

Biblical Counseling

What and How?

by

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"Seeking Better Understanding"

Church Without Walls



A BRIEF MESSAGE TO THE READER

Dear Reader,

Thank you for reading this book. The author is a medical doctor and churchman who loves Jesus and you. He wrote these pages for you to live a life full of joy and to be free from stress. In giving you this book, the author has provided you with the most important medical and biblical prescription for you to live a life fully pleasing to God who created you in His own image. So, please listen to him as you read these pages.

How to use this book? The counselor and the counselee should follow these steps:

- 1- They must pray first before reading each topic.
- 2- They must have their Bibles open to look up the biblical passages.
- 3- They should discuss each point in each topic to further their understanding.
- 4- The counselee must take good notes as his counselor explains each point of each topic.

May God the Holy Spirit guide you as you study this book to bring you closer to Christ and to his saving grace.



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First Topic:

WHAT IS BIBLICAL COUNSELING?

I. Introduction

A. Why counseling:

1. Man is a revelation receiver. God made man able to receive His word and to act as His child.
2. At first, there was no sin so man could think, desire, and act in a God-pleasing way.
2. Sin produced problems in man (his thoughts and desires followed by actions were anti-God) and outside of man (the world's influence pulled at man thereby drawing him away from God).
3. Man was now selfish, interested only in himself. As a result, he counseled and listened to himself and others instead of God.
4. Counseling has been around since creation. It continues after the fall but without the Bible for the unbeliever. Many people tell you what to think and what to do but without referring to the Bible. Instead they depend on feelings, common sense, experience, and their own reasoning.

B. Why biblical counseling:

1. Biblical counseling defined: it is the believer and only the believer using the Bible as the source of biblical truth for the purpose of solving problems God's way for His glory and the good of all persons and the Church.
2. The Bible is the standard for defining problems and their solutions (2 Timothy 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:3-4, 17-21).

3. Biblical counseling consists of meeting face-to-face to listen, to teach, to give direction from God's word, and to recheck the person's progress in applying God's truth.
4. Biblical change will occur, but it may be slow.
5. Biblical counseling involves coming alongside of the person as a friend to encourage and to correct as a blessing to the person and the Church which follows Ephesians 4:11-14.

II. God's Counsel vs. Satan's Counsel:

- A. God is the Creator, Controller, and Savior. He alone has truth and has the answers for man no matter the situation.
- B. The cross and the Christ's resurrection testify to the above facts.
 1. Man is called to change, and the issue is change to what and how? See 2 Timothy 3:15-17.
 2. The Holy Spirit lives in the heart of every believer and the believer uses the life easier. It does not remove problems, but it gives Bible to make changes that please God in thoughts, desires, and actions.
 3. Biblical truth simplifies life and when properly applied by the believer makes the believer a proper understanding and focus so that he solves problems God's way for His glory and his and the Church's benefit.
- C. Satan's counsel competes with the Holy Spirit's counsel.
 1. Satan is a liar from the beginning, and his counsel is a lie (John 8:44).
 2. It focuses on pleasing-self instead of God and if followed only leads to misery in this life and hell in the next (Proverbs 13:15b; 26:11).

III. God's Counsel is for Life and Godliness

- A. The key passage is 2 Peter 1:3-4: God's truth rightly understood and applied helps the person live properly according to Matthew 22:37-40 (love God and love neighbor).
- B. Love summarizes the Christian life (Romans 13:8-10; 1 John 4:7-12, 19)
- C. The godly man (Psalm 1:1-3) grows daily by thinking, wanting, and acting like Christ. Examples include not returning evil for evil but good for evil (Romans 12:17-21); not grumbling and complaining but functioning with a joyful thankfulness (Philippians 2:14-16); and fearing God rather than man (Proverbs 3:5-8).
- D. As the believer grows in godliness, he fulfills God's original design and plan for man; he enjoys life by following in Christ's footsteps of pleasing God (John 4:31-34; 2 Corinthians 5:9).

IV. Guidelines for Counseling Others:

- A. Everyone is called to counsel (Romans 15:14; Galatians 6:1-5; Colossians 1:28)
- B. Man was designed to receive and give counsel.
- C. Everyone is receiving from many different sources. There are many voices of false counsel.
- D. The only reliable source for giving direction is the Bible.
 - 1. Therefore you need to be ready and able to counsel according to Truth.
 - 2. You need to know biblical truth and how to present it to a person with the goal of helping the person solve problems God's way.
 - 3. You need to be able to present truth in a way so that the other person can understand and apply it to

himself and the problem. In that way he changes, grows, and solves problems God's way. God is glorified!

- E. Biblical counseling works to solve problems because it is directed at the person with problems and not simply problems themselves.
- F. Problems are always theological in some form and require the Bible's input and grace by the Holy Spirit.
- G. The believer is to learn biblical principles and how to apply them: first to himself and then to others.

V. Conclusion:

- A. It is a wonderful activity to know the Word and help apply it to self and to others.
- B. As a result, God is glorified, life is simplified, and individual believers and the Church grow (Ephesians 4:11-14).
Everyone WINS!

NOTES:

Second Topic:

The Practice of Biblically-Based Counseling

God created man to be counseled by Him, by himself, and by others. Therefore, every person is a counselee. Adam, before sin was guided by God's counsel. After sin and the fall, Adam had a choice: God's counsel or Satan's. Adam was not left alone without direction. At salvation, God's Word came alive through a unique and saving relationship with the Triune God. Those two features - truth and a relationship – are twin pillars for properly understanding God, self, life, problems, and solutions.

After Adam's sin and God's judgment, counsel and counseling became tainted with sin. Only biblical truth properly understood, conveyed, and applied can help release man from his bondage to sin, self, and Satan. Truth is a person – Jesus Christ (John 14:6) – and God's Word (John 17:17). If sin had not entered the picture man could and would counsel himself properly. But that is not the case. Sin changed man's capacity and ability to think God's thoughts, to desire what God desires, and do what God requires. In other words, unless saved (regenerated by the Holy Spirit: John 3:3-8), man is left to false counsel. As a result, there is misery in this life (Proverbs 5:21-22; 13:15b; 26:11-12) and hell in the next.

The Triune God did not leave His people. He supplied them with Truth: His Son (John 14:6), the Holy Spirit (John 14:26-27; 15:26; 16:13), and His Word (John 17:17; 2 Timothy 3:15-17). These facts enable believers to counsel themselves and to counsel others (2 Corinthians 13:5; Hebrews 4:12-13) especially and particularly other believers (Romans 15:14; Galatians 6:1-5; Colossians 1:28; 3:16).

I. Biblically-Based Counseling:

- A. The goal of Biblically-Based Counseling is to honor God. That goal is accomplished when the counselee is becoming more like Christ.

