paul (1 Corinthians 6:15-16) quote them to show their importance. This is the key verse in the Bible to making a marriage work.

"LEAVE" means to forsake or abandon. While we will always have a responsibility to our parents, we can no longer depend on them to meet our emotional, physical, financial or social needs. The relationship changes. We must transfer our needs to our mate. Failure to totally do this is one of the most common problems in marriage today.

"CLEAVE" refers to clinging, keeping close. It is used of skin clinging on bone. It means marriage is a 100% commitment: 'till death do us part', not 'till disagreement do us part'.

"ONE FLESH" refers to the oneness that comes from first leaving and then cleaving. The result will be a submersion of two partial selves into the creation of a whole new self. It refers to unity of heart, mind, soul and body. In cooking, flavors can be marinated (so each still retains some of its own identity) or married (blend into something new). In marriage we become one new person, incomplete without our mate.

"WILL BECOME" is progressive, meaning this is a process, not an instant act. It takes a lifetime to be complete. How many couples today really attain this?

Genesis 2:25 The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame. When a couple leaves, cleaves and becomes one, there is no shame between them. Intimacy (physically, spiritual, mental and emotionally) is the result. When a relationship is built on physical intimacy alone it will fall, but when sex is the expression of emotional, intellectual and spiritual intimacy it's one of God's greatest gifts to mankind.

THE HUSBAND IS TO BE A LOVING LEADER

THE NEED FOR LOVE Everyone needs to feel loved. That is a primary human need. When we feel loved we can attempt and accomplish almost anything. When we don't feel loved, we feel empty and want to quit. Some people will do virtually anything for love. Many substitutes abound, but they are just that – substitutes. They don't really meet the need.

Women especially need love from their husbands. Trusting and responding to a man makes them feel vulnerable, so they need the security of knowing they are totally and completely loved. The way a woman gives herself totally in love for her husband leaves her open for hurt. Knowing and feeling

his love makes her feel safe in loving him. Thus it is of the utmost importance for a man to make sure his wife knows he loves her.

LOVE DEFINED I Corinthians 13 is the main chapter in the Bible about love. Love is patient, kind, not envious, not boastful, not proud, not rude or self-seeking. It is not easily angered and keeps no record of wrongs. What a standard to reach for! Read I Corinthians 13 but instead of the word 'love' insert your name. How does it sound? Where do you need work?

There are 3 Greek words for love. *EROS* refers to sexual 'love' (lust). Our word 'erotic' comes from it. *PHILEO* is the Greek word which has more the idea of friendship. Philadelphia, 'the city of brotherly love,' is based on this word. It refers to a warm emotional response to that which is attractive to us. It is love dependent on the recipient, conditional love, "I love you because...", or "I love you if...." *AGAPE* is the word used to describe God's love for us. It is an unconditional love. It is love in spite of, love despite, love no matter what. Agape doesn't exist in order to get what it wants but empties itself to give what the other needs. Unconditional agape love sacrifices and puts the other first. It means loving others the way Jesus loves us.

Agape love is a picture of God's love for us. This love is reflected in the husband who lovingly and faithfully cares for his wife after she has become unable to do anything for herself and can meet none of his needs – just because he loves her. We all need to be loved this way. Women especially need this kind of love from their husbands. It's their greatest need. It is a **MUST** for a woman.

Ephesians 5:25-33 commands men to love their wives. Wives aren't commanded to love their husbands, but men are commanded to love their wives. It's natural for a wife to love her husband, but she needs God's help to trust Him. Likewise, men need God's help to unconditionally love their wives.

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her (v. 25)." Our standard of comparison for how we treat our wife is how Jesus treats us. It makes no difference if we are better to our wife than our neighbor is to his. The bar is much higher than that!

When a daughter heard about how Jesus loves her, her first comment was "That's just how Dad loves and treats Mom!" Wouldn't it be great if every child could say that about their father? Could your child say that about you?

As we said, women need to know they are unconditionally loved, so that is what a man is responsible to do. This is the key to the whole family functioning as God made it to function. "The most important thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother" (Theodore Hesburgh).

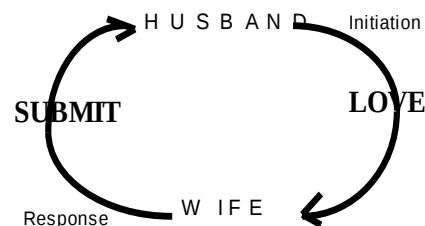
	MAN	WOMAN
NEED		SECURITY, LOVE
DUTY	SACRIFICIAL LOVE	

What does it mean to 'love your wife'? It means to love her as Jesus loves you. His love is unselfish – think of all He gave up to come to earth and die for you. Husbands are to be that unselfish. His love is also a humble love. It is not selfish or self-centered. His love is sacrificial. Our love must be as well. Do you love your wife enough to die for her? Do you love her enough to live for her each day? Will you sacrifice your time, emotional energy and resources to meet her needs before your own?

SERVING Men expect their wives to serve them, but that's not what the Bible says. A man is to do the serving, not be served! That's part of loving our wives as Jesus loves us. "Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave--just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many (Matthew 20:26-28)." Or to use John Kennedy's words: "Ask not what your wife can do for you, ask what you can do for your wife."

Serving others doesn't come naturally or easily. We have a sin nature that makes us self-centered. In addition, our wives have a sin nature, too. Perhaps we could serve a perfect wife, but to serve a wife who is far from perfect? Well, one would have to be like Jesus to do that! And that's the whole point! Loving your wife as a saint isn't really loving her with agape love. But loving her as a sinner is when we become like Jesus in our love. That is the first responsibility of a man – to unconditionally love his wife and make sure he communicates that to her. Women are responders and will react to how they are treated.

The following diagram shows that it is up to the man to initiate in love and then the wife to respond with submission. The wife is a mirror which reflects what the husband had built into her: love and security or lack of it. The loving must come first. Jesus loved us first, and now we respond to Him in submission.



“AS HE LOVES HIMSELF” Ephesians 5 not only tells a man to love his wife as Christ loves Him, it also says he is to love his wife as he loves himself. “In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church” (verses 28-29).

The right kind of self-love is a realistic love. “I know I’m not perfect, but neither am I worthless. I don’t like everything about myself, but I still take care of myself. Just because some parts of me aren’t the way I’d like doesn’t mean I have to destroy the rest. I can rationally and objectively list my strengths and weaknesses. I don’t expect perfection. I don’t excuse my weaknesses but continually focusing on them is no good, either. This is the way I must be with my wife, too. I know she isn’t perfect, but I love her anyway – as I do with myself (and as she does with me).” It’s the Golden Rule in operation!

The husband’s love has been compared to a warm coat which he wraps around his wife. As long as she feels encircled and sheltered in his love, she can give herself completely to him. In this safely she can accept herself as a woman and value her femininity. Then she will be able to entrust herself to her husband in the sexual relationship as the bird gives itself to the air or the fish to water.

Richard Halverson, Chaplain of U S Senate, said: “It is my deep, settled conviction that 100% of the responsibility for the sustenance of the marriage relationship belongs to the husband. The scriptures tell us that as husbands we need to model ourselves after Jesus Christ, who gave Himself up in every way in order to present His bride to Himself without blemish or stain or spot or wrinkle.”

HOW TO LOVE How can you have more love for your wife? Take your eyes off your needs and look at hers. Focus on her strengths and your weaknesses instead of vice versa. Ask God to increase your love for her and look for ways in which He does that. Remember that love is a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22). That means we can’t pretend to have agape love. We have to allow God to produce it in and through us. That also means we must keep doing the things we used to do when we were trying to win her love. Put her and her needs first.

HOW TO LEAD The Bible clearly says that men are to be the leaders in the home today (Genesis 3:16; 1 Corinthians 11:3-5; Ephesians 5:23; 1 Corinthians 11:3-10; 1 Timothy 2:11-15; 3:4-5). They are to manage their homes and families. The word ‘manages’ in 1 Timothy 3:4 summarizes a husband’s role. The picture is of one who does not do everything himself but guides and directs to oversee that it all get done. A pastor is to manage, as is a school principal or a president of a company. They have the total picture in mind, but depend on others to keep them informed and carry out much of the work. The company does not exist to serve the manager, he serves his interests by best serving the company. This is quite a responsibility, but is doable. God was pleased with Abraham for he carried out this responsibility (Genesis 18:19). That is the responsibility of every husband today, too.

PROVISION Many men see their role as only supplying provision for physical needs. Those are the easiest to provide, and only a small part of what a man must do. “Provision” is “pro” (before, ahead of time) and “vision” (seeing, sight). Thus the word ‘provision’ really refers to looking ahead, giving direction, anticipating needs and defining the destination. Men must provide spiritual, emotional and intellectual leadership to their families.

HOW TO DO THIS? This explains the ‘what’ of providing loving leadership, but what about the ‘how’? *“Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.”* 1 Peter 3:7. Let’s look at this phrase by phrase to understand how a man is to do this.

“Live with your wives.” ‘Live’ means ‘to dwell closely.’ Men must wrap their lives around their wife and family. Their primary satisfaction must come from family, not career. When a Jew married, he was to stay at home for the first year (Deuteronomy 24:5) to make sure his marriage relationship had a good foundation. That takes time and effort.

“Be considerate.” Accept your wife and family as they are. Don’t try to change her. Look at things from her point of view (Proverbs 18:22; Colossians 3:19).

“As the weaker partner.” Women are not weaker than men morally, intellectually or spiritually. In some ways they are weaker physically. In other ways they are stronger (like giving birth). Overall men are physically stronger, and that is why they should never bully or abuse a woman with words or actions. That is why, too, men should always help women with hard physical work. ‘Weaker,’ however, doesn’t so much refer to strength as to type of being. Woman has been called the ‘tender gender,’ because they are more delicate than men. They are more finely strung, like a delicate violin compared to a barn dance fiddle. Men are like stoneware; women are like fine China. Men are like buffaloes, women like butterflies.

“Treat them with respect.” Respect your wife, not for the work she does but for the person she is. Is she a precious treasure to you? Does she know she means everything to you? Do you treat her better or worse now than when you first met her? Does she know beyond a shadow of doubt that she is the most important thing in your life, or does she feel she has to compete with work or church or hobby? Does she know you’ll be there for her no matter what? Does she know you will seek to understand her feelings and take them seriously?

“Treat them ... as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life.” Remember, spiritually she is your equal, and together you will spend eternity in God’s presence. She is just as special and important to God as you are. Jesus died for her sins on the cross the same as yours. All either of you have comes from God’s grace. It’s not like men are on a higher level of some sort. You are equal in God’s sight, and she has a tremendous, wonderful future with God for eternity, the same as you do. She is God’s daughter whom He loves with all His heart. Treat her as such.

“So that nothing will hinder your prayers.” If you don’t *“be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life (1 Peter 3:7)”* your spiritual life will suffer. Your relationship to God will fade. Ever notice how, when you aren’t getting along with your wife as you should, you don’t feel close to God or like praying? Your patience is low and things just don’t seem to go right. The solution is to get right with your wife, THEN get right with God. I wonder if this may not be one of the reasons that too many men are spiritually stagnant too often – they aren’t the loving leader God wants them to be. Make sure this isn’t your downfall!

HOW TO BE A LOVING LEADER How, then, is a man to do this humanly impossible task of loving his wife and putting her before himself? God always equips us to do what He commands us to do. So how can we have that same sacrificial attitude to our wives and families?

A close personal relationship with God. No one can continually and genuinely put others first unless they have God's supernatural power within to do so. Thus salvation is the first necessity. Then it is essential to be living in God's strength each day. Private and family devotions, Bible study, Scripture memorization, a growing personal intimacy, close involvement with a Body of believers and continual confession of sins is necessary.

A commitment to show sacrificial love. To sacrifice for another means we must first sacrifice our own desires and selfishness. As Romans 12:1-2 explains, it is first a mental decision to make and commit to, then it becomes a day-by-day, even moment-by-moment recommitment to stay with it. As long as physical withdrawal (divorce) or even just emotional withdrawal is an option to you, you won't make a 100% commitment to serve your mate. It has to be something you commit to do. A hospital visitor saw a nurse tending the sores of a leprosy patient and said, "I'd never do that for a million dollars!" The nurse answered, "Neither would I. But I do it for Jesus for nothing." If you can't do it for your mate, or for yourself, you can certainly do it for Jesus!

Filled with the fruit of the Spirit. No matter how committed you may be, that alone isn't enough. It's not our commitment that does it, but it's our commitment that allows God's Holy Spirit to work through us to do this (Galatians 5:22-24). If we just pretend love, force ourselves to act like we are patient, or withhold negative comments, we can only do that for so long. We as men simply can't do this on our own. To be like Jesus and do what Jesus would do, we need His strength. We need Jesus in us by the Holy Spirit in order to really think and act like Jesus. He will produce His fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gal 5:22-23) though us when we allow Him to do so.

Follow Jesus' example "Whoever wants to become great must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave –JUST AS the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many." (Matthew 20:26-28) He is our example, the One we are to be like. "A student is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master." (Matthew 10:24-25). He told us He was setting the example for us when He washed the disciples' feet and told them to do likewise (John 13:1-17). Men, to be like Jesus means you must 'wash your wife's feet' regularly. It's different for each one of us, and it doesn't appeal to the flesh, but how we act like Jesus. Think of yourself as washing Jesus' feet by doing that act of kindness for your wife. He'll bless you for it, and so will your wife.

So, men, how are you doing as a servant leader? Where does God want you to improve? What can you do to start?

THE WIFE IS TO BE A SUBMISSIVE SERVANT

EMPTY SPACE FILLER Women are created to fill up their husband's empty spaces (Genesis 2:18, 20). Learn what those needs are and how you can meet them. He needs you. And you need Him. Let him know you need Him. "I need you" goes to the depth of a man's soul. He will do anything for a woman who needs him. Just as God built into a woman the need to be loved, so He built into a man the need to be the provider and leader of his family. She needs to know she is loved; he needs to know he is needed.

MEN NEED TO BE NEEDED Often when men are unemployed or retire, they feel a loss of self-worth. Many men turn to their job to find fulfillment and worth. That's why they often throw themselves too far into their work. If a man doesn't feel needed at home, he'll find someone or someplace where he is needed. Feeling needed is as critical to men as love is to

	MAN	WOMAN
NEED	PROVIDE, GUIDE	Security, Love
DUTY	Sacrificial Love	SUBMIT, RESPECT

women. Women, make sure your husband knows he is needed. If you don't, some other woman will, either on purpose or accidentally. You'll leave him open and vulnerable if you don't meet his need to be needed, just like he leaves you vulnerable when he doesn't meet your need for love.

UNCONDITIONAL LOVE This means that you need to love him like you want him to love you – unconditionally. Don't ever withhold love or affection (1 Corinthians 7:4-5 prohibits that). Like your husband, you, too, need to have a servant attitude. Go by the Golden Rule – treat him the way you want him to treat you, even if he isn't doing as well as you think he can. Watch what you expect of him – just love him and let him know you need him.

MEN	WOMEN
Mind	Emotions
Rational comes first	Feeling comes first
Production-oriented	Relationship-oriented
shop to get what needed quickly & efficiently	shop to enjoy the experience, browse
long-range sight, distance planning, overall	near-sighted, present details, today's problems

BUTTERFLIES AND BUFFALOES

Understanding the differences between men and women can help women have more realistic expectations of men. It's been said that women are like butterflies and men are like buffaloes. A butterfly has keen sensitivity to even the slightest breeze. It notices beauty even in the tiniest of flowers. It is constantly aware of

all the changes going on around it and able to react to the slightest variations in its environment. Tape a tiny pebble to its wing and it would be severely injured and die. Men aren't like that, though – they are like buffaloes. They are rough, callused and don't react to breeze. They aren't even affected by a very strong wind; they just go on doing what they were doing. They are insensitive to slight changes in atmosphere. Tape a pebble to its back and it won't even feel it. But this doesn't make him inferior to the butterfly, it just makes him different. They are each made the way they need to be for their role and purpose. The buffalo's toughness is necessary for him to survive. His strength can do many good things. Men need their toughness to be the ones who lead and protect their families. Women can't expect their men to be both butterfly and buffalo, instantly changing from one role to the next at their slightest whim or fantasy.

Men and women are different. Don't expect your husband to be like you. Remember the things you loved in him when you met and married him? They haven't changed, they are still there. But your expectations may have changed.

Instead of focusing on his failures, look at his strengths. Be his main cheerleader. Encourage him. Complementing him is like throwing a drowning man a life preserver. Be his support and help, not the one who makes things harder on him. Pointing out his weaknesses won't help him improve. Does it help you to have your faults pointed out by him, or do you respond better when he encourages and complements you on what you do well. There's the Golden Rule again. That is especially true if his love language is verbal affirmation.

MIRRORS A man has two important mirrors in his life to show him how he's doing: his wife and his work. Both reflect messages about his manhood, worth and meaning. What he receives from these two spells the difference between satisfaction and frustration. Of the two, the wife is the most important. If what he sees in that mirror isn't good, though, he'll turn more and more to work to find meaning and satisfaction. Make sure you complement, thank and encourage your husband. He needs it, and he needs it to come from his wife!

A wife is to not have unrealistic expectations of her husband, neither is a husband of his wife. What does God expect of wives? He makes that clear in His Word.

1 PETER 3:1-6 "Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as

braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands, like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear."

The focus is on a woman's internal beauty, not external. Outer beauty is fine, but inner beauty is much, much more important. Think of the women in the Bible. We don't know how they looked for no accounts of their appearances were given. However we do know a lot about the kind of women they were. The person a woman is inside is more important than how she looks. Spend more time on your inner being than you do on your outer being. Your husband wants you looking good, but he needs the real you inside even more.

WATCH WHAT YOU SAY A wife should be building up and encouraging her husband. Let him know you need him. That's the 'gentle and quiet spirit' Peter talks about (1 Peter 3:4). "A woman who tries to be outwardly attractive but says the wrong things at the wrong times is like putting gold jewelry on a pig's snout" (Proverbs 11:22). "A continual dropping on a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike" (Proverbs 27:15). "In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything" (1 Timothy 3:11).

GOD'S REQUIREMENTS OF WOMEN "Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God" (Titus 2:3-5). "Besides, they get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying things they ought not to. So I counsel younger widows to marry, to have children, to manage their homes and to give the enemy no opportunity for slander" (1 Timothy 5:13-15). "No widow may be put on the list of widows unless she is over sixty, has been faithful to her husband, and is well known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the saints, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds" (1 Timothy 5:9-10).

THE EXAMPLE OF SARAH Back to 1 Peter 3. Peter closes this passage with the example of Sarah and Abraham. "Like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear" (v. 6). Now Sarah isn't the first one we'd pick for an example. Abraham said she was his sister instead of his wife to protect himself. When Pharaoh took her to be part of his harem, Abraham was well paid instead of being killed. That event changed Sarah, though, for from then on, we see her taking care of herself BECAUSE Abraham was protecting himself and not her. Can you blame her? She obviously didn't feel unconditionally loved and she responded as would be expected. It was Abraham's fault. How could a woman overlook those faults and go on to love and encourage such a husband? Without God's help it couldn't be done! But that's just the point! She was able to do just that, with a husband that didn't deserve it, because she had God's help. It took her until she was 90 and Abraham was 99, but she did it! When she did God changed her name from Sarai ("contentious") to Sarah ("princess"). Then Isaac ("laughter") came into their home.

A woman has the power to form and mold her husband by how she treats him. She can't change him by nagging or pointing out his failures. She can change him by being there to unconditionally love him and meet his needs.

HOW TO BE A SUBMISSIVE SERVANT **A close personal relationship with God** is the first resource. Salvation and a commitment to live for Him each day is essential. Wives must first and foremost depend on their heavenly Husband and develop their relationship with Him. Without His help there is no way they will be able to show a submissive spirit.

Commitment to show submission is the next step. Make a decision to be his servant no matter what. Remember that servanthood isn't always rewarded. Don't assume he will notice or appreciate your actions. Don't assume he will instantly change and treat you differently. If you start being a servant because of what you will get out of it you are going about it all wrong. That motive won't work at all. Your rewards will be in heaven. Anything on this earth is just extra, if it happens. Take a moment now to make sure your motives are pure, meaning you are doing it out of love and service to God and not for anything you may expect to receive back because of it. Jesus is our example in this as well.

Filled with fruit of the Spirit *Galatians 5:22-24 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.* As I already said, no human being can produce the kind of love that brings sacrifice for another out of their own flesh. It is only as God's Spirit fills us that we can love as He loves. It's impossible to do without His help. Make sure you ask to be filled with the fruit of His Spirit every morning (Galatians 5:22-24). List them, emphasizing the ones you especially lack. Only as a woman yields to Jesus can she learn to submit and trust in the loving leadership of her husband. Only the power of Christ can enable a woman to become submissive in the Lord.

Follow Jesus' example is the final key to being a submissive servant. In each situation ask yourself what Jesus would do (WWJD) – and then do just that very thing!

Pray for your husband instead of criticizing. That's what Jesus does. This is all new and different to him, too. He probably didn't have the role model he needed to teach him how to be a godly husband. Also pray for yourself. As Jesus says, you must take the plank out of your own eye before you can remove the speck from his (Matthew 7:5).

Following Jesus' example means going to God with your unmet needs as Jesus did. Don't go to any other false substitute (friends, romance stories, children, career, etc.). Talk to your husband about your unmet needs. Do it in a way to educate him in love, not that he feels criticized or a failure. You harm yourself and your marriage when you do that.

UNDERSTANDING MARRIAGE PROBLEMS

Apply the principles and Bible truths explained above to the marriage problems you face when you counsel. Remember, most marriages go through a time of struggle. All face difficulties. None are perfect. Since opposites attract, and since we all come to marriage self-centered and with a sin nature, conflict in families shouldn't surprise us. God uses our mates to bring out our sinfulness and polish our rough edges. God's main purpose for marriage is to make us holy, not happy. Marriage is one of the main tools God uses to remove our self-centeredness and help us become more like Jesus. What makes conflict in families so painful is that it is one place where we really desire and need peace. Is that too much to expect? What can we rightfully expect from our family? What does God expect? Let's look at these things.

THE MYTH OF THE PERFECT FAMILY Perfect mates come only in shoes and gloves. Unlike the children's' stories, we don't "live happily ever after." Someone said that all marriages are happy, it's the living together afterwards that is tough! Adam and Eve had problems with Cain (Genesis 4). Abraham and Sarah certainly had their times (Genesis 16, 21), as did Isaac and Rebecca (Genesis 27) and Jacob and Rachel (Genesis 30, 31). Moses's marriage to Zipporah failed (Exodus 4) and so did David and Michal's (2 Samuel 6). Hosea and Gomer ended up back together, but only after much pain and hurt (Hosea 1). William Bradford's wife committed suicide on the Pilgrim's trip to this country. John Wesley had a very difficult time in his relationships with women. William Carey, the father of modern missions, had a disastrous first marriage and home life. The list could go on. Marriages can struggle, but homes don't have to always be in turmoil. God doesn't always prevent the difficulties, but He will help us grow through them and overcome them.

CONFLICT ISN'T ALWAYS BAD There's an old saying that a man has no business marrying a woman who can't make him miserable because it means she can't make him happy. A husband and wife have the capacity to make each other either more happy or more miserable than anyone else. Marriage can double your trouble and divide your joy or double your joy and divide your trouble. Moving parts always cause friction. The key is to keep the friction down with the oil of love.

CAUSES OF CONFLICT IN HOMES Putting two sinful, self-centered people together where sharing and putting someone else first is required can bring out the worst in a person. It is inevitable. But there are other reasons why homes aren't always peaceful.

1. Unrealistic expectations Let's face it; we aren't honest with our mates before marriage. We put our best foot forward, are attentive to their needs and do all we can to win and impress them. That is dishonest, for our mates assume we will be that way after marriage, too. We fall in love with a person's strengths, but then we end up living with their weakness'. If love is blind, marriage can be a real eye-opener!

2. Stages marriages go through All marriage go through these stages.

STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3
LOVERS: fall in love & marry	ANTAGONISTS: children & money problems	ALLIES: acceptance, maturity
ROMANTIC	RESENTFUL	HARMONIOUS
commitment UNTESTED	commitment UNCERTAIN - good times & bad	commitment UNDOUBTED
conflict AVOIDED	conflict CONSTANT open or below surface	conflict RESOLVED; trust grows
mate IDEALIZED - focus strength	mate DISAPPROVED (focus on weakness)	mate ACCEPTED

The solution is to make it from stage 2 to 3. Going from stage 1 to 2 will happen (it's downhill) but from 2 to 3 (uphill) often doesn't happen. Then the relationship ends in separation (physical, which is divorce, or emotional, which is living and working together but without real intimacy). The transition from stage 2 to 3 takes work. It means working through conflict.

3. Failure to leave and cleave In order for a marriage to be successful, each mate must totally abandon any emotional dependence they may have on their own parents ("leave" Genesis 2:24) and instead depend 100% on their mate for all their needs ("cleave" Genesis 2:24). It's hard enough for two people to bond and work together, but when one of their parents try to interfere, the husband wife relationship will suffer. We must put our mate before our parents in all things.

4. Failure to understand male-female differences Failure to understand this major difference will doom a relationship, for our expectations of the opposite sex will be unrealistic, we won't understand and meet their needs, and communication will break down.

MEN	WOMEN
Mind	Emotions
Rational comes first	Feeling comes first
Production-oriented	Relationship-oriented
shop to get what needed quickly & efficiently	shop to enjoy the experience, browse
long-range sight, distance planning, overall	near-sighted, today's problems ('nutrition')

5. Failure to Communicate Most family problems stem from the inability to communicate. Ephesians 4:25 - 5:2 explains some good principles to assure good communication:

a. Be honest and truthful (25) Don't fight to win or you will try to hurt and destroy. Be honest with yourself about your own feelings and motives. Plan ahead what you will say if you think conflict will result. Write it out and give the note to your mate, there's less pressure to respond quickly (and in

anger/hurt). Ask yourself what you want to accomplish by what you say. If you want to be right or hurt them for hurt they caused you, then don't do it.

b. Be self-controlled (26a) Handle your hurt as pain. Don't turn it into anger and try to hurt someone back. Learn to listen. It does take two to fight.

c. Keep it short (26b-27) Never go to bed with unresolved conflict, don't let it settle in!

d. Watch the timing (26-27) Don't get into arguments when tired, hungry, busy, tense

e. Take positive action (28) Don't fight each other, find the common problem & fight it.

f. Build up, don't tear down (29) Edify, build up, encourage - that takes humility

g. Keep close to God (30) Pray before talking and while talking (together & in own heart)

h. Develop constructive behavior (31) It takes time to break bad habits, but break them!

i. Be forgiving (32) Say "I'm sorry, forgive me," forgive others even when they are wrong. The better and quicker you forgive each other the better your marriage will be. A good marriage requires a lot of forgiveness, no matter who is at fault. Both must forgive quickly and completely, over and over. We are to forgive each other the way Jesus forgives us.

j. Live by love (5:1-2) Jesus is our example, ask yourself what Jesus would say/do

PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CORRECTION (Eph 5:15-21) Always lean on God's wisdom (15). Use your time correctly (16) which means saying NO to things. Be understanding and sensitive (17). Submit to God and your mate (18-21).

ANY HOME CAN BE RESTORED By building in God's strength on Biblical principles, any marriage and home can be restored (Proverbs 24:3-4). It takes work and commitment. It means surrendering one's own pride and pain for the good of the relationship. It means putting God first, your mate second and yourself last. That doesn't come naturally, but it can come. It must come.

Scriptures that talk about marriage include: 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; Genesis 1:27; 2:18, 24; Proverbs 5:18-23; 18:22; 19:13-14; 25:11; 27:15-16; Matthew 7:24-25; 19:4-6; Mark 10:6-9; 1 Corinthians 7:2-6, 9; Hebrews 13:4; Ephesians 5:21-28, 33; Colossians 3:18-19; 1 Peter 3:1-7; Luke 16:18; 1 Timothy 3:2; Song of Solomon 7:1-11; Proverbs 31:10-11, 30; Nehemiah 13:1-3, 23-26; Psalm 106:35-36; 127:1; Malachi 2:11

COMMUNICATING LOVE (LOVE LANGUAGES)

EVERYONE NEEDS TO BE LOVED Love is a basic human need. When we feel unconditionally loved and accepted, we feel we can accomplish anything. When we don't have love, we feel empty and lost. If we don't have the real thing we latch onto a substitute (which doesn't really meet the need). We try to impress others with our appearance, build, brains, personality, skill, accomplishments or possessions. We use work, money, sex, things or food as a substitute for real love. None of these satisfy our need for total love and acceptance.

COMMUNICATING LOVE There are different languages one can use to convey information between people. The same is true of conveying love. Unless people speak the same language, the information being sent won't be received. Many times a person's love tank isn't full because they aren't picking up on the love being communicated by another person. Dr. Gary Chapman has written a book called "The Five Love Languages" that is very helpful in understanding the ways people show and receive love. There are five main ways of communicating love:

1. Words which speak love - telling the person you love them
2. Worthwhile time spent together - showing love by spending good time together

3. Receiving a gift - giving something to convey love
4. Sacrificial Acts of Service - sacrificially doing something for the other person
5. Physical Touch - touching conveys love

1. WORDS WHICH SPEAK LOVE Mark Twain said, "I can live for two months on a good compliment." This was his love language. Words are powerful (Proverbs 18:21; 12:25), but some people need to hear good things said more than others. If this is how love is communicated to you, you pick up on good things said to you and thrive on them. Little criticisms and negative comments hurt deeply.

For some reason, after marriage people often have trouble telling their mate how much they love them. Why is it sometimes so hard to say words which speak love? Often it is our pride that makes us unable to say things we once would have said. We don't want to humble ourselves; we are afraid of opening up and being hurt. It could be we haven't forgiven them for something they said or did that hurt us. Maybe we are embarrassed by intimacy and see it as a weakness. If we have an unforgiving attitude to our mate, we will withhold complements and positive comments. Then, too, if this isn't the way we like having love communicated to us we won't realize how important it may be for another person.

2. WORTHWHILE TIME SPENT TOGETHER For some people, 'talk is cheap' and they need to be shown love by quality and quantity time together. Having another's undivided attention is what speaks love to them. This doesn't mean watching TV together, but focusing on each other or just sitting quietly together doing nothing. It means sharing on a deeper level than just talking about what to have for supper or about the children. There is a price to pay to have this kind of time: put the children to bed early and don't answer the phone, or better yet get a baby sitter and go someplace where you can spend good time together (not a movie or bowling).

Let me give some suggestions to make sure you 'connect.' Give the other person eye contact and keep your mind from wandering. Don't be doing anything else with your hands, eyes or mind but listening 100%. Listen behind and between the words: what feelings are they conveying? Observe body language, learn to 'read' your mate (more true, honest communication takes place this way than with words). By the way, watch your body language. Things like looking at your watch convey volumes. Never interrupt. That is like saying that what you have to say is more important than what they have to say. Don't contradict, argue, deny, defend yourself, etc. Just listen and then talk when it is your turn. Ask leading questions such as: "How did that make you feel?" Give them plenty of time to connect. Remember to follow up later, asking them how something developed or turned out.

3. RECEIVING A GIFT "For God so loved the world that He GAVE..." Some people convey love by giving gifts, others have their love tank filled when given something. This is their love language. It doesn't have to be something expensive or large -- it truly is the thought that counts. Married couples often do this before marriage and then stop. It doesn't affect most couples, unless one receives love through having gifts given to them.

4. SACRIFICIAL ACTS OF SERVICE Another way love is communicated is by having someone do an act of service for them: rake leaves, do dishes, cook supper, change diapers, shop, clean bathroom, take trash out, paint a room, take care of the car, etc. Jesus washed the disciples' feet. All Christians are called to "serve one another in love" (Galatians 5:13-14), but some people really need to have this done for them in order to hear love being spoken and their love tank filled.