- B. Becoming more like Christ is a duty, privilege, and blessing for every believer (1 John 3:1-3; 5:3-4)
- C. Becoming more like Christ involves changed thinking, wanting, and action by bringing them in line with God's thoughts, desires, and actions as given in His Word.

- 1. The person will begin to understand himself and the problem God's way for His glory.
- 2. He will begin to solve it and other problems God's way for His glory.
- 3. He recognizes that doing things God's way honors God and is best for him and the Church.

II. Biblically-Based Counseling has several features that distinguish it from all other types of counseling.

A. Its Foundation:

- 1. The Bible and God's truth are foundational because:
 - a) Mankind was created to hear and need God's word – they were created counselees and revelation receivers.
 - b) Mankind only has two categories of problems because he is a duplex being: inner man (heart) which could be termed spiritual and outer man or body – physical – including the brain. However, each aspect of man affects the other so that the whole person is the problem. Therefore, the whole person must be addressed.
 - c) Man is a theologian and every problem requires a proper theological solution.
 - d) Only the Bible provides that solution: 2 Timothy 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:3-4.
 - e) Only the Bible is the unchangeable Word of God that is truth and has been truth from the beginning.

f) This is in stark contrast to secular psychology which more accurately is termed secular psychologies because:

(1) They are more than 250 of them with little agreement between them as to what man's problem is and what the best solution for them is.

(2) They are based on fallen man's view of man, his problems, and their solutions.

B. Its Resource: not only is Scripture its foundation it is also its resource: 2 Timothy 3:15-17

1. Scripture is the personal, powerful, purposeful, self-revelation of God as He communicates Himself to His people.
2. Scripture has the following characteristics: it is clear, authoritative, necessary, and sufficient for God's people. God is giving them a piece of Him!
3. Scripture is inspired (breathed-out by God) so God is its Author.
 - a) As such it is infallible and inerrant: it contains no errors and it does not lead anyone astray or into error. It can be trusted!
 - b) Based on 2 Timothy 3:15-17 it is useful and mandatory for:
 - (1) Teaching: Scripture gives a standard or norm for what to believe and how to live.
 - (2) Conviction: it convinces the person of God's truth and his own error; it brings to bear God's truth so that the person is convinced that God is right, and he is wrong.

- (3) Correction: it sets the person on the right path – God’s! God’s word may knock you down, but it always picks you up – it moves the person in the right direction.
- (4) Training in righteousness - in right living. God-pleasing change is a long-duration effort that requires and embraces joyful change in thoughts, desires, and actions that please God.

C. Its Uniqueness:

1. The atmosphere and the environment are unique.
 - a) There is always a team/a threesome in the counseling room: the counselee, the counselor, and the Holy Spirit. Each is involved in Biblically-Based Counseling and only in Biblically-Based Counseling.
 - b) The Spirit is the Counselor and the counselor is working under Him as His instrument.
2. Its goal is unique: The counselee is confronted in love, out of concern for God and the person to bring change that honors God and is best for the person. The confrontation is always to be for God and with God by the Holy Spirit.
3. The objective is unique: change into Christlikeness in thought, desire, and action that becomes a patterned way of life.
4. Its method and means are unique: the counselor relies on his relationship with Christ by the Holy Spirit to bring appropriate biblical truth as given in the Bible to the person that fits the person’s spiritual maturity and willingness to learn.
5. The motivation for giving and receiving counsel is to honor God by pleasing Him as both the

counselor and the counselee grow in Christlikeness.

6. The results are unique. Success is defined by the person's change and growth in Christ.
 - a. Becoming more like Christ is God's design for His people.
 - b. When that happens, God is honored and glorified and the counselor and counselee are encouraged.

III. Why and what is the Importance of Biblically-Based Counseling?

- A. The answer centers on one's view of God, self, life/world, problems, and solutions to them.
 1. The answer addresses two fundamental questions: Is God Creator and Controller and if so, what is the importance of these facts?
 2. Man is God's creation. God takes care of His people. The cross and the resurrection affirm these truths.
 3. God has provided Himself and His answers for sin and man's greatest need: forgiveness of sin which is accomplished in Christ by the Holy Spirit.
 4. The Triune God's answer for men's greatest need is a working, personal relationship with the Triune God. God's answer for man's basic need extends to all other problems; they are all man needs for life and godliness.
 5. Only the Triune God is truth and gives the Word of truth.
 - a) The Father is Truth: Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 31:5; Isaiah 65:16; Romans 15:8.
 - b) The Son is Truth: John 14:6; 2 Corinthians 11:10.

- c) The Holy Spirit is Truth: John 16:13; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 John 2:20, 27; 4:6; 5:6.
 6. Only truth sets one free from a bondage to self and self-pleasing; to sin – its power and penalty; and to Satan. There is no freedom outside of the Triune God and there is no truth outside of Him.
 7. Biblically-Based Preaching and Biblically-Based Counseling are God’s major tools through the Holy Spirit to accomplish His redemptive purpose which is to save and to bring a people into His presence through a relationship with Him that begins now at salvation and continues eternally.
- B. Scripture teaches that the Word is God’s chosen tool to facilitate change in His children (2 Timothy 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:3-4).
1. Change is crucial. The believer was radically changed at salvation and this change continues as he becomes more like Christ daily.
 2. The unbeliever also changes daily but by becoming more like Satan.
 3. Biblically-Based Counseling is one of God’s tool to help individual believers and the Church to grow in Christlikeness (Ephesians 4:11-14).
- C. Scripture is the only source of truth for life and counseling: its truth applied by the Holy Spirit brings about God-honoring change in the person.
1. The Word is to be learned, enjoyed, and loved: Psalm 119:9-11, 24, and 97.
 2. The Word is a lamp and light: Psalm 119:105. Truth expels darkness and satanic logic.

3. The Word gives understanding and makes one wise and eager to love the right path and hate the wrong path: Psalm 119:53, 104, 136, 139.
4. The Word is to be applied – blessing comes in the doing as the believer grows as a trusting, obedient child of God: Matthew 7:24-27; John 13:17; James 1:25.

D. As a result of receiving God’s truth through the ministry of the Word and the Holy Spirit, the counselee should be able to understand himself and his problem through the lens of the Word; to understand the problem in biblical terms; to know what the Word says about the problem and solution; and to apply truth as he trusts and obeys. He grows as a God-truster and a God-pleaser.

1. This ministry of the Word is a blessing to all involved.
2. The Church and the individual grow in true Christlikeness as problems are solved God’s way for His glory and God’s people are blessed and rejoice.

IV. There is a difference in counseling when the person (counselee) is an unbeliever.

- A. You do not counsel an unbeliever by presenting God’s truth to him thinking he has the necessary equipment to respond God’s way.
- B. He is not regenerated (saved). He does not have the Holy Spirit.
- C. As a result he cannot and will not understand truth (Romans 8:5-8; 1 Corinthians 2:14-). It is not loving to present that which he cannot handle.

1. These passages teach among other things that the natural or unconverted person does not like God's truth and in fact rejects it (Romans 1:18-23).
2. He does not have the mind of Christ. He cannot think God's thoughts, desire what God desires, and act accordingly.
3. You do not love that person by piling on truth that he easily rejects.
4. Remember unbelievers hate the Word of God and the God of the Word.

D. What do you do?

1. You use the opportunity to offer real help and hope for him in the context of his problem.
2. Present gospel truth to him but point out that unless the Holy Spirit indwells him, he won't understand truth, seek after truth, or apply truth. He will not be free!
3. Tell him God's answer(s) to his problems – but caution him that something first must happen.
4. God has answers to every one of his problems, but he is not able to use them because he is on the wrong side of the fence.

5. You offer the hope of salvation and life after salvation.
6. You come alongside of him as a fellow sinner and offer true help and hope for him in his problem but only after you address his bigger problem: his relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.
7. He may not accept your offer but that is God's business.
8. Pray!

NOTES:

Third Topic:

So-Called *Mental Disorders*:

What Are You to think about Them?

Does God have Answers?

No matter where a person lives in the world he is faced with problems, diagnosis of problems, and a treatment program. This can work very well in some cases. For instance, complaints of pain in the arm could be explained by a broken bone. The diagnosis and treatment plan of this problem seems uncomplicated.

In other cases, the person may have number of complaints that are non-specific such as not feeling well, tired and fatigued, aches, pains, not sleeping well, and bad feelings. Often a search is made for a cause, but none is found. Often a diagnosis of a so-called *mental condition* is made. What happens depends on the diagnosis but almost always includes the use of medication. The most common conditions termed as *mental illness* are worry, anger with or without violence, fear – often labeled a panic attack, and depression. Other labels include Bipolar Disorder and Obsessive Compulsive to mention but two.

From one website I found this information: *Common mental disorders include depression, which affects about 264 million, bipolar disorder, which affects about 45 million, dementia, which affects about 50 million, and schizophrenia and other psychoses, which affects about 20 million people globally.*

From another website I read this: *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) is the American Psychiatric Association's standard reference for psychiatry which includes over 450 different definitions of mental disorders.

The International Classification of Diseases (ICD) published by the World Health Organization (WHO) is the international standard system for classifying all medical diseases. It also includes a section on mental and behavioral disorders. The diagnostic criteria and information in the DSM and ICD are revised and updated with each

new version. This list contains conditions which are currently recognized as *mental disorders* as defined by these two systems.

There is disagreement in various fields of mental health care, including the field of psychiatry, over the definitions and criteria used to delineate mental disorders. Of concern to some professionals is whether certain mental disorders should be classified as ‘mental illnesses’ or whether they may be better described as neurological disorders, or in some other unknown ways. A bottom summary is this: there is proliferation without consensus except the Bible has no fundamental answers.

The questions for believers and the Church is this: What is going on in these people who carry these labels and give these labels, and what do these conditions have to do with biblical truth?

- I. The Situation and the background of “mental conditions” and labels and how they work in a person’s life:
 - A. In the practice of Medicine labels are a two-edged sword.
 1. They may convey knowledge with the hope of victory, or they may be faulty and misinform. The person with a diagnosis of a thyroid disorder or heart failure can be quite helpful.
 2. However, those people who carry the term a *mental condition* or those who carry a psychological label have received the label based on self-reported feelings and perhaps observed or perceived behavior. There are no confirmatory findings.
 3. So what *characterizes* all the conditions mentioned in various books and people so labeled?
 - a) It is feelings and feeling-directed behavior that follows a pattern and may be life-long.
 - b) Subjectivity – not objective findings - is the ruling determinant.

B. People who give the label and who carry the label of a mental disorder are *psychologized* and *medicalized*.

1. The phrase *psychologized/ medicalized* is in part based on the acceptance and application of the Medical Model of disease or a *body-mechanic* mentality.
2. The Medical Model of Disease is based on a discovered and proven abnormality in and with the body that explains the person's complaints. Such is the case with appendicitis, or some known infectious disease such as bacterial pneumonia. Physical examination and various tests are required for the diagnosis.
3. In contrast, no physical exam or laboratory work is required for giving a psychological label.
4. Further, treatment is directed at the presumed but unproven body problem.
5. The Medical Model of Disease assumes that every symptom has a corresponding abnormality in the body even if it is not found.
6. The hope is to change feelings and behavior. If they do, success is claimed and announced.
7. Biblical principles are not applied or if they are, it is only adjunctive and supportive which represents a *spiritual mechanic* mentality. That is the body must be fixed but so must the heart or inner man but the linkage between the two underemphasized except as a tool to improve the body.
8. There is no consideration of the person as a whole person – an inside-outside person by God's creative design.

- a) The Bible speaks of root and fruit. Root refers to the heart – the source – and fruit refers to the expression of the contents of the heart.
- b) Root and fruit refers to the person’s thoughts, desires, and actions in his body and brain AND in his heart where the Holy Spirit resides if he is a believer.
- c) There is no focus on or toward God in making a diagnosis or in solving the problem.

C. I repeat: the giving of the diagnosis and label depends on a self-report of bad feelings and behavior and perhaps observed behavior that is feeling-directed and motivated.

D. Subjectivity rules, both in terms of *giving* the label (diagnosis) and in determining the *success* or *failure* of treatment (assessment).

E. The truth that man is a whole-person: inner and outer man - and an image bearer of God is not considered or considered improperly.

F. *Help* is not defined God’s way. Rather, its definition depends on a definition of help that includes feeling and acting differently. It is the practitioner’s own definition of help and his standard for defining help. There is no consideration of biblical truth for understanding the whole problem and the whole person.

II. The practice of Non-Biblically-Based Medicine and Counseling:

A. The people – medical personnel - in both places of practice are diagnosis-and label-oriented:

- 1. As noted previously, the label focuses on feelings AND feeling-directed behavior that is self-reported.
- 2. The label is descriptive of feelings and behavior.

3. The label gives the person an identity that he accepts as defining him.
 4. In reality, the person often called a patient, has developed patterned thinking, desiring, and acting prior to receiving the label and the patterned activity is one basis for the diagnosis and the label. This fact is not considered from a biblical perspective.
- B. The person with the diagnosis and label has several outstanding characteristics:
1. The person is self-focused.
 2. The person focuses on his perceived victimhood.
 3. The person takes little or no personal responsibility for who he is or what he does or does not do, think, desire, and feel.
- C. The person does not properly address and focus on God.
1. Rather, feelings take precedence. Behavior follows.
 2. Commonly, the person has a “me” focus and “me” approach to people and circumstances.
- D. However, the person’s motivation to please God and his relationship with God is not mentioned.
- E. Replacement thinking, wanting, and doing as a God- pleaser for the glory of God are not mentioned and not emphasized.
- F. The problem is considered solely a body problem (follows the Medical Model).
- G. Spirituality may be mentioned but it does not involve the Holy Spirit.
- H. The person is considered a victim to that which is outside of him (which is God’s providence that is labeled as *stress*) and whose feelings and behavior are considered *outside of his control*.