What makes this hard to do? Again, our pride stands in the way. Down inside we feel others should be serving us instead of us serving them. We are self-centered. We don't want to do something nice for someone who in any way has hurt or not served us. Sometimes we feel inferior if we serve someone else. That's our pride. Still, this is very important to do.

5. PHYSICAL TOUCH The last but not least way of communicating love is by physical touch. Some people hate being touched while others really, really need it. For these people sex means much more (in a different way) than it does to others. Jesus touched children who came to him. Today this is a hard love language to communicate. Touching those of the same sex or strangers is really discouraged and often misinterpreted. Someone who needs touch to feel love but has been physical abused may be afraid of the very thing they most need. We must be sensitive to the needs and feelings of others in this aspect, but always remember that, for some people, touch is their life-line to feeling love.

HOW TO DISCOVER YOUR LOVE LANGUAGE Each person has one of these five as the primary way they perceived being loved. We also have secondary way(s) of receiving love. Knowing this can show why some things mean more to you than others and why you respond better to some people than others. It can help you tell your mate how to better communicate love to you. How can you know what is your language?

What makes you feel most loved by your mate? What do you desire above all else from them? What most quickly and sufficiently fills your love tank? What are the best memories you have of being loved as a child or in marriage? What comes most naturally to you to do to show love to others?

What does your spouse do or say or fail to do or say that hurts you most deeply? How do they hurt you most deeply? What would you quickest to change about them if you could change anything?

How do you most naturally show your love to your mate? The way you naturally show love is usually the way you want to be shown love.

<u>YOUR LOVE LANGUAGE</u>	<u>MATE'S LOVE LANGUAGE:</u>
_____ Words of Affirmation	_____ Words of Affirmation
_____ Quality Time	_____ Quality Time
_____ Receiving Gifts	_____ Receiving Gifts
_____ Acts of Service	_____ Acts of Service
_____ Physical Touch	_____ Physical Touch

What implications and benefits does this have for your relationship? What can your mate do to better fill your love tank? What can you do to better fill theirs?

REPAIRING DAMAGED LOVE What about the couple who has said and done things that have deeply hurt each other? We can't go back and undo the past, but we can change the future. The "in love" feeling is totally gone, and it won't be back. Can love return? Yes, it can. Love is a free will choice, not a gushy emotion that sweeps us off our feet. God choose to love us despite all we did to hurt Him. His love for us is a free will choice, not a gushy emotion He gets when He thinks of us! Loving someone has nothing to do with liking them -- that would be conditional love. Love "if," "when," or "because" isn't real, unconditional, agape love. You don't have to like someone to love them. Sometimes you won't like what they do or say, but you can still unconditionally love them. Love doesn't always come easily or naturally. Showing love often takes effort. Jesus on the cross is the ultimate example of that. That's why He can tell us to love our enemies (Lk 6:27-32). Real unconditional love is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) and not something we can make happen on our own. We can choose to allow God to produce that fruit in us. Only by asking for God's help and love can we have real love for others.

Learning to love is like learning a foreign language -- it takes time and practice. Unfortunately, we don't always work at love. Instead of making an effort to show love to our mate, sometimes we act worse to them than to anyone else. We are short, rude, critical and often withhold love. We treat strangers nicer, in fact we often treat others else nicer than our mate. 1 Corinthians 13:1-8 describes

true love. Read it. Think of each word used to describe love: patient, kind, not jealous or envious, not proud, rude or self-seeking, not easily angered or keeping account of wrongs, etc. These descriptions of love are not emotional feelings but rather mental attitudes and actions which we are to control. It takes a free will choice to be nice to another instead ignoring them or being unkind. We need to make that choice with our mates.

SPEAKING YOUR CHILD'S LANGUAGE OF LOVE Children, too, have their own individual language of love. Knowing what it is helps to be able to accurately convey love to them. It helps to avoid discipline that will wound them without your being aware. Harsh words to a child whose love language is words can be extra damaging. So can violently spanking to a child who needs physical touch. Isolating a child who craves quality time can really hurt them, too. This doesn't mean we aren't to discipline, but we are to be aware of how it affects them. Temperament, birth order and other factors enter into this, too. Looking at one's childhood in light of this can be very revealing. (See Temperaments, Birth Order under III A above.)

A good way to discover your child's love language is to sit on the floor and see what they do. Do they crawl on you or sit on your lap (touch), get a book to read (quality time), ask you to play with them (sacrificial act), sit and talk (words of affirmation) or give you a gift (giving gifts)?

GOD'S LOVE LANGUAGE Now that you understand the love languages, think about them in connection with God. Which does God use to show love to man? Which are we to use to show love to God? The answer, of course, is all of them. Usually it is done directly between God and man, but sometimes (especially with touch) God meets our needs through another, and we show Him love by showing it to others. He affirms us (Bible), is always available (time), gave the best gift ever (salvation), is always ready to help us (acts of service), and touches us spiritually and emotionally (physically, too, through others). What a great, wonderful, loving God we have to create such great ways to show love!

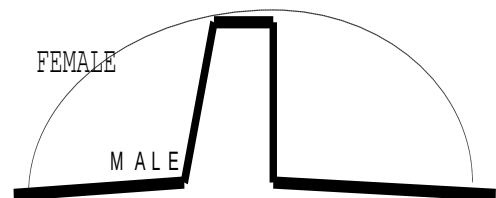
3. SEX PROBLEMS IN MARRIAGE

Root: fear, pride, self-centeredness

Fruit of the Spirit that is needed (Galatians 5:22-23): love, patience, self-control

God created sex for married men and women before sin entered. Sex in marriage is holy and pure (Hebrews 13:4). It is God's wedding gift to a husband and wife. Its purpose is twofold: to create babies so the human race continues (Genesis 1:27-28; 9:1; Psalm 127:3) but also as a pleasurable way for a husband and wife to be fully one and show their love for each other (Genesis 2:23-25; 18:12; 26:8-9; Deuteronomy 24:5; Proverbs 5:15-19; Song of Solomon 7:6-10; Hebrews 13:4). But because we are sinful, fallen people, we often have sexual problems in marriage.

There is a common saying that pretty well summarizes the sexual differences between men and women. It is that **women give sex to get love, men give love to get sex**. Sex for a woman starts first thing in the morning as closeness is cultivated by small talk, touches, time and attention. Men turn on and turn off quickly, but for a woman each is a slow, gradual process that men must be aware. Here's a place where you must certainly put her needs before his! Romance and attention are still very important, like when you were dating her. That's why small talk is so important for her in the evening, it is her way of making emotional contact with you. If you don't take that first step anything past it will be much harder.



A healthy, satisfying sex life is built on a healthy, satisfying marriage relationship. The above articles talk about how to have a good marriage. This must come before full sexual satisfaction can come. The purpose of physical intimacy is to celebrate emotional intimacy.

In sex, each mate is to focus on the pleasure of the other, not themselves (1 Corinthians 7:4). It is a picture of our marriage relationship in that way, serving the other instead of ourself. That's why sex problems can't be dealt with alone, they must be seen in the context of the whole marriage relationship.

Wrong sexual stereotypes start young and are reinforced as boys grow to men. Our culture portrays sex in a very unbiblical light. Sometimes Christianity contributes to this wrong stereotype by its silence on the whole matter, making talking about sex taboo. Thus misinformation and ignorance about the role and function of sex grows. This sets fertile ground for pornography, lustful fantasies and wrong sexual thought patterns. Parents teach children how to handle money, but often not how to handle sex. As a result men today often go around pretending they have it all together sexually, but in reality they do not. .

Although in our minds we know better, **men still seem to consider adequate sexual functioning as proof of our masculinity**. On top of that, we aren't really sure of what 'adequate' is. We know what we've been exposed to in the world isn't right, but what is?

Often men and women's view of sex has been influenced by exposure to **pornography** in some form. Actually pornography is a fantasy, a substitute, an escape. Pornography for men is the same as romance movies or novels for women. Both are sexual, vicariously experiencing a forbidden fantasy. Both are self-centered and self-serving. In each, the underlying emotional needs and dynamics are much stronger than the physical reality of it all. Emotional needs more than physical needs make them appealing.

The same is true of **mental or physical unfaithfulness**. This usually has little to do with sex. The reasons go much deeper. They fulfill unmet emotional needs. These unmet needs must be honestly admitted, explored, and met in legitimate, Godly ways. Often the root causes go back to faulty childhood relationships with mother or father.

Pray together before sex. We pray before we eat, thanking God for his gift of food and asking Him to bless it to our benefit. Why not do the same for sex? After all, God created sex -- it was His idea! What's more, He gave it to mankind BEFORE there was sin or evil. Sex in marriage is a beautiful gift, symbolic of the oneness of Christ and His church.

WHAT CAN A WOMAN DO TO HELP?

Honestly admit to yourself any pull you feel to soap operas, romance novels or any related type of sexual/romance fantasy. What emotional needs cause that to be appealing to you? Turn those needs to God for Him to meet in His time and way.

Do you have too high expectations of your husband physically, emotionally or spiritually? I think most women do. He will sense that and feel he is a failure. It puts extra pressure on him. It can make him feel less a success and this impacts all areas of his life. Reassure him often of your acceptance of him as a man in all areas.

Allow him to NOT want sex sometimes without your thinking something is wrong with you or him.

Make sure you do not fill the role of mother in his life. If you take on that role, or he puts you in that role, it will be more difficult to adjust to being sexual lovers at night. That's also true if you see him in a father-figure or father replacement role.

Remember how the sexual curve differs for men and women. Gently educate him to your needs. Don't assume he knows these things, men don't unless taught them.

Don't make his ultimate pleasure the only focus of sex. Pornography does that. Don't use that as your assurance of how successful the act was for you or him.

Remember, sex breaks down emotional walls for women and men. That can be threatening to men and they may withdraw emotionally during sex. Be patient and understanding. Gently talk to them about this later.

Pray for him and yourself in this area. Pray before sex, even if it is just to yourself.

If you have had sex with someone you aren't now married to that bond must be broken. If it was in a previous marriage, remember the government can only break what the government makes (the legality of a marriage). Only God can break the spiritual bond which is entered into by sex, with or without marriage (1 Corinthians 6:16). Confess the sin (if it wasn't in marriage). Ask God to break the union physically and emotionally. Accept His forgiveness and carry no guilt. Don't ever let your thoughts dwell in it again.

See also: 21 Sexual Addictions, 22 Sexual Self-stimulation, 23 Adultery, Fornication

4. PARENTING PROBLEMS

Root: sin, immaturity

Fruit of the Spirit that is needed (Galatians 5:22-23):

Being a good, godly husband or wife is difficult, especially without God's help. Being a good, godly parent is also difficult. We all have our own immaturity and sin natures, and so do our children. Husbands and wives often disagree on how to raise and discipline children. The first priority is to make sure both parents agree in the approach taken, if not it will cause more problems in a marriage. Parents must be united in a healthy, growing, loving marriage relationship to be able to do their best raising children. If not, problems between the parents will come to the surface and make raising children all the harder. First, let's look at God's guidelines for raising children.

CHILDREN NEED TO BE LOVED

One quiet afternoon a father took his young son out in the fields for a walk. Tiring a bit, he decided to lie down under a beautiful shade tree, for the day was hot. The little child ran about gathering wild flowers and bits of fern. Coming to his father he said: "Pretty! Pretty!" At last the father dozed off. While he was sleeping the youngster wandered away. When he awoke his first thought was, "Where is my child?" He looked all around, but could not see him. He shouted at the top of his voice, but all he heard in return was the mocking echo of his own voice. Running to a little hill, he looked around but couldn't see the boy anywhere. Traveling a bit further he suddenly noticed a cliff. Advancing to the edge, he looked down and there upon the rocks below was the mangled form of his dear little son. He rushed to the spot in tears, took up the lifeless form, and hugged it to himself. For the rest of his life he accused himself of being the murderer of his own son.

Can you imagine living with guilt like that? That parent's neglect affected the child's whole life! There are other ways of neglecting children, though, ways with even worse consequences. Spiritual and emotional neglect can have eternal consequences.

Just having a child doesn't make one a good parent any more than owning a piano makes one a good musician. There are certain basic needs a child has that must be met. Children need to feel LOVED. Did you feel the love you needed when growing up? I didn't ask if your parents loved you, I

asked if you felt their love to the extent you needed it? What about your children? Do they feel the continual, unconditional love they need? Love is the main thing we need and get from our heavenly Father. Love covers a multitude of sins (1 Peter 4:8). How are to make sure our children feel loved?

LOVE THEM UNCONDITIONALLY Jesus sets the pattern by loving His children unconditionally, with agape love. This is love in spite of, not love because of love. Did your parents withhold love or acceptance when they disapproved of something you said or did (or didn't do)? How did it make you feel? Rejection is never a good form of correction. It brings the opposite results.

Joseph, step-father of Jesus, was an example of a man who loved his children unconditionally. He loved Mary the same way, and she responded by trusting and following him. Joseph spent 25 or so years in the carpentry shop with Jesus and 30+ years in the same home with Him. They spent every minute of every day together. What an impact he had on Jesus! By looking at the lives of some of Joseph's other sons, James and Jude, we can see what a loving, accepting man he was. That must be why God picked him to raise His Son.

David, on the other hand, didn't know how to make his children feel loved and secure. Maybe that was because his own father and brothers rejected and looked down on him (1 Samuel 17:28). This culminated with Absalom doing all he could to get his father's approval but failing (2 Samuel 14:28-33). Finally he rebelled against his father and was killed. Finally, heartbroken, David's love for Absalom came spilling out (2 Samuel 19:4), but it is too late. Don't wait until it is too late to show love!

Who are you more like -- Joseph or David? Whom do your children respond more like, Jesus or Absalom? Love them unconditionally and you'll see a great change!

For more information about communicating love see "Communicating Love (Love Languages)" under Marriage Problems above. Read the section on "Speaking Your Child's Language of Love."

OVERSEE THEM INSTRUCTIONALLY The Bible says that children are like arrows (Psalm 127:1-5) - carefully formed so they can be sent to accomplish a task. Parents mold and aim the arrow. The target is Christ-likeness. That is our goal for our children. This is a life-long process which includes birth and grown, spiritually as well as physically:

Spiritual Birth (salvation - John 1:12,13; 3:3) is the start of life. We must teach our children about being born spiritually, not just physically. We must pray for them, set a godly example for them, and teach them God's Word. Children don't have to understand all about Jesus in order to accept His free gift of salvation. In fact, adults are to come to God as children, children are never told to come as adults (Matthew 19:14; Mark 10:14; Luke 18:16). What is the minimum requirement to be born again? I think it is to accept (more accurately stop rejecting) God's free gift of salvation. He wants to give it to us; we just allow Him to do so. A child can do that. When a child is old enough to understand their need and Jesus' provision, then can accept this free gift. This can be as young as 3-4, certainly by 8 to 10 years old.

Salvation is giving all we have of ourselves to all of Jesus which we understand. We don't need to be grown and mature, nor do we need to know and understand everything about Jesus. We simply give what we have to Jesus as we then understand Him. Later, as a child matures, he understands more about himself and Jesus. They can keep giving themselves to Jesus over and over again, but the first time is their salvation experience. We do this as well. Husbands and wives do this to each other in marriage. Their marriage vows are what makes the marriage legal, but as

Love them Unconditionally Oversee them Instructionally Validate them Continually Emancipate them Gradually Discipline them Consistently

they grow individually and in love for each other, their commitment is reaffirmed and deepened. The same thing happens with salvation.