- I. Common and frequent language include I can't ..., that is the way I am, it runs in the family, I feel so bad. Pain relief is the most important thing..; relief of bad feelings is so important.

III. Biblically-Based Medicine and Counseling:

- A. There is a way to practice medicine and counseling. It is based on the application of biblical principles regarding God, man, and problems
 1. It differs from a medicalized-psychologized approach to man and his problems.
 2. It brings God's truth to bear on the person in the problem.
 3. It offers victory not simply relief.
- B. The practice of Biblically-Based Medicine and Counseling are fully committed to the application of God's teaching regarding sin, man, problems, and response to them.
 1. One major foundation of the practice of Biblically-Based Medicine and Counseling is the reality that thoughts, desires, actions, and feelings are linked and occur in both the inner and outer man.
 2. Therefore, feelings and their change are never to be the primary target for helping the person.
 3. Rather, focusing on their origin/source and response to them is critical for true help.
 4. Changing thinking and wanting brings a change in motivation and direction even if feelings do not change.
 5. Victory may include a change in feelings, but victory comes when there is a change in the person's view of God, himself, and his situation. Feelings may or may not change.

C.. The practice of Biblically-Based Medicine and Counseling approaches man as a whole person, a duplex being, both inner and outer man.

1. Man is a unit, an image bearer of God.
2. The whole person – the physical body, and the inner man commonly referred to as the heart in the Bible, has been affected by the fall and sin.
3. Therefore, it is best to avoid such questions as: is the problem a body problem? Is it a spiritual problem? Rather, it is a whole-person problem.

D. The practice of Biblically-Based Medicine and Counseling has a proper view of man which is called a proper anthropology (the study and knowledge of man).

1. Man is a thinking, wanting, and doing being by God's design.
2. Man was created a rational, thinking being; a relational being – in relation to God and others; and a religious, worshiping and moral being as the image of God.
3. Man was created a faith-based being which is either saving faith or non-saving faith.
4. Man was created a sensual being: he perceives and interprets with his senses the world and facts around him.
5. Man was created a relational, motivational, and morally responsible being.
6. Each of these aspects regarding man are to be considered and is to be a target for helping the person change his thinking and wanting God's way and thus secure victory.

E. The practice of Biblically-Based Medicine and Counseling consider every person a theologian:

1. Every person is a created, dependent being.
 2. Every person has some belief about God.
 3. Every person has a relationship with God.
 4. Every person worships something or somebody.
 5. Every person has a sense of morality (right and wrong and good and bad).
 6. Every person is a thinking being and has knowledge: he is wise or foolish.
 7. Therefore, every problem in life is in some measure a theological problem and deserves a proper theological answer.
- F. The practice of Biblically-Based Medicine and Counseling is based on the fact that every person lives from and out of his heart: Proverbs 4:23; Matthew 12:33-36; 15:16-20; Mark 7:18-20; Luke 6:43-45.
1. A person does what he does and feels what he feels because he thinks and wants what he wants. Note the linkage of thoughts, desires, and actions which are linked to feelings.
 2. Motivation is tied to thinking, wanting, and doing. Feelings are the result.
 3. Man lives out of an identity – who he thinks he is or wants to be.
 4. Man’s behavior is:
 - a) Logical - it makes sense to him.
 - b) Purposeful - he sets an agenda and pursues it.
 - c) Fruit-bearing – he pursues his heart’s desires that often become wants and demands.
 - d) Treasure-driven - what he wants and thinks he must have - Matthew 6:19-24; Luke 12:34.

5. Man has two basic motivations: pleasure and entitlement: *I want, I deserve.*
 - a) They are rooted in self-pleasing and self-worship because of previous membership in Satan's kingdom and family: Philippians 2:3-5; James 3:13-4:3
 - b) Feelings, experience, and reason unaided by Scripture is their "guiding light."
- G. The practice of Biblically-Based Medicine and Counseling considers the issues of control and resources central to everyone but especially to those carrying the label of a mental condition.
 1. The issue of control and resources must be answered: whose will you rely on: Proverbs 3:5-8: God's or the person's?
 2. There is a link between thinking, wanting, and doing, AND feelings.
 3. Thinking and wanting drive behavior and feelings, and feelings drive all three.
 4. People who are angry, fearful, worried, depressed, and/or overwhelmed are driven by bad feelings which are initially derived from perceptions of control and resources and their lack.
 5. The person is not content with what he has or might have. They compete with God for control.
- F. The practice of Biblically-Based Medicine and Counseling has the believer focus on God's control: His power, wisdom, and goodness-love AND His purpose (Romans 8:28-29).
 1. They are taught to function based on the truth that this is God's world and that He has given direction on how to live in it.

2. The psychologized counselee and counselor ignore the above truths and are in competition with God.
 3. They will lose: Proverbs 13:15. Life is complicated, and the people grow weary
- G. The practice of Biblically-Based Medicine and Counseling emphasizes God as the Giver - His Resources:
1. God has given believers everything needed for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3-4).
 2. God has invested Himself in the believer, but that fact is not life changing for those who seek control using their own resources to obtain their major goal: feeling better.
- H. The practice of Biblically-Based Medicine and Counseling knows that people, especially those *psychologized* and *medicalized*, express themselves via feelings.
1. The person with the label thinks but thoughts are expressed as *feel* and he acts as if he is his feelings. He is NOT but he lives the lie.
 2. Concentrating on feelings and living by them is to be expected in fallen man.
 3. Feelings and emotions are NOT synonymous. Emotions are physiological and have an emotional control center in the brain (amygdala). They have a cognitive component as well. Their expression is influenced by a person's thinking and wanting both of which resides in the heart.
 4. Since man is duplex, the inner man (heart) influences the outer man (body) and vice versa.
 5. Any situation and other people are commonly referred to as *life*; in reality, they are part of God's providence. Rather, situations and people are the

context for the person to expose his heart by answering the question: is he for or against God?

- I. In contrast to those who don't practice biblically-based medicine and counseling, those who do realize that all of life is theological and a moral drama is played out in every person's heart daily especially the one who carries the label of a mental condition.