Growth comes wherever there is life. That is true physically as well as spiritually. Following spiritual birth comes spiritual growth (2 Peter 3:18). **Nourishment** brings growth. We are to feed on the Bible, God's Word (1 Corinthians 3:1-2; Jeremiah 15:16). This starts from little on (2 Timothy 3:15). Not only are we to teach content, we are also to develop a desire for God's Word in them ("train up" in Proverbs 22:6 literally means "create a taste for"). **Communication** is something babies soon discover, by words or actions. We must teach our children to communicate with their Heavenly Father by prayer. These things are all done by daily example (Deuteronomy 6:4-9) as well as by teaching content. **Walking** soon follows when there is growth. Our children must learn to walk by faith (Galatians 5:16; 2 Corinthians 5:7), obeying God and parents.

It's exciting to see a baby grow physically and just as exciting to see our children born and grow spiritually. Neither happen alone, though. Each take lots of work and time from the parents. Putting in that time and care shows children we love them. It helps them feel loved. It helps them start their life-time walk of becoming more Christlike.

VALIDATE THEM CONTINUALLY "Valid" means "sound, effective, well grounded." We produce this in our children when we 'validate' them by encouraging, complimenting and building them up. "Fathers (sometimes translated 'parents'), do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). We "instruct" by teaching, praying and setting a good example to build proper behavior and values into our children. We "train" (correct improper behavior) by disciplining children. These are what we DO. What we are to NOT do is frustrate or exasperate them. Inconsistent, unfair or unloving discipline will do this. Our goal is not to have them obey out of fear of punishment, but to motivate them to want to obey their parents.

HOW can we motivate our children? For one thing, **use their natural bent**. Train a child "in the way he should go" (Proverbs 22:6). Keep in mind their individual temperament, personality, learning style, birth order, etc. (See III A, Understanding People, above) What works for one child won't always work for another! Also, **use the salt principle** to motivate. You can lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink, but you can feed it salt! Develop their natural interests. Use their curiosity and creativity. Work WITH them, not AGAINST them. Along with this, **help them choose their own goals**. The older they get the more long-range these goals can be. Instead of focusing on what is easiest at the moment, have them work toward a goal. This will help them motivate themselves. Always **let them experience the negative results of not reaching goals**. Don't bail them out. God uses natural consequences to teach us the importance of doing what is right, use them with your children. **Remember the power of praise**. Positive reinforcement (praise) works much better in motivating all of us to try harder than does criticism. Like a small spark that needs to be fanned, praise them whenever and for whatever you can.

EMANCIPATE THEM GRADUALLY Earlier we talked about children being like arrows which parents are to form into something useful. Arrows are made to be sent to a destination, a goal. Arrows must be released to accomplish their work. As in archery, the release of children is critical, too. It is not a one-time event but a life-long process which starts the day they are born! Many adults still struggle with freedom from parental control. Releasing a child smoothly takes skill and maturity. It means overcoming the fear that your children can't make it without you, that maybe you didn't adequately prepare them for all they will face. It means denying your urge to be in control, to accept that you aren't as needed by them as you used to be. Letting go needs to be done over and over, each day. It means being totally convinced that they really belong to God and are just on temporary loan to us.

Emancipating doesn't just mean turning them loose to head any direction. The direction we shoot our arrows, the goal for them, is to be like Jesus. We want them to be the mature Christian man or woman that God wants them to be. When arrows were invented, they changed the face of warfare forever, for a soldier could impact a battle scene from a great distance. He didn't have to be there to have an influence in the outcome. So, too, our children will go places and accomplish things far beyond anything we could do. They will impact a world for Jesus that we won't be able to touch! What a privilege to send them to a needy world to show people Jesus!

DISCIPLINE THEM CONSISTENTLY Note the key word here is "consistently." Children need to be disciplined consistently (not CONSTANTLY). It's more important that we be consistent with where we draw the line than where the line is drawn. Too often we are inconsistent depending on our mood or stress, if others are around, etc. Inconsistency is very confusing and frustrating to children (Ephesians 6:4), and makes it very difficult for them to figure out what we really want. They end up either outwardly rebelling against everything or inwardly thinking they are miserable failures. Neither is a response we want!

The Bible makes it clear that children need discipline (Titus 1:6; 1 Timothy 3:4-5; Proverbs 13:24; 22:15; 29:15; 23:13-14; 29:17). Children won't admit that and come asking for it, but down inside they sense it and are insecure when neglected and left on their own. It's not uncommon for a strong-willed woman to marry a weak man so she can control him, but when she does, she loses respect for him. Down inside something makes her know she needs him to be stronger than her (in a loving, gentle way). While she fights his every attempt to assert himself, secretly she wishes he could bring the control and order she needs in life. The same is true of strong-willed children.

When very young, babies can't be disciplined because they aren't able to make free-will decisions to rebel. Parents who give in to their every fussy need find they will eventually have a spoiled, demanding baby on their hands, so don't create self-centeredness by always giving in. But discipline is not an issue until they willfully disobey. For the most part, firmly but lovingly removing the object from them (or whatever it is) will give them the idea. Be persistent and consistent. After age two, though, their will is strong enough to start making their own decisions. They begin to realize there is a more self-satisfying alternative than obedience, it's giving into the flesh. They will start to purposefully test the limits. Respond with loving, firm, consistent discipline: sitting in a chair or standing in the corner. Physical punishment should only be used for overt, willful rebellion, not immature mistakes, forgetfulness or clumsiness. It should never be administered in anger. From the age of 4 or 5 on try to teach them the why's of things, not just what they are to do but why. Part of maturity is being able to give up immediate gratification for a long-range goal. As they understand better the reasons for your rules, they will be better able to discipline themselves.

Part of good discipline is making sure they clearly understand just what is expected of them. Any good rule must be clearly understood and enforceable. Always reassure them with hugs and words after a confrontation is over. Always remember that "love covers a multitude of sins" (1 Peter 4:8). Make sure they know they are loved no matter what. Better to overdo this than underdo it. Better to be a little spoiled than grow up with a poor self-image. The reality of life will quickly burn away the self-centeredness of being spoiled, but a poor self-image can take a lifetime to overcome.

A good way to help decide how to respond to a situation is to ask yourself how God would respond. After all, we teach about Him in how we treat our children, for from us they learn about the sovereign authority figure in their lives (us now, God later). As far as this goes, remember how God disciplines us. Usually if we go astray, He lets us learn the hard way, but suffering the natural consequences of our actions (drive too fast - speed ticket, don't pay taxes - penalties and fines, ignore our health - sickness, neglect our mate - distance and conflicts). It's always good, from as soon as possible, to let children suffer the consequences of their actions instead of bailing them out.

If they break something they must pay for it. If they hurt someone they can't be with people for a while. If they don't use their money wisely, they don't have it when needed. Instead of nagging my children to practice their musical instruments, if their teacher says they aren't prepared for a lesson then we make them pay for the lesson themselves. The Bible sets up this principle when it says that anyone who doesn't work shouldn't be given free food (2 Thessalonians 3:10).

Remember, parents are nothing but baby-sitters for God. They are HIS children, and He will use all things to help them grow and mature (Romans 8:28). God gives us the children we need to help make us more like Jesus! No family is perfect, no parent perfect. We all struggle and wonder if we are failing. Raising children correctly is impossible without God's help and wisdom, but He does promise that if we just ask for it (James 1:5). Make sure you keep constantly going to Jesus for wisdom and power, for encouragement and guidance, for He alone can help you.

CHILDREN WHO DISOBEY PARENTS

ANGRY AND REBELLIOUS CHILDREN Children are immature and often think only of themselves. They are naturally self-centered and don't know how to control their sin nature. They lack self-control and want immediate gratification. That is why God gives children parents to train them and help them mature in healthy ways. Thus they are naturally rebellious.

That rebellion can be made worse by poor parenting. When a child experiences a lot of hurt from his parents, whether it is real or perceived, it will wound his spirit (Proverbs 18:14). This hurt is the seed that germinates and grows into a root of bitterness (Hebrews 12:15) unless forgiveness and reconciliation take place. Love does not keep a record of wrongs (1 Corinthians 13:5) but bitterness does! Then anger grows.

Parents are told to "*not provoke your children to anger*" (Ephesians 6:4). We are to be careful to not hurt their spirits so this does not happen. We must always discipline in love and never in anger. If we do, we must apologize and reestablish a loving relationship with our child. God disciplines us but never in anger (Hebrews 12:4-12).

The Bible says rebellion is as bad as witchcraft (1 Samuel 15:23). Proverbs uses the term "fool" to identify this person and describes him as someone who despises wisdom and instruction (1:7; 17:16), hates knowledge (1:22), grieves his parents (10:1; 17:25), enjoys devising mischief (10:23), is right in his own eyes (12:15), is quick to anger (12:16; 29:11) and makes others angry (18:6), is full of evil (13:19), deceitful (14:5:8), arrogant and careless (14:16), rejects his parent's instruction (15:5, 20) and is quarrelsome and contentious (20:3).

REASONS FOR DISOBEDIENCE IN CHILDREN To find the root cause of a child's disobedience, first learn to separate sinful rebellion from childish immaturity. When a child disobeys or does something wrong, was it done with full understanding and on purpose? Or was it ignorance of immaturity that contributed? Children, even teens, don't always think ahead as to what consequences may come from their behavior. They do things without thinking them through. That is a lot different than purposeful, willful disobedience. What causes willful, intentional rebellion and disobedience? Of course, they have a sin nature and that is enough. But often there is hurt or pain behind the action and causing it.

God Himself commands parents to discipline their children: Titus 1:6; 1 Timothy 3:4-5; Proverbs 13:24; 22:15; 29:15; 23:13-14; 29:17. But there is a big difference between discipline and punishment. Often when parents are frustrated by disobedient children, they try to hurt the child back. They take their anger out on their child by hurting them, but that isn't discipline. It does more harm than good.

The chart below shows the difference between punishment and discipline.

	DISCIPLINE	PUNISHMENT	BIBLICAL REFERENCES
	SINLESS ANGER (RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION)	SINFUL ANGER (CARNAL HOSTILITY)	Hebrews 12:10; Isaiah 13:11
Direction	Toward sin itself	Toward anything or anyone that upsets us	Psalms 7:11; Galatians 5:19-21
Purpose	To right a wrong, change in future, bring maturity	To gain revenge, protect self, inflict a penalty	Romans 12:17-21
Attitude	Love and concern for child	Anger, hostility, frustration	1 Corinthians 13:4-7; Lamentations 3:33
Method	Slow and controlled	Rapid and impulsive	James 1:19-21; Proverbs 16:32
Physical	Controlled Spanking on the buttocks done in love, ages 2 to preadolescence	Abuse: hit, kick, slap, done with violence and anger to any age child	Proverbs 13:24; 22:15; 29:15; 23:13-14
Result	Increased respect for parent, security & love	Increased hostility to parent; fear, guilt and anger	Proverbs 15:1; Ephesians 6:4
Result in parent	Satisfaction for Christian concern	Relief from releasing hostility, then guilt over losing temper	

Why is it that some youth are obedient and others aren't? How can we account for the sacrificialness of Ruth (giving up her own future) and Isaac (willing to give up own life)? What can we do to have our teens obey without having to nag and threaten? Ephesians 6:4 tells us. *"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ... Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord."* Children and teens must use their free will to submit and yield to their parents as to God. This is how they will learn to follow God when older. Parents must train and discipline their children in love and patience, the same way God treat us, His children. We show them what God is like by how we use our authority in their life when young. If we are loving and patient, but firm and consistent, they will see their heavenly Father the same way. If we are impatient, angry and critical they will feel God is that way as well. Let's look at Ephesians 6:4 in more detail.

"Fathers" are the ones responsible for the training of children of all ages. Even if they aren't with the child as much as the mother, they are ultimately responsible before God for the whole family. The wife is under the husband's authority and carries out his (their) goals. She implements what they together decide, but he is the leader with oversight and final say. She, also, is not to exasperate her children. The word translated "fathers" can also be translated "parents" (Hebrews 11:23), so this responsibility also includes mothers.

"Do Not Exasperate" is the command given to parents. That means don't frustrate a youth by too high expectations, criticism without love, withholding love, inconsistency, rejection, over-burdening them with rules, expecting too much (perfectionism), overprotecting, spoiling, being over permissive or too severe. Anything but firm, consistent, loving discipline for clearly defined rules can frustrate. Especially disciplining in anger or criticizing can exasperate. Disciplining or treating adolescence like children can quickly frustrate them, too, for they have a God-given inner drive to leave childhood and become adults. Being inconsistent is also frustrating. Only make rules you can enforce, and when you make a rule, you must be consistent in when and how it is enforced. That's why disciplining in anger is so damaging. Remember the Golden Rule, treat them the way you want them to treat you, for that is what will happen.

"Instead Bring Them Up" means to "nourish, bring to maturity, shepherd" them. Parents do this physically, emotionally, socially, intellectually and spiritually. How is this to be done? By bringing them up *"in the training and instruction of the Lord."*

"In The Training of The Lord" refers to discipline, correction, teaching self-control until they can exercise self-control over their own actions. The word "disciple" comes from this word. This requires

discipline, and until they can exercise self-discipline, parents must provide the discipline from without. God commands this (Ephesians 6:4; Proverbs 13:24) and children need it so they feel loved & secure. Besides, it is an example of how God treats His children (Hebrews 12:11) and our discipline of our teens must reflect God's discipline of us (consistent, in love, for our betterment not just to pay for the inconvenience we have caused Him, etc.)

"In The Instruction of The Lord" refers to training, prevention, so correction/discipline isn't as necessary. This is done by our example as well as words (Deuteronomy 6:4-9). Communicate your feelings and emotions, struggles (current and as a teen) and difficulties with them. Draw them out. Ask "How did that make you feel?" Silently listen, think carefully before giving advice. (James 1:19). Encourage them (1 Thessalonians 5:11). It takes 99 compliments to make up for 1 harsh criticism

DISCIPLINING YOUTH (Teenagers and adolescents) To correctly discipline an adolescent it is important to consider the reason for their disobedience as well. There is a big difference between willful, stubborn rebellion against authority from their free will and the natural and necessary pulling away that is part of their maturing process. Willful rebellion is different than actions from immaturity or ignorance. What comes from changing hormones and what comes from the sin nature? Knowing that can be very helpful for each must be handled differently, as God does with us.

Teens need limits, but also freedom and flexibility. Treat them like adults but expect them to act like children. They have the same emotional needs of children for love, security and acceptance, even though they don't always show it.

It can be helpful, too, to notice in what area they choose to rebel. It's usually social life & customs (friends, dress, hair, always gone), responsibility (not carry own load, help), school performance (grades, study habits, attitudes), family relationships (getting along with parents or siblings) or values and morals (sex, TV shows, talk, deceitfulness). Why do they choose THIS area to rebel in? Is it because we expect too much in this area? Is it because it's an area we haven't totally got under control in our own life? It is something that is important to us and they know they can hurt us by their disobedience in this area? Pray and ask God for wisdom and insight into their motives and reasons. It will help you know much better how to correct them. Overt rebellion needs firm but loving consequences. Immaturity or ignorance need teaching and reasoning to help them learn and grow.

Pick your battles carefully. Don't expect instant, immediate obedience in everything. Teenagers are no longer children, give them some space to exercise their own free will. If you can't win a battle, don't let it start. Decide what is major enough to make an issue of and what isn't. When you draw the line, do it with love. *"Love covers a multitude of sins."* Always, in as many ways as possible, assure them of your unconditional love. Keep their emotional tank full.

When you must discipline, use **natural consequences** instead of nagging, threatening or yelling. Deprive them of a privilege that goes with their sin. The Bible says that anyone who doesn't work shouldn't eat (2 Thessalonians 3:10). If they are going to school, school is their work. They shouldn't eat until they do it. If they don't get along with their siblings, they can't spend time with friends outside the family. If they don't treat others nicely, they are isolated and can't be around others. If they spend money unwisely don't give them more for an important occasion, have them do without. Avoid power struggles and nagging at all costs! Don't spank, for it builds hate & resentment. Anything that makes them feel like you are treating them like a little child is counterproductive. Make sure you don't play favorites to a child of the same sex as you -- or opposite sex. Also make sure you don't expect more of a child because he is a boy or a girl or born first.