IV. How to give biblical help

- A. You must listen to learn and understand the person in his world.
- B. You minister biblical truth that is appropriate for the person in his situation.
 1. Present gospel truth in such terms that meets the person where he is.
 2. Expect change - God does; you do as the counselor and the counselee should as do well.
- C. Direct attention to the source of AND the person's response to bad feelings.
- D. Address the whole person: thoughts, desires, and actions AND resultant feelings using biblical truth.
 1. Rightfully understood and applied, Scripture gives you and the person everything they need to get victory: 2 Corinthians 1:20-22; Philippians 4:13; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:3-4. This fact will be denied in favor of feelings!
 2. Address (1 Peter 3:15) the claim that *psychological labels* are due to body problems. This requires wisdom and great data gathering.
- E. Begin with the gospel. The Bible addresses the person's motivation:

1. Address the person's salvation and life after it. At salvation and as one saved, the person will become more like Christ in thought, desire, and action.
2. Address the person's relationship with Christ and others: Matthew 7:24-27; 22:37-40.
3. Address the person's resources in Christ and the cost: Christ humbled Himself and took on humanity; in the indwelling Holy Spirit; in biblical truth and possessing it; enabling grace; and the privilege and blessing to be a child of God.
4. Present biblical truth in a way that meets the person in his problem.

F. Remember that labels are enablers.

1. *Psychological labels* are driven by bad theology and are based on a certain mindset and worldview which influences the person receiving the label more than biblical truth.
2. In response the person accepts the label and the philosophy behind it.
3. The label carries more influence than the truth that the believer is in Christ.
4. The labels usually promote:
 - a) The notion of disease and protracted medical treatment.
 - b) The refusal of personal responsibility and the acceptance of a victim mentality. Behavior including thinking and wanting are excused.
 - c) A mentality that makes it easy to blame God for the condition.
 - d) A deceptive spirit by shifting one's attention away from pleasing God even when it is hard.

G. Remember what characterized psychological disorders. It is feelings and perhaps behavior.

1. You must answer the question and help the person answer: what does his salvation and sanctification have to do with changing behavior that includes changing his feelings, desires, thinking, and actions?
2. The correct answer is everything, but the person will deny this truth.
3. Biblical truth always and completely overcomes man's "wisdom" which is based on experience, feelings, and unaided human reasoning.

H. Help the person develop thought and desire renewal:

1 Corinthians 2:14, 16; 2 Corinthians 5:9, 14-17: this will be a challenge:

1. Man thinks and desires in the brain (outer man) and in the heart (inner man). What is the connection? Habit patterns of thinking, wanting, and doing are formed in both such that inner and outer man activities are linked.
2. In the believer, the inner man is the domain of the Holy Spirit.
3. The believer is commanded and privileged to put on and practice biblically-based thinking and wanting: 1 Corinthians 2:16; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Ephesians 4:22-24; Philippians 2:3-5; 4:8; 1 Timothy 4:7; Titus 1:2; 2:11-14; 1 Peter 4:1-3.
4. The believer is to think God's thoughts AND desire what God desires (Psalm 40:6-8; Proverbs 3:5-8; 14:16). In that way he is a wise person and he imitates Christ. Problems will be solved!

5. The believer has a new interpretative grid: biblical truth by the Holy Spirit through saving faith ((1 Corinthians 2:9-10; 2 Corinthians 5:7, 14-15; Hebrews 11:24-26).
 - a) As a result, he thinks and desires differently than he did; God-pleasing actions follow.
 - b) Sadly, the psychologized Church and individual believers have been fooled and seduced by counterfeit wisdom.
 - c) Believing the lie is commonplace - the Bible summarizes that activity by various terms including Proverbs 3:5-8: “trusting in self” and “wise in your own understanding.”
- I. The disciple-counselor’s focus should not be on the label but on the person and helping him function as a true whole person according to:
 1. The believer’s true identity: He is in Christ. Therefore, the believer answers Who Christ is and what He has done; the cost to Christ; what the believer is in Christ; what union with Christ costs the believer; and how those facts impact his response to *life’s problems* which are from God – they are part of God’s providence.
 2. The believer’s resources: the person’s resources in the context of being controlled by feelings are:
 - a) The person’s relationship with God in Christ: therefore, have him answer the question for all ages: Who do you say Jesus is? Matthew 16:13ff.
 - b) The indwelling Holy Spirit: therefore, have him view 1 Corinthians 2:16 and 2 Corinthians 10:5 and give a response. Hope is a key!

- c) The Bible: have him answer what he believes the Bible is and why he believes it.
3. God's control: the application of biblical truth to all of life including the body is a radical shift in the person's thoughts, desires, and actions for anyone but especially the psychologized counselee and patient. He will resist this truth.
- J. The biblical-based doctor and biblical counselor will direct his attention to the whole person: thoughts, desires, actions (behavior) AND to the *why* of that behavior – the person's motivation.
1. Feelings are linked to thoughts, desires, and actions.
 2. Examples: the person diagnosed with *depression* feels bad for a reason; the person with a label of obsessive compulsive cleans and avoids for a reason; angry people get angry for a reason; worriers think a certain way for a reason; the person with the label of bipolar are up and down for a reason. These activities involve the whole-person - body and heart and are theological. These reasons must be addressed God's way using biblical truth.
 3. Address the whole person not simply feelings and actions. You do not necessarily need the Holy Spirit to change behavior. You need Him to honor God.
 - a) Therefore, change thinking and wanting about self, God, and others.
 - b) As a result the person will change his motivation from self-pleasing to God-pleasing.

- c) Put off the behavior by replacing it with the motivation given in 2 Corinthians 5:9, 14-15 which describes a radically-changed approach to life.
 - d) Meditate constantly (24/7) on the truth that God is IMMENSE/ BIG and GOOD, Who created and controls His world for His glory and the believer's good, and He deserves to be worshipped.
 - e) Ask their view of God and if they agree with the view described in the above point. Then ask: what is it about God as described above that keeps you from pleasing Him?
 - f) Help them be grateful for a personal Savior Who lived, bled, died, and rose in their place. If they are not, determine the reasons.
4. The result of a change focus is a God-honoring person and a lifestyle of thinking, wanting, and doing as a whole person, duplex being, and image bearer of God. The change comes but often it may be one thought, desire, and action at a time.
5. Change God's way for His glory is true change. That is true victory. It often comes slowly. The call to *be encouraged* is true for both the counselor and the person.

NOTES:

Fourth Topic:
Specific Life Problems: Worry Defined
How to get Victory

I. Defined:

- A. Worry is a commonly used word to describe a common activity.
- B. A person may use words such as concern, care, anxiety, burden, and uneasiness to describe this activity.
 - 1. The words are descriptive. They do not define what worry is; they may indicate the sin of worry.
 - 2. All the above words including worry focus on the subjective – a person’s feelings in response to God’s control.
- C. Biblically, the term worry indicates something that the person does in terms of thinking and wanting.
 - 1. It is an activity.
 - 2. It is an activity in the brain – the body – AND in the person’s heart – the inner man.
 - 3. Worry – sinful thinking and wanting has a focus:
 - a) It is focused thinking on:
 - (1) What a person wants in his life but is not getting.
 - (2) What a person does not want to occur in his life but might or is happening then.
 - b) It is focused on self; it is based on what the persons thinks is best for him at any moment.