WHEN YOU'VE MADE A MISTAKE take responsibility for your part without blaming or justifying. Confess your sin to them and God, asking for forgiveness. Forgive yourself and reestablish communication with them. Make necessary changes so it doesn't happen again. Be patient. God doesn't expect you to be perfect, but He does expect you to admit it when you are wrong.

ADVICE TO CHILDREN AND YOUTH The key for anyone still living at home and therefore under their parent's authority, no matter their age, is obedience out of love and respect, following the example of Jesus (Luke 2:51). If you feel your parents are wrong, be careful, maybe they have some insight you aren't aware of. Sometimes they will be wrong, allow them that right. They aren't perfect, either. If you think they are wrong, don't confront them when your or their emotions are high. Respond in love, as you want them to do to you. When you are wrong apologizing and confess your sin to them and God. Seek the root problem, not just the surface symptom. Set goals to help you act in love: "The first words to my parents will be thanks." "I will clean my room before being asked." "I will have meaningful devotions each morning." Remember, "this is right" and brings God's blessing. Obey in love and practice the Golden Rule. Treat them the way you want them to treat you.

SIBLINGS WHO DON'T GET ALONG WITH EACH OTHER (SIBLING RIVALRY)

Joseph's brothers hated him (Genesis 37:4) for getting them into trouble by tattling on them (Genesis 37:2) and because their father clearly favored Joseph over them (Genesis 37:3-4). Joseph's telling them about a dream in which they bowed down to him (Genesis 37:5-10) didn't help the relationship, either. I'm sure it grieved Jacob to have his children not get along. Of course you know what happened: Joseph was sold into slavery in Egypt. It's very sad when siblings don't get along.

What causes sibling rivalry? Basically, it comes from having more than one child! It doesn't seem to take more than that! Two children, two sin natures, two immature self-centered people, and conflict is inevitable. There are factors, though, that make this much worse. These include:

1. Favoritism by parents If children feel they are competing for parent's attention or approval (it doesn't have to be real, even if they just imagine it) they will see each other as rivals to defeat. Since no two children are alike, none can be treated alike, and that can be perceived as favoritism. Isaac showed favoritism to Esau over Jacob, Jacob did the same with Joseph. These led to disastrous results. Children who feel left out will disobey to get attention. Even scolding is better than being ignored. Negative emotion coming their way is preferable no emotion!

2. Displaced anger When a child gets angry at others things or people in life, they are often tempted to take it out on a sibling. Thus Cain killed Able and Jacob and Esau grew up in constant conflict. Bickering and fighting are usually just the fruit of deeper problems festering within.

3. Feelings of inferiority by being compared (consciously or subconsciously) with a more accomplished sibling. Leah's antagonism to Rachael was because of this. These reasons are magnified when children go through adolescence and privacy and fairness are more important to them. Adolescents become more critical and are often easier targets for others in the family who want to get back at them for past or present actions

4. Developmental changes As children become adolescents, they view of younger brothers and sisters can change. Part of their pulling away can be seen in impatience and looking down at younger siblings. Younger children can find good ways to "get to" these older ones. Understanding what is happening and why can make prevention easier.

5. Temperament differences Some temperaments rub others wrong, some are just harder to get along with than others. All this can contribute to disobedience and not getting along. (See Section III. A. Understanding People, above, for more information.)

6. Birth order Another important factor is birth order. Understanding that, too, can help us know better what to expect and to determine the cause of disobedience in a child. (See Section III. A. Understanding People, above, for more information.)

SOLUTION - PARENT'S SIDE Pinpoint the severity of the conflict. Is it natural, normal rivalry or do you sense something more? Talk to the children, listen between the lines, draw out their feelings by questions ("How does that make you feel?"). Differentiate between normal personality differences (especially during adolescence) and deep bitterness from unmet emotional needs or allowing sin to dominate. Teach (by word and example) how to handle anger, frustration, unfairness and not getting their own way. Set a good example by your tone of voice and attitude. Teach them to label their feelings (hate, fear, jealousy, hurt, selfishness, etc.) so they can handle them. Show unconditional love no matter what. Seek counsel from mature Christians, if necessary. Don't be afraid to ask for help!

SOLUTION - ADOLESCENT'S SIDE Don't always run to your parents with every little conflict. That really wears on parents! Realize everything can't and won't be fair. Be like Jesus and turn the other cheek. Practice the Golden Rule, even if others don't. Walk away from problem situations, give yourself and others time to cool off. Willow trees last through storms that destroy oaks because in hard times they can bend but oaks cannot. Be flexible. Put some time between yourself and the event, things look better after time passes. Don't think you'll accomplish anything by hurting someone back. They'll just try to hurt you back even more. Don't let unforgiveness build, don't let it out in little things like sarcasm, teasing, tattling, etc. Forgive them with Jesus' help. God commands you, too: "If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live at peace with everyone" (Romans 12:5,9,13,15-18). With God's help all things are possible!

So, then -- obedience is our goal, and even if we realize we won't ever fully attain it, we must still aim for it. We must try to understand what causes our child's disobedience and deal with that, or at the most we will just force outer conformity (hypocrisy). Having them feel loved and secure is more important than discipline, both are needed in balance

. Treating them as we would want to be treated is important. Setting a good example by showing them how we discipline ourselves and handle our weakness' is a must. Asking God for wisdom and then treating our children as He treats us is something we must always remember. And, of course, pray, pray, pray, pray, pray, pray.

DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILIES

Understanding the causes and symptoms of dysfunction in a family is important to give godly advice. King David's family is a clear example of a family that wasn't functioning properly. He is probably one of the best loved people in the Bible. The stories of how he fought the bear, lion and even Goliath never cease to thrill us. He was well liked and popular with everyone, even God. He was a skilled musician, a poet, a mighty warrior and best of all he was "a man after God's own heart." Yet all wasn't perfect in his life. He sinned with Bathsheba, but he confessed that and sought reconciliation with God. Where David failed, however, was with his own family. That is a bad place for a Christian leader to fail (1 Timothy 3:4-5). Actually, the groundwork for that failure was set much earlier.

SEEDS OF FAILURE SOWN Ruth and Boaz seemed to have a good, healthy relationship. Not much is known about their son Obed, but his son Jesse seems to have had problems meeting his son's needs. He didn't consider David equal to the older brothers (1 Samuel 16:4-11). They never learned to treat their younger brother with respect. They were very rude to him when he came to bring them food in the army (1 Samuel 17:28-29). Not only was this hard on David, but he didn't grow up with a good example of how to be a godly father and man. Although he developed a good, mature intimacy with God, it doesn't seem he ever accomplished this in his family relationships. They are characterized by a lack of emotional intimacy. The sad story starts in 2 Samuel 11.

SIN PLANTS THE SEEDS OF DYSFUNCTION David wasn't where God wanted him to be (2 Samuel 11:1) when his army went to war and ended up committing adultery with Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11:2-5). When he found out she was pregnant he should have had the courage to face up to his sin. Instead

he tried to cover it up, even to the extent of having Bathsheba's husband killed so no one would know the baby wasn't his (2 Samuel 11:14-27). Then he married Bathsheba and ignored everything else. When confronted by God for his sin, David repented and was restored (2 Samuel 12:13). Still, there were grave consequences to David's sin.

First, the baby died (2 Samuel 12:16-18). David never allowed his feelings of grief to surface; he stuffed his pain down and tried to ignore it (2 Samuel 12:21-23). Then he ignored the emotional impact this must have had on the others in the family. How would his grown children feel when they learned about the adultery and murder? However they felt, there was no open ground for communication. They had to follow David's example and bury their feelings. David dealt with the sin between himself and God, but never between himself and his family.

DYSFUNCTION REPEATS ITSELF IN THE NEXT GENERATION Family dysfunction often begins with an inability to handle emotions and tends to become more extreme as time passes. Amnon, David's oldest son, was sexually attracted to his step-sister, Tamar (2 Samuel 13:1-2). In the same way that David had planned to manipulate circumstances so he could have the woman he lusted after without facing consequences, Amnon planned to do the same thing. He manipulated his father (II Samuel 13:6) so he could get in a position to rape his sister (13:11-18). Then when he had to face the consequences of his action, he lacked courage to do so, blaming and hating Tamar for it.

As could be expected, Tamar was devastated (13:18-19). Her brother Absalom saw her and suspected what had happened (13:20a). Why hadn't he done something to head it off? Because in David's family problems were buried, emotions ignored, and everyone had to pretend everything was all right. In fact, that's how Absalom responded to Tamar's desolation. Instead of giving her a hug and some reassurance that justice would be done, he told her, in effect, to not take this seriously because it is a family matter and we must not make a big thing out of it (13:20b).

When David heard about what happened he was furious (13:21) but didn't take any action to right things, comfort Tamar, or even enforce God's law which required stoning or at least exile of the guilty party. Everyone had to pretend it never happened.

UNRESOLVED PAIN GOES UNDERGROUND On the surface everything seems smooth, but underneath a storm is raging. David is furious, Tamar's life is ruined, Amnon hates Tamar, and Absalom hates Amnon. As in dysfunctional families, these feelings do not lessen as time passes but grow stronger.

After two years of denial Absalom moves to end the stalemate. He approaches David about getting the whole family together but David balks at the suggestion. For some strange reason he allowed Absalom to invite Amnon over, although he knew of the problem between them (13:23-27). Direct communication is difficult in dysfunctional families. Change only occurs in crisis situations. This was David's last chance to resolve this issue in a mature, peaceful way, but he again avoids the whole issue. Thus Absalom, who has lost trust in and respect for his father, takes the issue into his own hands and kills Amnon (13:28-29).

Again David is grieved and Absalom must go into exile, but nothing else is done. Often in dysfunctional families one 'rebel' doesn't play by the rules (ignore the pain, pretend things are OK, cover over all emotions, etc.). He acts out the pain that has not been faced by the rest of the family. The blame for what is wrong in the family gets heaped upon him instead of those who are really responsible. He becomes the scapegoat. In David's family it was Absalom. In fact, many today still see Absalom as the rebellious son, not understanding the forces that drove him.

For 3 years Absalom was in exile, David not allowing him to return but not handling the root issues, either. This rejection made Absalom's bitterness grow. He was continually reminded of Tamar's

pain for she lived in his household. That so impacted him that he even named his only daughter 'Tamar.' He had never learned from his father how to correctly handle pain and hurt, though.

Finally David allowed Absalom to return from exile and live in Jerusalem. Absalom had to really force the issue to finally, after being back for two years, get to see his father David (14:30-32). It's important for a child, especially a son, to know where he stands with his father. David kissed Absalom (14:33) but it was very superficial and no change or reconciliation took place, despite Absalom really wanting and needing this. This seems to have been the last straw for Absalom, who has been trying to get things straight for the last seven years since the rape took place.

DYSFUNCTION DESTROYS Absalom now starts telling the people that their king will not hear their needs or complaints, which was really a direct reflection of Absalom's assessment of his family life. Before long most of the nation was supporting Absalom in a revolt against David (15:1-23). Eventually David's faithful soldiers were able to put down the revolt and kill Absalom. When he heard of Absalom's death it seems something broke in David. "O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you -- O Absalom, my son, my son!" (18:33). Finally all his grief could no longer be ignored and pushed down, and David is crushed. In fact, he was so carried away in it all that it offended the soldiers who defended David so much that they almost deserted him. Still, though, nothing is really changed. Lives are ruined: Tamar, Amnon, Absalom, even David's life continues to go downhill from here.

Dysfunctional families are nothing new. Still, they don't need to be. We can change ours so we don't pass these things down to our children. What was your family of origin like? Was it similar to David's family? In what ways? Who in David's family do you most identify with? What can you do right now to start moving into healthy relationships? Each journey starts with one step. Take your first one now.

GOD'S DIRECTIONS TO CHILDREN & TEENS

"CHILDREN, OBEY YOUR PARENTS" (Ephesians 6:1, Colossians 3:20) is God's command to children and teens. It's what He expects, so we should expect it, too. Jesus Himself obeyed His parents (Luke 2:51). Please understand that we're not talking about outer conformity here. We're talking about an inner attitude of respect. That's why God also says children are to "honor" their parents (Ephesians 6:2). A wife isn't to submit outwardly while having an inner attitude of self-centeredness. Christians are to serve God motivated by love. In the same way, children are to obey parents with their whole heart. This is why respecting parents is so important.

Just as wives respond to a husband who sacrificially loves them and puts them first, as Christians do to God, so children respond in obedience much better when they are treated with consideration and respect. For children to respect parents, parents must respect their children. Be sensitive to their needs and emotions. Treat them as you would want to be treated were you them (that's the Golden Rule, and it's still in effect). Expect obedience from them, but realize that learning obedience is a life-long process. How complete is your obedience to God? Do you expect more from your child than God expects from you? Are you as patient and understanding with you children as you want God to be with you?

WATCH WHAT YOU EXPECT Remember, children are not short adults! "When I was a child, I talked like an adult, I thought like an adult, I reasoned like an adult" is NOT how 1 Corinthians 13:11 reads! Don't expect them to be adults. We are competing with no one but ourselves, trying to improve and grow. We measure ourselves now by comparing ourselves to how we were a year ago. Use the same standard on your children. Don't compare them with other children. Don't be expecting too much of them. That will just frustrate them and build anger into them (Ephesians 6:4). Too high expectations will discourage your child and work against them. The same happens when

others expect too much of us. Children need encouragement and building up more than having every weakness and failure pointed out to them. If weaknesses are focused on more than strengths, than they will grow up insecure, feeling inferior, with a poor self-image. That is VERY difficult to overcome! I think it's more damaging in the long run that growing up a little indulged. Personally I think it's better to err on the side of being too easy on a child than too hard. A semi-spoiled child will take a few knocks in life and learn they'll have to have more self-discipline, and they'll have the internal value and worth to be able to make the adjustment. An insecure person, though, won't have anything to fall back on and can struggle for years. To be perfectly honest, I think God is WAY too easy on me and lets me get away with FAR too much, but He knows what He is doing. We are to pattern ourselves after Him, and that means extending mercy in love.

UNDERSTANDING TEENAGERS

IN-BETWEEN-AGERS Adolescence is like a house on moving day - a temporary mess! Everyone goes through it. Even the apostle Paul went through this process (1 Corinthians 13:11). How can parents help?

CHALLENGING THE GIANTS Children grow up seeing themselves as helpless, totally dependent on 20-foot-tall sovereign giants to provide for them in every area of life. They feel small and powerless, needing protection and care. Suddenly they are thrust into adolescence when their glands start sending chemical messages for the body to start puberty. Changes in the body, mind and emotions begin. The child finds himself aiming for a position of equality with these giants. What a scary, seemingly-impossible task looms before them! If parents can understand this, though, they can help a lot. For one thing, it helps parents understand why their teens start paying more and more attention to the parent's faults and weakness'. It's easier for them to pull away and be their own person when they see their parents aren't perfect. If a parent can take himself down from the pedestal by admitting to his faults and sharing his own struggles (past and present) his child won't feel he has to look for chinks in the armor.

PREPARING THE SHIP TO LEAVE HARBOR What is our role as parents in all of this? It's like preparing a ship to leave the harbor. Before heading out to sea on its own, the ship is securely tied to the dock while it takes on fuel (love, acceptance, security, confidence, good experiences to draw from) and makes preparations for the voyage (training in values, knowledge, wisdom, etc.). If the ship is sent off too soon it is doomed. Once the engine starts (the body starts going through adolescence) it better be loaded with training for adulthood.

This leaving parental authority and control is natural and normal. It is a God-given drive to 'leave the nest,' 'cut the apron strings' or however you want to phrase it. Genesis 2:24 says a person must leave (break dependency on) their parents before being able to cleave to a mate. Parents must help their teens with this process. Thus parents find their role changing from sovereign control (20' giant) to more of a friend-friend relationship. The lines of control are drawn in (but not completely severed). Responsibility for actions is passed to the teen. Let them suffer the consequences of their actions, positive or negative. Peers take on more and more importance as adolescence compare themselves to their friends to see if they are acceptable to others their age.