III. Origin

- A. It originates in whole person but resides principally in the heart of man (Proverbs 4:23).
- B. It affects the whole person – body including the brain and the inner man.
 - 1. It involves desires, thoughts, and conclusions reached by the person.
 - 2. These activities occur in both the heart (that is, the inner man) and in the body.
 - 3. In the body, the result of these activities can be detected by neurochemical and physiological changes in the body including the brain.
 - 4. Areas affected include the skin (the person may sweat and feel cool); the muscles (the person may feel tired); the lung (the person may feel tired and out of breath); the heart (the person may say his heart is too fast or skipping); and the bowels (the person may experience diarrhea with or without pain).
 - 5. In the heart, the results of these activities are predominantly reflected in thinking, wanting, and feelings.

III The Person

- A. Often he carries the label of a *worrier*. If he is a believer, the label is stronger than the fact that he is a child of God.
- B. At that moment, the person wants and believes he knows what is best for him in contrast to God's wisdom and God's will.
- C. His thoughts express thoughts, desires, and even demands described as: I need it; I need more; if I don't have, it all is

loss; I want it and if I do get and have it, then will it probably be gone.

- D. The *worrier* hopes to avoid something or to have something happen that may not. He increasingly focuses on these desires and hopes.
- E. The *worrier* is focused on control: getting it and keeping it or losing it.

IV. The *worrier's* focus:

- A. It is on self and tomorrow.
- B. *Tomorrow* is not necessarily a calendar day or a 24-hour day.
- C. Rather, its focus is on what may happen or is happening which the person does not want, or it is on what he wants to happen but may not.
- D. God's control – His providence - is not accepted as God's good choice.
- E. The term *tomorrow* speaks of God's sphere of responsibility which is not the person's responsibility. Rather, the worrier is competing with God!
- F. The person misses the truth that problems and situations are not the problem. They are from God even extremely hard times.
- G. Rather, the worrier is the problem!
 - 1. He is looking for something better by his definition which is opposed to God's definition and his circumstances.
 - 2. The believer is called to respond to and use God's providence in a godly manner no matter what is happening (Romans 5:1-5; James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 1:6-7).
 - 3. To use for what? It is to become more like Christ in the person's thinking, wanting, and actions at the

time he is tempted to sin and as a regular pattern of living (Romans 8:28-29).

4. However, a worrier is too busy focusing on himself rather than on developing Christlikeness.

IV. Simply, worry is concern that is gone wrong and it is sin.

- A. At the heart of worry is the worrier's heart.
- B. Unless the person accepts that his way of thinking and wanting are sinful, self-focus, he will not change.
- C. The worrier wants something to happen and to continue happening or he wants something not to happen.
- D. The focus of the worrier is control and the results: his vs. God's.
- E. Thinking and wanting are involved and the two are related and linked.
 1. Both result in and are controlled by feelings and vice versa.
 2. Feelings are the result of thoughts and desires.
 3. Actions – doing and not doing – follow.

VI. How is worry concern gone wrong?

- A. *Today* is the person's present life including daily situations and people which are from God.
- B. It is the person's responsibility to function *today* as a God-pleaser. He does that by evaluating and responding to circumstances and people in a God-honoring manner.
- C. Every person responds in and to the situation from his heart – from the inside out. The person's response flows from the importance of the person's relationship in Christ.
 1. Thoughts and desires are active.
 2. They result in actions or inactions.

3. The worrier is not a happy person.
- D. The worrier and worrying stems from what he thinks he knows about God, self, and life.
 - E. However, changing what is outside of the person is not the key to helping him change.
 1. The person's response is to God and his view of and about God.
 2. That which is outside of a person may never touch the person.
 3. That which is outside of a person affects the person only through the person's thoughts and desires.
 4. Thoughts and desires are inside: in the person's heart and in his brain.
 - F. His thinking and wanting are wrongly focused on *tomorrow* – the future - which is God's responsibility.
 - G. Therefore, the worrier is engaged in activity that puts him in competition with God.
- VII. The major focus of the sin of worry is what is going to happen.
- A. The person focuses on the outcome for *himself* (what he wants or does not want) and his self-efforts trying to bring about or prevent the situation.
 - B. The *worrier* is caught and stuck because he has chosen to trust his control and self rather than trust God and His control.
 - C. However, in his heart he knows he is not in control but seeks to control for himself. Pleasing God is not his concern.
 - D. Behind his desire for control include the following thoughts, wants and action:
 1. He wants certainty, assurance, and things his way for any number of reasons.

2. He doubts that God will provide for him.

E. Proverbs 3:5-8 contrasts the mindset of trusting self with trusting God.

1. The contrast is expressed as a person's efforts for his control for his end vs. trusting God and His control for His glory.

2. The person either accepts the truth of God that He knows, wills, and accomplishes what is good and best for His people and the person.

3. Or the person denies the truth of God and attempts to work out his solution his way for him.

F. In response to God and the circumstances, the person may "try to do the right thing" but as a means of control: to get things his way. The person's focus is having things his way and he is willing to use God to get it.

VIII. Worry is sin especially against the first, second, and third commandments.

A. Worry is unbelief and idolatry.

1. O you of little faith – why do you doubt? (Matthew 6:30; 8:26; 14:31; 16:8; 17:20)

2. The person who worries is doubled-minded – he has a double or divided heart – he is doubter: James 1:8; 4:8

3. The person's focus is on self and pleasing self rather than on pleasing- God.

4. The mindset and the activity of the person when he worries is this: You want what you want more than you want what God wants for you and Himself and what He deserves which is all of the believer! The worrier is devoted to himself – what he hopes to get or not get!

- B. Worry occurs in a person who has little faith and or a divided faith manifested at the time of worry but often before.
- C. The worrier may be a believer who says he is a God-truster
 - 1. At that moment he is not functioning in that manner.
 - 2. Rather, he would rather compete with God although he denies that he is.
- D. James 1:5; 4:8: James describes the person who lacks wisdom, doubts, and has an unpurified heart as being small or double- souled. His heart is not on fire for God but for self at the time of time of worrying.
- E. The worrier practices responding to God's providence by a certain thinking which the Bible calls worry. It becomes a patterned mindset and lifestyle.