During the early stages of adolescence teens may argue and talk back. During the later stages, though, if things haven't been worked out right, they'll start distancing themselves from their parents by rejecting some of their parent's more important values, especially spiritual ones. This is a prime way of 'getting back' at their parents. Often this is Christians' teens rebel so much.

If children don't work through these stages they won't mature into a balanced adult. We all know many adults who have immaturities from stages they missed as teens. In the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32) we see this. The younger son rebelled (one extreme) to exert his

independence. His ship pulled away prematurely and failed. However the older brother who stayed home and never went through the stages of maturing wasn't any better off. He never established a secure identity for himself, that's why he couldn't rejoice in his brother's return. He still needed parental favoritism because he didn't have any security in himself. Sometimes they stay like that for the rest of their lives.

MOTHERS & FATHERS, BOYS & GIRLS It is usually the mother the teen first starts breaking from because she stands for childhood, and being close to and dependent on a mother makes a teen feel like a child. Girls can have a harder time of this than boys, for they are often closer to their mothers growing up. Not only do they tend to be more sensitive and emotional than boys during these years, but they often don't have anyone to turn to when they turn from their mother. Boys have long been taught not to be 'Mamma's boy', and they have their father to draw closer to. Fathers play important roles during these early adolescent years. They serve as way stations for adolescents leaving childhood (mother). They can greatly help their sons and daughters transition into adults by accepting them as they are and not treating them like children.

If mothers or even fathers talk to them or treat them like children they will immediately notice. This can cause rebellion in them. They aren't mature enough to say "I want to think and decide for myself. Don't treat me like a child. When you boss me around, I feel like a child, and I don't like that." Parents must listen to hear that said in their actions and forms of rebellion. Parents must learn to really listen - be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to become angry (James 1:19). That means parents must work through their own fears and insecurities, their own immaturities and lack of self-control, their own hesitancy about letting go. Adolescence, to be handled right, means a parent must be mature and secure in their own right. If you can't handle your emotions, you can't handle theirs!

EXIT PARENTS, ENTER PEERS When adolescents start turning FROM parents, it is peers they turn TO. They need to know how they compare to others their age. Are they OK? Do they fit in? Can they make and keep new friends? These become VERY important for them. If they are unwilling to spend a night away from home, avoid peers, or seem especially fearful, then something is hindering their maturing process

Do your best to help them have the right friends. Open your home to others. Get to know their friends. Sometimes you can help someone else's adolescent better during these years than you can your own. Talk with them about their friends: why they picked them, traits they like and don't like (ones they'll want to copy or reject), why they do what they do, etc. It's a good way of keeping communication open and helping them think through what they are doing.

OPPOSITE SEX FRIENDS As adolescence progresses, teens are more and more interested in the opposite sex. As they become more secure with their own identity and fitting in with same-sex friends, they start wondering if the opposite sex will accept them for who they are becoming. This is natural and important. Brother-sister friendships are very valuable. Unless they understand the opposite sex and know what traits in the opposite sex they like and dislike, they will have a much harder time finding and being a mature mate. It helps them know how to act around the opposite sex -- what is accepted and what is rejected.

REGRESSIONS Its natural for the boat we talked about earlier to make a quick trip back to the dock to take on emergency supplies from time to time. A teenager may all of a sudden start acting more like a child for a short period of time. This sudden regression is natural, they'll pass through it if you give them some space. Encourage them, but they must do it on their own. Like a bird getting out of an egg or butterfly out of a cocoon, they have to do it on their own to properly mature.

Thus adolescence can be an exciting and growing time. Special bonding and closeness can take place. Or it can become a constant battle for control, a time of uncontrolled emotions and a home in uproar. Understanding what your teen is going through can help a lot. Working through your

own problems is also essential. With God's help you can enjoy a rewarding relationship with your teens, one that will last the rest of your lives

5. BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS

Root: sin, pride

Fruit of the Spirit that is needed (Galatians 5:22-23): love, peace, gentleness, forgiveness

Is there a relationship in your life that isn't as close as it once was? Perhaps there's some one that you need to make up with but don't quite know where to start. Just how are we to heal broken relationships? God's Word gives us the answer.

1. CONFESS IT TO GOD. The prodigal son and David both recognized their broken relationship sins as being against God. Confess your part as sin (1 John 1:9).

2. FORGIVE THE PERSON. Even if they don't apologize, we are to forgive (Matthew 6:12-15; 5:22, 38-39, Romans 12:19; 1 Peter 3:9). Jesus is our example in forgiveness (Ephesians 4:32). Give up any right you feel you have to hurt them back for their hurt to you. Take that hurt to God instead, asking Him to heal you of it. Remember, if we don't forgive others God won't forgive us (Matthew 6:12-15; 7:1-5, 12; Luke 6:31; Romans 2:1). (See 18 Unforgiveness under III B Understanding Personal Problems above)

3. MAKE THE FIRST MOVE. Even if you are totally innocent and have nothing against the other person, if they have something against you the Bible says you are to go to them before you can worship God (Matthew 5:23-24; 18:15-17). Do it quickly, too. Don't put it off. If you can't go in person, call or write a letter or email, then see them in person as soon as possible (Matthew 18:15), unless they live a great distance away. Never send the message with another person.

4. GO IN GENUINE LOVE. Pray for God to fill your heart with love for them (Ephesians 4:32; Matthew 5:44; 18:15-35). God says if we don't love others, we can't really love Him (1 John 2:9-11; 3:14-15; 4:7-11, 20-21; Luke 17:3-4). God doesn't say we have to like (fleshly appeal, approval of their values and actions) but we do have to love (unconditionally wanting what is best for them) everyone.

5. DROP THE MATTER. Don't bring it up to anyone ever, don't allow it in your mind. Don't gossip about it. Ask God to remove it whenever it comes to mind. Keep doing this for as long as necessary (Matthew 18:21-35; Luke 17:3-4).

It is our pride that makes this so hard. We expect others to come to us, apologizing and begging our forgiveness. Then we will be great enough to forgive. That's not how God forgives us, nor how we are to forgive others. He reached out to us by coming to earth and then going to the cross -- before we made any move to Him. He wants us to do the same, for in that way we become more like Him. It really hurts me to see my children not getting along with each other, and I'm sure it hurts our heavenly Father when His children don't get along, either!

6. SEXUAL ABUSE, RAPE

Root: sin, lust

Fruit of the Spirit that is needed (Galatians 5:22-23): peace

One of the most devastating forms of abuse that can happen to a person is sexual abuse in the form of rape. While this can happen to men as well, it is most commonly experienced by women or children. Rape is a physically and emotionally violent attack on a weaker victim in a most intimate and personal way. It is one of the most traumatic experiences a person can experience.

Unfortunately, it is very common today. In America, 1 out of every 6 women will be the victim of an

attempted or completed rape in her lifetime. Most rapes go unreported because of shame and fear experienced by the victim. It takes much understanding, love and patience to counsel a rape victim.

Female rape victims are best counseled by women because they often have a fear and distrust of men. Women can better understand and empathize with them as well.

Women who have been raped often feel anger because of the unfairness of what has happened to them and because of the way they may have been treated afterwards. They may feel their body is dirty and feel hopeless about the future. They may feel guilty and blame themselves, thinking they should have been more careful or have done something to avoid the event. Fear of it happening again is quite common. They also feel grief, for something very important to them has been lost and they will never get it back. What this loss is not just physical but emotional as well.

When talking with a victim of rape, make sure it is clear that you are standing with them. Do not let them think you in any way blame them or that they are somehow at fault. She needs your total support and trust. Listen to them and make sure they know they are being listened to. They need someone to really listen to them more than they need someone to give them advice. And when you do give advice, think before speaking. Don't offer simple platitudes saying that God will make it all right or that it really wasn't that bad. That heaps more pain on the victim.

You can help them heal through prayer and the Scriptures. They may be angry at God and not want to hear the Bible or pray. Don't push or criticize. Be patient and understanding. Help them know that they are completely cleansed and restored (Luke 17:11-19; Ephesians 5:25-27). Help them see the difference between true and false guilt (see above 7. Guilt and Shame).

Pray with them. Stay in touch with them often. Read scripture and pray each time. Listen, no matter how long they talk. Be patient. These things take a long time to get over. Do not let them think you are impatient. Jesus is patient with us, no matter how long it takes for us to heal or work through an issue. It will take time for their trust to be restored again. Make sure they know there is someone who cares and is always available for them.

It is important for them to acknowledge what has happened, not to everyone but to the one counseling them. If they won't talk to you find someone they trust and will talk to. There are rape hotlines where a woman can call and talk to someone without being known. This can be a good first step. Let them express their emotions in words, no matter how harsh and angry they may be. Let them get it out. Eventually, for their own freedom and moving ahead in life, they will have to heal from the hurt and be willing to give up the anger and unforgiveness they feel toward the abuser and turn him over to God for God to deal with (Romans 12:19). See 18. Forgiveness above for more information.

It can be very freeing for a female rape victim to press legal charges against her abuser. This should be encouraged even though the victim may not want to face him or the event. It can be very empowering for her, and she has a moral obligation to prevent it from happening to future victims.

In the Old Testament, the penalty for rape was death (Deuteronomy 22:25).

See also: Suffering; Abuse, the One Abused; Forgiveness

7. ABUSE

Root: sin, evil

Fruit of the Spirit that is needed (Galatians 5:22-23): healing, forgiveness, joy

An abuser is someone who disrespects, insults, controls or devalues another verbally, physically or sexually. Abuse is a sin and abusers are to be avoided (Proverbs 22:24; Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:4-5; Luke 17:3; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15).

THE ONE ABUSED

BY A MATE Anyone abused is in need of godly counseling and support. Usually it is a woman who is abused by her husband. She will be full of pain, anger and rejection. Let her talk about these things. Do not minimize them or make excuses. The pain is very deep and she must be able to feel it and express it. Do not push her to forgive or be restored. These will come in time. Reassure her that what happened is not her fault and she is not responsible.

The abuser needs to go through a time of counseling, repentance and growth on his own. Then there needs to be marriage counseling for both of them. He needs to prove to his wife that he will be kind and she can trust him. Until that happens, she may want to live separately from him. That is Biblical (1 Corinthians 7:15).

For their own freedom and moving ahead in life, the abused mate will have to give up the anger and unforgiveness she feels to her abuser and turn him over to God for God to deal with (Romans 12:19). See 18. Forgiveness above for more information. Scriptures about forgiving an abuser include 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; James 4:6-7; 1 Peter 5:6-7

Scriptures that help with overcoming abuse include: Psalm 34:4-5; Proverbs 3:5-6; 55:4-8; Isaiah 26:3-4; 61:10; Matthew 7:12; 2 Samuel 22:2-4; Psalm 27:10; Romans 8:16; 2 Corinthians 4:7-11; 1 John 3:1; Psalm 18:2; 28:7; Isaiah 43:18-19; 58:8; 61:7; Joel 2:25

BY A PARENT If a child is being abused, the child must be rescued and protected. This must be done at all costs, even if police and legal authorities become involved. We are responsible to protect children from harm and evil, even if it is done by their parents (Matthew 18:6; Luke 17:2).

When counseling a child who has been abused, or an adult who was abused at a child, be it male or female, it is important to listen to their story. Never in any way justify what was done or try to minimize it or explain it away. That adds to the victim's abuse and puts them in deeper bondage. Instead let them talk. Affirm them and what they say. Never in any way minimize their pain. If you have doubts that what they are saying is true, give them the benefit of the doubt for the moment. The truth will come out later.

Reassure the survivor of abuse that they are not to blame and it is not their fault. Eventually, for their own freedom and moving ahead in life, they will have to give up the anger and unforgiveness she feels to her abuser and turn him over to God for God to deal with (Romans 12:19). See 18. Forgiveness above for more information.

Scriptures dealing with the abuse of children include: Psalm 34:17-19; 37:2-39; Matthew 18:6; Romans 8:28; 15:13.

THE ONE DOING THE ABUSING

When one marriage partner is abusive to another, it is not marriage counseling that is needed. The abuser has issues that go deeper than the marriage relationship. It is not a matter of the husband and wife learning how to better communicate or work together. Abuse is a deep-seated evil in the offender that must be removed before any healthy relationships can be formed. In fact, when there is abuse in marriage, God allows for the victim to leave for the sake of peace and protection (1 Corinthians 7:15). He does not expect an abused wife to stay in an abusive situation. She can and should separate for the sake of peace.

If the abuser wants to repent and change, he (or she) must go through an extended time of counseling and mentoring so they can grow emotionally and spiritually. Issues in their own childhood and background that contributed to their problem must be faced and worked through. Mature Christian growth must take place. A spiritual mentor and accountability partner is very helpful for this. Root issues must be faced and resolved. Often spiritual warfare is also necessary if the violence and

destructiveness are demonically influenced. See my Spiritual Warfare Handbook for more information.

Scriptures to help an abuser overcome his sin include: Psalm 34:14; Romans 12:10; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Ephesians 5:25-33; 6:4; Philippians 2:3-4; 1 Thessalonians 5:15, 22

See also: Sexual Addictions; Addictions, All; Abuse, The Abuser; Abuse, The Victim; Sexual Abuse, Rape; Forgiveness

D. UNDERSTANDING CIRCUMSTANTIAL PROBLEMS

(Getting along with your situations)

Sometimes we face difficulties in our circumstances of life. It's nothing we have done wrong and it doesn't have to do with relationships with others. It's conditions we face that become trying.

1. TRIALS, SUFFERING

Root: sin in the world

Fruit of the Spirit that is needed (Galatians 5:22-23): faith in God

One of Satan's best arguments to turn people against God is the issue of suffering. If God is good, how could He allow suffering? If there is a God, why is there so much evil in the world?

The question as to why some have much suffering has no clear answer. God doesn't defend Himself or explain what He allows. He gives us a free will choice. Sin and the resulting evil are the natural consequences of turning from Him. Still, innocent people suffer. Some question God because of it. The implication is that either God isn't in control of everything or He isn't good. Either way He loses. No wonder this tool is so effective for Satan and his forces. How can we answer it?

The fact of pain in the world is not a reason to see God as less than loving. Still, innocent people suffer. We can't try to evaluate God's person and character by these things for He has proven His character and love by leaving heaven, becoming a man, living on earth, then going to the cross to take on the punishment for every sin we would ever commit. That proves His love for us beyond a shadow of a doubt. If it weren't for that we would all spend eternity in hell. So anything less than hell from now on is because of His grace and mercy. It's not up to us to judge why He seems to show more love and mercy to some than others. God isn't accountable to us. We cannot stand in judgment of Him until we know all the facts as He knows them and see everything as He sees it.

We can't try to evaluate God's person and character by things we don't understand for He has proven His character and love by leaving heaven, becoming a man, living on earth, then going to cross to take on the punishment for every sin we would ever commit. That proves His love for us beyond a shadow of a doubt. He definitely is good. If it weren't for the cross, we would all deserve eternity in hell from this moment on. So anything less than hell from now on is His grace and mercy. Why He seems to show more to some than others is not up to us to judge. God isn't accountable to us. We cannot stand in judgment of Him until we know all the facts as He knows them and see everything as well as He sees it. So we trust in His character as revealed by His works in our life. We focus on the known, not the unknown.

Many things seem unfair to little children but they must trust their parents. Getting an injection from a doctor, having a pretty shiny knife taken away, things like these seem to a child that a parent doesn't love them. But a child doesn't have the perspective to truly understand all that is involved and we don't either. We do know that facing things we don't understand gives us an opportunity to trust. Our faith is stretched and we grow. God is glorified as we see Him deliver and as others watch

us continually trust Him no matter what happens. We fall back on the fact that He is in sovereign control of everything and that that all He does is out of love for us. More than that we cannot know.