IX. Since worry is sin, repentance is in order. The person must repent.

- A. Every time you worry:
 - 1. Define what you are doing in terms of thoughts and desires and be ready to repent.
 - 2. Determine what your thoughts and desires are at that moment – what are you thinking and wanting and the reasons.
 - 3. Repent of the sin of worry and the pattern of your thinking and wanting, and the excuses for the sin.
- B. Keep a worry journal.
- C. A temptation to worry is not sin. But record the times and events that you find in your life that make it easy to worry. You are looking for patterns.
- D. The situation is only the context/setting for you to please self and worry and fret or to honor God by trusting, loving, and getting busy doing for His glory.

- E. The situation is not the issue. It is the person's response in it which is a response to God.
- X. God's answer for the sin of worry is to change thinking and wanting:
- A. The person's focus and view of the situation (or potential one) should be through the eyes of such truths as given in Romans 8:28-29 and 2 Corinthians 5:9. Repentance is evidence of your change.
 - B. Based on his understanding and acceptance of the truth of the two passages above and the truth that God is the Creator and Controller in charge of His world AND He is personal, purposeful and good, the person will begin to look differently at and reinterpret his situation; he will view it from God's perspective and viewpoint.
 - C. The issue: trusting self vs. trusting God.
 - 1. Ask the person and have him answer: what is it about God that helps him trust and please Him rather than self. What is it about God that makes Him untrustworthy?
 - 2. Ask the person and have him answer: What is it about him that makes it easy to trust self? What does that look like and what are the results?
- XI. God's answer: How is it possible to be concerned in the proper manner which is biblical?
- A. Think biblically
 - 1. The person has the mind of Christ: 1 Corinthians 2:16 – he can think His thoughts – every time to a varying degree.
 - 2. He is commanded to take captive every thought: 2 Corinthians 10:5.

3. God does not give commands that His people cannot keep.
4. He has given the believer a new heart, union with Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Bible.

B. Desire biblically

1. Psalms 27:4; 37:4-5; 40:6-8
2. Desiring what God desires was a primary motivation of Christ while on earth: John 4:31-34. Imitate Him!
3. 2 Corinthians 5:9: every person's ambition and aim is to fall in line with God's purpose and design for His creatures.

XII. Have him ask himself self and perhaps others:

- A. What has he accomplished by his way of handling life and problems: see Proverbs 5:21-23; 13:15, and 26:11?
- B. What is it about him and about God that makes it easy to trust himself and not God?

XIII. The key is biblically-controlled thinking and wanting

- A. Habituation is patterned thinking and wanting with resultant actions.
- B. The actions may be God-pleasing or self-pleasing (and therefore God-dishonoring). Often the believer has a mixed pattern of wanting and thinking.
- C. Change is possible and has begun at regeneration and is and will continue.
 1. The believer is the most changed person (John 3:3-8).
 2. He is a new creation and has been ushered into (brought into) a new manner and mode of

existence:

2 Corinthians 5:17.

3. Therefore, the believer is the most changing person done out of duty but more: it is done as privilege and blessing (1 John 5:3-4).
4. 1 Corinthians 10:13: God gives four promises which say that the believer cannot say *I can't* and that motivates him to change from a worrier/self-truster to a God-truster.
 - a) Temptation is part of living as a sinner even as saved one in a sin-cursed world. They are a reality and will happen.
 - b) God is faithful (1:9; 10:13) – He is trustworthy: He has made promises and keeps them.
 - c) He knows the heart of every person including the believer and He will not exceed the believer's spiritual IQ which is his ability to respond as a God-pleaser in every situation.
 - d) God provides Himself and biblical truth that when properly applied the believer has victory in the problem. God may or may remove him from the situation.

XIV. God's answers for worry: The Bible describes worry as sin – *do not worry, be anxious for nothing.*

- A. Matthew 6:24-34: worry is unnecessary, unproductive, unbecoming, and unbelief
 1. Christ in this portion of Scripture sets down the doctrine of two ways; worry is an opposite (antithetical) way of living – thinking and wanting - in God's world that is anti-God.
 2. God provides. Therefore, be thankful. Develop a *thank list* and use daily.

3. God is trustworthy. Develop trust. Develop a *trust list* to be used at the times when tempted to trust self vs. God.
4. Worry is:
 - a) Unproductive: v.25
 - b) Unnecessary: v.26-27
 - c) Unbecoming: v.28-30
 - d) Unbelief – idolatry: v. 19-24
 - e) It is an offense against a good and holy God. Repent!

B. Philippians 4:6-9

1. v.6-7: pray rather than worry: worry is non-productive self- talk that dishonors God.
 - a) Prayer is communication with God that is a blessing, privilege, and duty.
 - b) It is to be specific and God-honoring – properly oriented to God expressing dependence and respect for, of, and to Him.
 - c) Prayer un-packages thinking and wanting so you think God’s thoughts and desire His desires when tempted to worry.
 - d) There is a promise associated with proper praying and prayer: v.7: PEACE.
 - e) Develop a *prayer list* and use it when tempted to worry and throughout the day.
2. v.8: develop a *think list* to help you focus on the things of God.
 - a) Also develop a *want list* so that thoughts and desires are in sync with each other and with God’s will and Word.

- b) Verse 8 lists eight categories to think about (to change thinking) when you begin to worry or when tempted to wrong thinking and wanting.
 - c) Prepare yourself by listing the times that it is most easy to worry - what are your triggers?
 - d) Repackage – change your thinking and replace sinful thoughts and desires with God’s thoughts and desires. Thoughts and desires are linked.
 - e) Right thinking and wanting enables you to use times of temptation for good: to become more like Christ rather to sin by worry.
3. v.9: action – the verse speaks of patterned action. You develop this action-pattern one thought, desire, and action and at a time. Develop an *action list*.
- a) Put on God-pleasing activity in place of self-pleasing activity motivated by a proper view of God, self, and others. Change in your thinking about God, yourself, others, and situations must take place.
 - b) This activity is not simply duty but privilege and blessing,
 - c) Prayer is part of a thought and desire change BUT does not replace action. In fact, prayer is part of and calls for God-pleasing actions.
 - d) You must have a *faith-in-action* plan (it consists of passages that you call to mind: to read, to recite, to mediate on and to memorize; then you verbalize (say them out loud or to yourself) and to actualize (put specific thoughts and desires into specific actions - practice). This change is motivated by the desire to please God because He is most worthy of your thoughts, desires, and actions. Use the *faith-in-action* plan daily.

- e) Stop worrying as a patterned way of life is not the goal; rather, the goal is pleasing God in thoughts, desires, and actions.
- f) In summary: love God and neighbor (Matthew 22:37-40). If the person does, he will be changing from a self-truster (have him write out all the ways that he trusts self) and are putting on God-trusting thoughts, desires, and actions (have him write out the ways that he is trusting God and the reasons).