A related question is why God would allow Satan to attack us at all when He could prevent it. If He is a God of love, why not deny Satan and demons any opportunity to attack? Then we wouldn't have to resist or learn to fight. Life would be much simpler and easier. But that isn't God's purpose, nor is it how He works. Why didn't God just kill all the Canaanites and not have the Jews have to go through warfare against them? The Jews had a free will to follow God or not, and if they followed, they needed to learn to obey and to fight as God would have them. Perseverance, faith, teamwork, patience, obedience and many lessons were tied up in this. God used it to stretch their faith, to give them opportunities to grow and see Him work through them and to show others His glory by what He could do through His people. The same is true of us today.

Scriptures that can help as we go through suffering include: Psalm 55:22; 91:3-5; 119:75-76; Isaiah 26:3; 38:15, 17; 41:10; Romans 5:3-4; 8:28, 31-39; James 1:2-4, 12; Lamentations 3:22-24; Luke 21:15-19; 2 Timothy 4:18; 1 Peter 3:15; 4:12-16,19; Revelation 2:10; James 1:2-4,12

2. SORROW, GRIEF, LOSS

Root: pain, loss

Fruit of the Spirit that is needed (Galatians 5:22-23): joy

We all face sorrow. As a pastor I get involved in the sorrows of others as well as my own. No one is exempt. Even Jesus Himself was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief (Isaiah 53:3). By looking at how Jesus handled sorrow we can get a good idea about how to handle it in our own lives. How did Jesus respond when His cousin and forerunner, John, was brutally murdered?

The first things Jesus did was to spend A FEW MOMENTS ALONE (Matthew 14:12-13). There are private thoughts and feelings that must be processed and allowed to flow. There is the necessity of prayer. There is a need to pour out our souls to God. Staying alone isn't good, but starting out with a little time alone is important.

Despite the pain and loss, it is important to RESUME NORMAL ACTIVITIES as soon as possible. Jesus returned from His time alone to feed the 5,000, then walk on the water. It's natural to want to do things for someone in sorrow, but the sooner they get involved in regular responsibility instead of having more time to sit and think, the better. Normal activities force you to make decisions and orient yourself to life. After a loss readjustments must be made, but life must go on.

Jesus knew to ACCEPT SORROW AS A PHASE OF TRANSITION (Matthew 9:14; John 16:20-21). There is a time to mourn and a time to be glad (Ecclesiastes 3:4). When sorrow comes it seems it will never leave, but we must realize that it will be gone. It takes time, time is the great healer for sorrow.

While being alone at the start helps, soon it is important to SHARE YOUR GRIEF WITH OTHERS. Jesus did this in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:37-38). Just having someone to sit quietly and listen, or just be with you if you don't want to talk, is very, very important.

It is important to ACCEPT TRAGEDY AS THE WILL OF GOD as Jesus did (Matthew 26:24). Don't continually ask yourself "Why?" or wonder "what if..." Don't feel guilty or responsible. God is in control of all and has a reason even if we don't understand it (Rom 8:28).

Notice also that Jesus bore no bitterness. When sorrow hits, LAY ASIDE RESENTMENT. Forgive anyone you feel any resentment towards, as Jesus did (Luke 23:34).

Finally, remember that SORROW IS TEMPORARY. To help them through their sorrow, Jesus tried to get the disciple's eyes on the future with Him (John 14:1ff). We must keep our eyes on heaven, when there will be no more sorrow! Then Jesus will turn our sorrow into joy (Matthew 5:4).

Scriptures which give comfort in suffering include: 1 Thessalonians 4:13; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4; 6:10; Ecclesiastes 7:2-3; Hebrews 4:15; 12:2; Isaiah 35:10; 53:3-4; John 4:1-3; 16:20,22; Lamentations 3:32-33; Matthew 5:4; 11:28-29; Proverbs 10:22; Psalm 30:5; 34:18; 126:5-6; Revelation 21:4

See also: Suffering

3. FINANCIAL PROBLEMS

Root: ignorance, greed, fear

Fruit of the Spirit that is needed (Galatians 5:22-23): peace, self-control

Money is an important part of life and essential to our civilization. Without money we'd have to barter and trade for everything we wanted. We need to have our money serve us, and not we serving our money. Money is a great servant, but a terrible master. When we use it as the Bible tells us, things go well. When we don't, there are negative consequences. Putting our faith or dependance on money is a sin (1 Timothy 6:10). There is nothing evil about money, but putting it before God it is very wrong (Luke 16:14).

It's not the amount of money we have but our attitude to it that is key. Money can become an idol that replaces God in our lives (Luke 16:13). Many trust in their resources to meet their needs, but riches ultimately fail (1 Timothy 6:9). Money can be deceptive. It can seem to bring security and pleasure, but in the end it doesn't (Mark 4:19). No amount of money will ever be enough to fill the God-shaped hole in our hearts that only He can fill. Money may help our lives function smoothly, but it doesn't satisfy the deepest desires of the human heart.

The love of money always leads to wanting more: there is never enough. This is called greed, or covetousness (Ecclesiastes 5:10; Exodus 20:17; Psalm 119:36; Deuteronomy 5:21; Proverbs 11:24-26; Matthew 16:26; Proverbs 22:16; Hebrews 13:5). We become dissatisfied and always want more, no matter how much we have. The danger with money is that it can become a substitute for trust in God. Too many people evaluate themselves and their 'success' in life in terms of dollars and possessions. Money does not bring security. The more money God entrusts a person with the more they are accountable for their stewardship of this important resource. When our money serves us instead of us serving it, we avoid pitfalls and troubles.

We are commanded to work to earn money (Proverbs 14:23; Ephesians 4:28). Faith in God tells us He provides what we need (not always what we want). Therefore we must be content with what we have (Hebrews 13:5; Philippians 4:11-13). Contentment is an act of trust. It says: "God, I choose to trust you and give thanks no matter what my circumstances are. You know exactly what I need!" See also Philippians 4:11-17; 1 Timothy 3:3, 8; 6:8; Titus 1:7; Hebrews 13:5-6; Isaiah 56:11.

The book of Proverbs has much to say about money. It says there are advantages of wealth for it provides some protection and security (Proverbs 10:15). However, there are many disadvantages for it deceives the wealthy person into thinking he doesn't need God (Proverbs 18:11), it can make him unkind to others (Proverbs 18:23) and it can tempt to prideful independence from God (Proverbs 30:8-9).

God gives us more money than we really need and expects us to share the extra with others in need. This is called stewardship (1 Corinthians 4:2; Matthew 6:19-21, 24, 33; Luke 6:38; 19:11-27; 21:1-4; Galatians 6:7). We are to also give money to support God's work in the world (1 Timothy

5:17-18; Philippians 4:15-17; 2 Corinthians 9:13). In addition, we are required to pay taxes (Romans 13:1-7; Matthew 17:24-27; Mark 12:17).

As we give to others, we are blessed by God (Proverbs 11:25; 2 Corinthians 9:6-7). In the Old Testament, people were commanded to give 10% of what they had to God (Leviticus 27:30; Proverbs 3:9). That command is not repeated in the New Testament. Instead, we are told to give in proportion to how God has blessed us (2 Corinthians 9:7; Deuteronomy 16:17). Someone once said that God does not look at what we give, He looks at what we keep for ourselves (Luke 21:1-4). 10% can be a good starting place for God's people, but there is nothing legalistic about it. Each must give as God directs them.

My wife and I have established some principles concerning money which we have tried to pass on to our children. One is to not spend what you don't have. God gives us 24 hours of time in a day and that's all we have. It's a limited resource and we must learn to live within it, although we often try to do more than we really have time for. Money is a limited resource, too. Unfortunately, today we can spend money we don't have, and the temptation to do so can be great. But that will catch up with you and can cause many problems. Make sure you don't spend money you don't have. The Bible forbids going into debt (Proverbs 3:9-10; 10:4; 13:4; 21:5; 22:7, 26-27; Romans 6:12; 8:5; 13:7-8, 13-14; Psalm 37:21; Matthew 6:21, 31-33; John 6:27; Galatians 5:17; 1 Timothy 6:6-10, 1; Luke 12:15; Hebrews 13:5-6; Deuteronomy 15:6; 28:12). If we do owe others money, we must pay it back as soon as possible (Proverbs 3:27-28; 22:7, 26-27; Luke 16:11-12).

A second principle we taught our children is that you can only spend your money once. While this might seem obvious, the truth behind it is that if you use it for the wrong thing then it won't be there for what God intended it to be used for. In this country, with very few exceptions, God gives us the amount of money He knows we will need to live on plus extra to use for His Kingdom. He knows what He wants us to use it for. That's why a budget can be a good way of discovering God's will for the use of your money and make sure you stay within your limits. I can spend money I have (principle 1) but I must also spend it for what God intended it to be spend for (principle 2). If not, I won't have it for what I really need, nor will I properly use some of it for His Kingdom. That's why we always remember that we can only spend our money once so we need to make sure we use it wisely.

Scriptures which give God's perspective on money include: Deuteronomy 8:17-18; Psalm 34:10; 37:16; 62:10; Proverbs 11:15; 13:7; 15:16; Ecclesiastes 5:10). God also makes promises concerning our money: Proverbs 10:22; Malachi 3:10; Philippians 4:19.

4. AGING, OLD AGE

Root: natural, effect of the fall

Fruit of the Spirit that is needed (Galatians 5:22-23): peace, joy, self-control

Because of improved medical treatments, many people are living longer than in past times. Growing old isn't easy. It is God's way of warning us that we won't live on this earth forever and we better prepare for our life in the next world. God promises He will be with us in old age as He was when we were young (Isaiah 46:4).

Maturity can come with aging, although many just grow older but not more mature. We should become wiser as we age (Job 12:12; 1 Kings 12:6). We can see life in better perspective and can evaluate more accurately what really matters and what doesn't. We ought to see our own strengths and weaknesses more clearly. God continues to work in us, helping us become more like Jesus (Philippians 1:6). Those who are older should be shown special honor (Leviticus 19:32; 1 Peter 5:5; Proverbs 16:31).

One of the difficulties in aging is that our bodies aren't as strong or energetic as they were. Aches and pains develop. These are opportunities to trust God and rely on His help. Remember, these are temporary for in heaven we will have perfect health and strength (Isaiah 40:31; 2 Corinthians 4:16-17). God has big plans for us in heaven! How glorious it will be!!! We need to be patient now and do what we can to serve Him and help others.

Whenever possible, those who are older should help those who are younger to learn and grow (Psalm 71:18). Youth and adults may need assistance choosing a righteous path, and the experience of someone older can guide them. Reach out to those who are younger to help, encourage and train them (Proverbs 23:22; Ecclesiastes 9:10; Titus 2:2-5).

As long as a person still has life, they know God still has a reason for them to be on earth. There should be no fear of death for those who trust in God (See 6 Someone Dying below).

ATTITUDE TO AGING: I recently read a blog by Max Lucado that helped me look at death in a bit of a different way. He focuses on aging as a blessing instead of a curse. We know it entered with the curse when man sinned, but it really shows God's grace for it allows us to be reunited with Him instead of living forever on this earth separated from Him.

Max Lucado likened our bodies to a bulb planted in a garden which weakens and crumbles. We are glad to have this happen because from the dead bulb comes something beautiful and wondrous. If it didn't go through the aging and dying process, it would just remain a plain, unproductive bulb taking up space somewhere. It was created to die so new life could pour forth from it. It wasn't created to just remain a plain bulb forever. The same is true of our bodies.

What if those in heaven saw our bodies like we see a bulb planted in the earth? Would they become excited with anticipation as we weaken and crumble physically, knowing that the time of our death is near? Do they rejoice because this process produces our release to be what we were ultimately created to be? So, each new wrinkle or pain, the medical tests that come back less than perfect, the growing limitations we feel – these are good signs because they mean our time of blossoming forth is getting near. These bodies are weak and getting weaker. In fact, they begin to decay the minute we are born.

That's all part of God's plan. It's why He created the aging process. He wanted to bring us home to a more beautiful state, something to last for all eternity. But He wants to make sure that while we are still on this earth, we remember we are heading in that direction. Every wrinkle or ache and pain means we are one step closer to that last step when Jesus will change these weak bodies into eternal bodies. No more pain, or sickness, or tears. Only joy and bless. And of that there will be NO end. See Philippians 3:21; 1 Corinthians 15:36-54.

God's promises to those aging include: 1 Kings 3:14; Psalm 91:16; 92:13-14; Proverbs 17:6; Isaiah 46:4. Examples of aging in the Bible: Deuteronomy 34:7; Joshua 14:7-12; 1 Chronicles 29:28. Other Bible verses about aging include: Genesis 24:1; 47:9; Deuteronomy 32:7; 34:7; Job 5:26; 111:17; 2:12-13; 32:7; Psalm 71:9-18; 90:10; 143:5; 148:12-13; Proverbs 16:31; Matthew 6:10; 2 Samuel 19:34-37; 1 Timothy 5:1-2.

5. ILLNESS, SICKNESS

Root: result of the fall

Fruit of the Spirit that is needed (Galatians 5:22-23): peace, joy, self-control

We all experience times of illness and poor health. Some have very little and others a lot, but no one always has perfect health. This is a reminder that we live in a fallen world under the curse

(Genesis 3). It keeps us aware that one day we will leave this earth and enter eternity, either with God or separated from Him forever. Sickness reminds us this life is temporary. When we suffer from illness or disease, we have an opportunity to trust God and depend on Him. We must yield to His will and plan in our lives. For more information see above: 1 Trials and Suffering and 2 Sorrow, Grief and Loss.

VISITING THE SICK It is good for a pastor, leader or counselor to visit those who are sick. It is a great way to show the love of Jesus, and at those times people are generally more open for serious talks about their faith. Make sure you come at a convenient time and let them know you are coming. Don't stay too long, they need rest. Smile and be encouraging. Ask questions and let them do most of the talking. You are here for their sake, not yours. Touching conveys love, so touch them in appropriate ways: pat their arm, hold their hand to pray, etc. Make sure you read a Scripture before leaving. Psalm 23 is always good to use. Other good ones to use are included above under 1 Trials and Suffering and 2 Sorrow, Grief and Loss. Always pray out loud with them before leaving. Check back later through a visit, call or letter to see how they are doing. Show you really do care and are interested in them. You are Jesus' representative and He will encourage them and love them through you.

Bible passages about those who were sick include Psalm 107:20; Matthew 8:8; Mark 6:13; 2 Corinthians 12:7-10; Proverbs 4:20-22; 1 Peter 4:19. Other passages about sickness include Psalm 23; 41:3; 103:3; Matthew 4:23; James 1:6; 5:13-16; 11:4; Jeremiah 30:17; 1 Peter 2:24;

God's promises to those who are facing ill health and/or death include: Romans 8:28-29; Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:2; Hosea 13:14; John 5:28-29; 14:1-3; Acts 24:15; Romans 5:3-5; 8:38-39; 14:7-8; 1 Corinthians 15:20-22,51-54; Colossians 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14; 5:10; Hebrews 2:14-15; Revelation 14:13.

God promises He will be with and help those who are sick (Exodus 23:25; Deuteronomy 7:15; Isaiah 35:6; 57:18-19; Malachi 4:2; 2 Corinthians 4:17; James 5:14-16). He does not promise to heal everyone in this life but promises to give us grace to endure and assurance of eternity with Him.

ILLNESS CAUSED BY DEMONS

There is often a strong relationship between **spiritual deliverance and physical healing**. Often physical problems are also gone when the demons leave. That is because the demons were causing the physical problems. Examples of these in the Bible include: crippled limbs (Luke 13:11-17), Paul's thorn in the flesh (eye disease? - 2 Corinthians 12:7), muteness (sometimes dumbness, too - Matthew 9:32-33; 12:22; Mark 9:17-18,24-25), blindness (Matthew 12:22), seizures (Mark 1:26; 9:17-18,20,22,25; Matthew 17:15,18; Luke 9:39), deafness (Mark 9:17-18,20,25), sores (skin cancer?) (Job 2:7), boils and other painful afflictions (Psalm 78:49 - the plagues in Egypt were demon-caused), and physical torments of all kinds (Revelation 9:5, 10). The Bible states that Satan can cause illness (Job 2:7-8), even death (Job 1:19).

Physical healing can be a result of deliverance. If any of the demons were causing physical problems those problems will be resolved when the demons are removed. Generational spirits can cause the same ailments from generation to generation. Physical problems are usually not God's main concern; rather He is more concerned for the spiritual condition of the heart. We often pray for the symptom (physical problem) to be removed while God wants us to seek Him and what He is trying to teach us through it. Paul's thorn in the flesh is a clear example. It wasn't God's will for that demon to be removed, but for Paul to be spiritually strengthened through the experience.

If a physical problem is present, it can be good to find out when it first started and what else was going on at that time. Instead of focusing on removing the physical symptom, look for the root cause, be it demonic, spiritual or whatever else it may be.

It must be noted that **not all illness is demonic** in origin. Jesus healed physical ills that weren't demonic (Matthew 4:23-24; 8:16-17 fulfilled Isaiah 53:4; Mark 1:34; Acts 9:34; etc.). The Bible clearly talks about illnesses that are not demonic: severe pain (Matthew 4:24), seizures (Matthew 4:24), paralysis (Matthew 4:24; Acts 8:7), leprosy (Matthew 10:8), blindness (Luke 7:21), crippled limbs (Acts 8:7) and many other various diseases (Matthew 4:24). The fact that some physical ailments are on both lists (like seizures) shows that many ailments may have demonic or natural causes. They could be from one source or the other.

Jesus often cast out demons and cured illness at the same time. Jesus said he would do this (Luke 13:32). He did this at the start of His ministry (Matthew 4:23-24; 8:16; Mark 1:34; Luke 4:41), around Tyre and Sidon (Mark 3:10-12; Luke 6:18-19), and in the middle of His ministry (Luke 7:21). Many female followers of Jesus were cured of both (Luke 8:2).

Even more precise are the accounts of when **Jesus both cast out demons and healed illness in a person at the same time** (Mark 6:13; Acts 5:16). Philip did this in Samaria (Acts 8:7) and Paul did it in Ephesus (Acts 19:12).

Thus it is obvious that **some, but not all illness is demonic**. There are no certain illnesses that are exclusively demonic, nor others that aren't. Any physical ill can be demonic, but no one ill is always demonic. In our day and age we err by seeing too little illness as being demonic. Thus we often miss the cure. How can we tell if an illness or physical problem is demonic or not? Some clues to look for are: medical doctors aren't able to bring relief or cure; there is a pattern of it running in the family; it seems strange or doesn't follow the regular pattern of symptoms (comes and goes for no particular reason, etc.); or you feel in your spirit that it should be prayed about and looked into as possibly being demonic.

Again, our pattern for bringing about this removal of physical ills by deliverance should **follow Jesus' example**. He rebuked a fever and it left immediately and strength instantly returned (Luke 4:39). On at least one occasion power came from within Jesus to heal (Luke 6:19). He often laid hands on a person to bring both deliverance and healing (Luke 4:40; 13:13; 4:29; Matthew 8:15; Luke 13:11-13).

As to us doing this today, again it must be **done in God's strength and power**. If He chooses to bring healing through deliverance that is His will. We must never demand it or make it dependent on having enough faith. No one today has a gift to heal anyone and everyone. It is right for us to pray for healing when doing deliverance and leave the results to God. It is also necessary to deal with any demons who may be causing the illness (physical or mental, see page 11). Often demons affect our health in indirect ways, such as working in us so we eat or do things that are unhealthy for us in the long run and undermine our health. All of these, too, must be dealt with in Jesus' name (Matthew 10:1). Sometimes God may lead you to **anoint with oil** as a symbol of the Holy Spirit who does the healing (Mark 6:13). Do NOT put any faith in the oil or any ritual in using it, it is simply an audio-visual.

Therefore, be aware that **often illness is demonic**, especially when doctors are unable to bring a cure. Even diseases they can cure can still be demonic, especially if there are other signs of demonizing active in the person's life. Keep this in mind when praying and seeking wisdom. Don't accept any illness as "incurable." Always make sure it isn't demonic (by asking God for wisdom and commanding any demons involved in that ailment to be gone in Jesus' name). Remember, when dealing with emotional and spiritual ills in your warfare praying, don't leave out physical ills! Never fear, demons can only cause ills with God's approval (Job 1:6-12).

One word of warning: since demons can cause illness, they can also bring **counterfeit 'healings'** by stopping the physical ills they themselves cause (Matthew 12:24; 24:24; 2 Thessalonians 2:9; Revelation 16:14). This explains miraculous healings that aren't done in accordance with God's will and Word.

For more information see my "Spiritual Warfare Handbook."

IS IT GOD'S WILL FOR EVERYONE TO BE HEALED TODAY?

There are those today who believe that Jesus not only paid for sin on the cross, but that He also paid for our sickness. They say that each is received by faith, if you have enough faith to receive it. Loss of faith, then, causes the loss of these benefits of faith. They claim some are especially gifted in healing and can heal those who come to them.

Is this true? This is not just one peripheral issue, but stands very central in our salvation and Christian life. Is God's sovereignty or man's free will the final and ultimate deciding factor? It must be God's sovereignty. The motive for living for Jesus should not be fear of losing our salvation. The goal of living for Jesus should not be a problem free life. Pain and suffering aren't to be faced by whipping up enough 'faith' so that God removes it. If it isn't removed then the person lives with the feelings of failure and guilt believes that is their fault by not having enough faith. What about these claims of 'faith healers'? What does the Bible say?

IS THE GIFT OF HEALING FOR TODAY? While it's true that Jesus and the Apostles healed, it was done as a sign to authenticate that they were from God (Matthew 12:39). This was God's way having people listen to them instead of all the counterfeits around. When the New Testament was complete and people knew what to look for in a true man of God, there was no longer any reason for the sign. In AD 35 all were healed but by AD 60 some were not (Epaphroditus, Paul's thorn in the flesh). Then by AD 67 very few were being healed (Trophimus was left at Miletus sick, Timothy's stomach was unhealed, etc.). Jerusalem, the scene of many early miracles, had not one miracle done in it after Stephen was stoned. The people had the evidence but rejected it. James, the oldest book in the Bible, says that if someone is sick we are to pray for them (James 5:14).

SHOULD WE SEE MIRACLES TODAY LIKE IN BIBLE TIMES? Actually if you list all the miracles in the Bible you will find almost all of them fit three time periods. They aren't evenly spread out throughout history but cluster in the times of Moses/Joshua, Elijah/Elisha and Jesus/apostles. In each of these times a new challenge had developed so God sent a new message through a new messenger whom He authenticated by miracles ("signs"). One more time of miracles is coming, called the Tribulation. In order to tell those who are speaking for God from counterfeits, God's spokesmen will be able to do sign miracles.

IS FAITH A PREREQUISITE FOR HEALING? Jesus didn't make faith a requirement for healing. Many that He healed didn't have faith. The impotent man at the pool didn't even know who He was. The man with the withered hand and the man with dropsy were healed as a sign to religious leaders who were present, they didn't ask to be healed. The cripple that Peter and Paul healed outside the temple didn't exercise any faith. Of course the demoniacs who were delivered and those brought back from the dead didn't exercise faith. Then there are others who had strong faith but weren't healed: Stephen, Paul, Timothy, Job, David, Elisha, etc.

IS 'HEALING' TODAY THE SAME AS IN BIBLE TIMES? Today's 'healers' must meet the same characteristics of Jesus and the apostles to claim they are doing what was done then. Jesus and the apostles healed with a word or touch wherever and whenever. There was no special place or time, no chants or music, no gimmicks, nothing. Do today's faith healers walk down the hall in a hospital and empty every room? That's how Jesus and Peter did it. Also, Bible miracles were done instantly,

not gradually or slowly. There was no healing to 'claim' or lose. Healing was then done totally, not partially, and it was never lost. Everyone was healed. 100% of every one, no matter the need, was healed. Organic diseases were healed: limbs grew back instantly, strong enough to walk on, eyes were open, leprosy instantly gone and healthy flesh grown. Then, too, the dead were raised. Today's faith healing doesn't nearly meet these characteristics.

DOES GOD NOT HEAL? Yes, a sovereign God can always heal. He is always able to heal, but He is not always willing. Healing isn't guaranteed. Healing isn't based on our having enough faith. Miracles by Jesus and the apostles were done as a sign to authenticate the One who could heal an unseen soul. God can and does heal, but He doesn't gift others to do it as Jesus and the Apostles were able, nor does He say that is the recommended norm for His people.

WHAT ARE WE TO DO WHEN SICK? When we are sick it's good to first make sure it isn't for sin or disobedience. If there is sin that God is using the sickness to point out, confess it and God will forgive and then use that illness for good (Romans 8:28). It's fine to pray, asking God to heal if that is His will. We are to submit to His will, not demand He do what we want. Ask Him to use the pain and suffering for His glory (that we and others can see His greatness through His provision and peace) and our growth (make us trust Him more and become more like Jesus). Use the best available resources: diet, rest, exercise and medical help. Realize that all healing does ultimately come from God. Leave the results to His will, though.

Always remember, our faith must be in Jesus. HE is the object of our faith, never a human being or group. Put faith in Jesus, not faith in your faith! HE is the one we are to look to and glorify. Always keep your eyes on Him. Trust and serve Him no matter what.

6. SOMEONE DYING

Root: sin in Eden, curse on mankind

Fruit of the Spirit that is needed (Galatians 5:22-23): peace, joy, hope of eternal life

Ministering to those who are dying is one of the most difficult, yet most rewarding responsibilities pastors, church leaders and counselors have. Death is one experience every person must face, there are no expectations. Death comes at unexpected times in unexpected ways.

VISITING SOMEONE WHO IS DYING When you visit someone who is or may be dying, remember you are representing Jesus to them so show His love and patience. Ask them questions and let them talk. Don't be surprised if they express anger or question God. Let them express their feelings, like God did with Elijah (1 Kings 19). Do not criticize them or preach to them, just love them. Listen and encourage them by reading Scripture.

People go through various stages as they adjust to the thought of dying. At first, they may be shocked and feel sorry for themselves. They may express anger, crying and grief. If their faith isn't strong, and even sometimes when it is, depression can be present. They may go through a time of denial and refuse to accept the fact. Patiently listen, love them, visit often, read Scripture and pray with them. Eventually they should come to accept it and become a great testimony of God's grace.

Don't avoid talking about death. It is a great way to make sure they are putting faith in Jesus for salvation. If they are, encourage them about God's promises to be with them through death. Remind them about the blessings awaiting in heaven. If they aren't putting their faith in Jesus, not is a great opportunity to do so (see Verses that Talk About How to Get to Heaven, below).

Touch in appropriate ways can be comforting to the dying person: pat their arm, hold their hand to pray, etc. Make sure you read Scriptures about God's faithfulness, promises and what

heaven will be like. Psalm 23 is always good to use. Other good ones to use are included above under 1 Trials and Suffering and 2 Sorrow, Grief and Loss. Many other good verses about heaven are listed below. Always pray out loud with them before leaving. Visit on a regular basis. Show you really do care and are interested in them. You are Jesus' representative and He will encourage them and love them through you.

DEALING WITH FEAR OF DEATH God uses death as a reminder this life is not all there is and that we will spend eternity in heaven or hell. If a person doesn't have salvation, or aren't sure of their salvation, they will have a fear of death. Talk to them about salvation and where they are at spiritually. Listed below are verses about how to get to heaven. Read and talk about them. Share your own testimony with them.

Another reason we fear death is because we fear the process of dying, not what comes on the other side. God promises to walk with us through the valley of the shadow of death (Psalm 23:4). Jesus will take us from this life into the next (John 14:3) and we will be with him forever (Luke 23:43).

God promises us grace for each day as we need it. That includes the day we will die. He promises dying Grace. We don't get that ahead of time, but it'll be there when the time comes. God promises it, and He always keeps His promises (Psalm 23:4). See more of His promises below.

I think another concern about death for Christians is about the people they will leave behind. I know that when I die, it will be wonderful for me. But I know there are those who will grieve. I don't want to be the cause of grief in anyone's life. That's something we have to leave up to Jesus. He loves our loved ones more than we love them. He knows what the grief of death is like. He wept at the grave of Lazarus (John 11:35). He promises to be near to the brokenhearted and save the crushed in spirit (Psalm 34:18). We need to trust in His promises. We commit our loved ones to His care when we are gone, the same as we do now while we are still here.

When we live for the Lord and want to serve Him, we don't want to leave this world until we have completed our work here. Perhaps there were things unaccomplished. There may be things in the past that could have been done better. So yes, we want to go to heaven, but not just yet. It's good to want to live these lives so that every moment has meaning until we are done. But the timing of our death is a decision only God can make.

One thing we do know for sure, one second on the other side of death we will be glad that it happened. Trust God with the timing of all of it. Thank Him that we have assurance that this life is not the end. This is not as good as it gets, this is as bad as it gets for the child of God. We are not leaving the land of the living and going to the land of the dying, we are leaving the land of the dying to spend eternity in the land of the living.

So, take your concerns and fears about death to God and leave them there. But don't let it rob you of joy and peace in your life today. Jesus has conquered death. There is nothing to fear.

Bible **examples** of those who suffered from a life-ending illness include: 2 Kings 13:14; Job 19:27; John 11:21-26.

God's **promises to those who are facing ill health and/or death** include: Romans 8:38-39; Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:2; Hosea 13:14; John 5:28-29; 14:1-3; Acts 24:15; Romans 5:3-5; 8:38-39; 14:7-8; 1 Corinthians 15:20-22, 51-54; Colossians 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14; 5:10; Hebrews 2:14-15; Revelation 14:13; Psalm 23:4; 116:15; Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 5:1-8; Philippians 1:21; 3:20-21; Hebrews 2:14-15; 9:27-28; Revelation 2:7.

God gives many **promises about heaven**. Some include: John 14:2; 1 Corinthians 2:9; Revelation 21:4; Ephesians 2:6; Colossians 3:1-2.

Verses that talk about **heaven** include: Luke 12:32; 16:19-31; 20:34-38; 23:43; Revelation 4:1-11; 7:9; 8:1; 21:1-22:6; 1 Corinthians 13:12; 15:42; Philippians 1:23; 1 John 3:2; 2 Chronicles 2:6; 4:17-18; 5:1,8; 12:4; Mark 16:19; Deuteronomy 26:15; Job 3:17; Psalm 11:4; 14:2; 17:15; 33:13-15; 73:24; 103:19; 23:6; Matthew 3:17; 5:3; 22:30; 6:9, 20; John 14:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 4:17; Exodus 25:8-9; Jeremiah 23:23-24; Ezekiel 1:22-28; 10:1-14; Hebrews 8:1-2; 9:23-24; Daniel 12:3; Isaiah 66:1; 33:17; 2 Peter 3:13; Malachi 3:17.

The Bible talks about **how to get to heaven**: Matthew 7:21; 10:32-33; Luke 12:8-9; 13:23-28; 23:42-43; John 3:3; 6:27-29; 14:6; Acts 4:12; Revelation 21:27; Romans 10:6-9; Philippians 3:20; 1 Peter 1:3-4

Bible verses about **eternal life** include: Luke 16:9-31; 18-18-30; John 3:1-21; 6:60-71; 11:25-26; 17:1-26; 1 John 5:1-13; Mark 12:25; Luke 16:19-31; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; James 2:26.

CONCLUSION

I hope you benefited from reading this book. I certainly benefited from writing it. It was not an easy book to write. In fact, it was one of the hardest I've ever written. There are many subjects to talk about, and each had to be covered completely and accurately without using too many words. I did my best. I depended on the Lord's help through it all.

There's so much more to counseling than could be covered in one book. Dozens of books have been written about each the subjects I covered. New ones are being published every month. Thankfully, God promises us wisdom in abundance (James 1:5). Trust Him to give you His wisdom and to share His truth with others. He is the Wonderful Counselor (Isaiah 9:6). His Holy Spirit is called (John 14:16-18; 26-28; 16:13). Trust that He will guide you and tell you what to say and then faithfully share that truth with others.

If I can be of any help, you can contact me at jerry@ChristianTrainingOrganization.org.

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