XV. Conclusion:

- A. Commit to the truth that worry is sin; the person sins when he worries, and God has answers.
- B. God's answers are given as principles in the Bible.
- C. The person is to apply them specifically daily.
- D. He does that by changing his thinking, wanting, and acting daily according to biblical truth.
- E. Growth in Christlikeness is reflected in changed thoughts, desires, and actions as a means of pleasing God because He deserves it. This is a wonderful lifetime activity!
- F. Be satisfied with pleasing God when the person is not getting what he wants and think is best.

NOTES:

Fifth Topic.

Specific Life Problems: Depression: What is it? Is it Sin?

Introduction: Definitions matter. From them come labels which move to diagnosis which moves to therapy and various treatments.

Unfortunately, the world, irrespective of where you live, is convinced that feelings – how you feel – just are and they are the reason for a person’s thinking, wanting and activity or inactivity. Feelings become the person’s reasons for doing or not doing and for being active or being inactive. How did we get into this situation and does the Bible have any help and answers?

I. Definitions, lists, and labels:

A. Naming something or someone seems to be a good thing. To know where you have come from and where you are going is generally a good thing.

1. It helps in preparing for a journey.
2. It helps by making it easy along the way.
3. It helps at arriving at the end.

B. But list, labels, and definitions can be problematic. They create problems.

1. They require a standard, a norm, and a comparison.
2. They require a standard maker.
3. They require someone to interpret the standard.

C. People use them to diagnose and treat.

1. The medical field claims that a person can be “made better” if he or she has a proper diagnosis because only then will he get proper treatment. There is truth in this statement.
2. In the world of medicine and more particularly psychology, psychiatry, and “mental health” field, lists, labels, and definition rule.

3. This is particularly true when addressing depression.
4. The source of the origin of these labels and lists are people who developed the criteria for depression. The diagnosis of depression is based on a yes answer to two basic questions:
 - a) Over the past two weeks, have you ever felt down, depressed, or hopeless?
 - b) Over the past two weeks, have you felt little pleasure or interest in doing things?
 - c) A *yes* answer to both questions enables and forces the treating person to make the diagnosis of depression.
5. Please note:
 - a) The standard for the diagnosis is man's view of man and of problems without biblical insight.
 - b) The diagnosis hinges on a person's description of himself through his feelings – I feel bad; I feel down; I can't because I feel so bad; I am discouraged, overwhelmed, and in bad mood..
 - c) A person will report being depressed – feeling down and fatigued, often all the time.
 - (1) A person may say that he does not need anyone or anything to “depress” him – he can depress himself.
 - (2) The person thinks that he is a victim to and in the situation believing that the other person or situation made him feel a certain way.
6. The person's focus is on bad feelings which are the reason for his thinking, inactivity, and often irresponsibility.

- a) He may be disinterested in many things, but he is interested in doing nothing.
 - b) He may lose weight and sleep poorly.
 - c) Quality of work and play often decreases.
 - d) The major attitude and thinking of the person is “what is the use.”
7. As a result of bad feelings, the person gives up on life – his responsibilities; He gives up on God and others. He describes himself as hopeless.
- a) He is self-focused and denies that fact or explains it away by bad feelings.
 - b) He gives in to feelings and gives up on God and on good stewardship.
 - c) He is not hopeless; rather, his hope is a false hope. He wants what God has not given him!

III. Does the Bible have answers for the person who has received a diagnosis of depression and the ones caring for him? YES!!!

- A. The secular world of medicine and psychology understand feelings as the major culprit and target for depression as well as other “mental conditions.”
- B. The secular world believes that feelings are “felt” in the body which is true.
- C. But the secular world has no place for the heart or the inner man in the understanding of the so-called *mental conditions* including depression.
- D. Changed feelings are the major target whether by medications and or such activities as meditation, yoga, mindfulness therapy, or cognitive behavioral therapy.
- E. The person’s activity in his heart – inner man – is of no concern to them or even denied.

- F. Rarely someone may pray for better feelings and relief.
- G. A spiritual aspect regarding the person may be considered but it is not Holy-Spirit related. Rather, the spirit is the person's inner consciousness that must be set "free."
- H. Self is the focus and good feelings are the goal.

IV. The Bible:

- A. The Bible is the Word of God, the God of hope and peace (Romans 5:1-5; 15:33; 16:20).
 - 1. Therefore there is hope for the person – he is not alone.
 - 2. The cross and the resurrection affirm that fact.
- B. The Bible is God's powerful, purposeful, personal self-revelation. Therefore, it is to be trusted.
- C. The Bible gives man everything he needs to please God (2 Timothy 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:3-4).
- D. The Bible is not a medical textbook, but it does not need to be!!!
- E. The Bible gives the proper view of man and his problems because it is the Word of God and proclaims that:
 - 1. God is the Creator.
 - 2. Man is the creature, an image-bearer of God.
 - 3. The Bible records the fact of failing bodies and bad feelings: sin and God's judgment on Adam and all mankind: Romans 5:12-14; 2 Corinthians 4:16–18.
 - 4. Therefore, bad feelings are a reality in a fallen world and in people with failing bodies.
- F. The key for God-honoring victory is one's response to failing bodies and bad feelings which is a response to God.
- G. For victory, the person must:

1. Address the origin of bad feelings.
2. Address his response to bad feelings.
3. Determine if pleasing God is worthy of his efforts to change his thinking, wanting, and doing about God, himself, and his situation.
4. Better feelings may follow pleasing God but having them becomes less important than pleasing God.

V. The Bible's view of the person who carries a diagnosis of depression

A. We live in a fallen world.

B. Bad feelings are a given.

C. Now what?

1. Every person lives out of an identity.
 - a) The person has been told what and who they are.
 - b) The person has accepted the label and identity.
 - c) They become that label.
2. There are consequences and blessings for the choice a person makes as to who and what he is.
3. The believer is identified as Christ's because of union with Him by the Holy Spirit.
4. The believer is to live as a child of the King with God as his Father and Jesus as his brother.
5. The believer has the indwelling Holy Spirit.
6. Therefore he is not his own – he is to honor God with his body – his whole person (body and spirit): Romans 6:16- 19; 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20.
7. The person who carries a diagnosis of depression denies these facts because of feelings: *I feel so bad.*

- a) His identity is bad feelings.
- b) He takes no responsibility for them: their origin and his response to them.

D. The person must come to the point that pleasing God is to be his prime motivation because God is worthy.

VI. Victory is God's way.

A. Address the person's mindset that *relief-is-everything*.

1. Ask the person how something outside of him *makes* him feel the way he does.
 - a) Ask him what he is thinking at the time and prior to the situation.
 - b) Ask him what he is wanting at the time and prior to the situation.
 - c) He may have a patterned way of thinking and wanting.
 - d) Ask him how he counseled himself and on what basis. What was the result?
 - e) Ask him what biblical truth he used to direct his thinking, wanting, and actions and the results.
2. He should agree that what is outside of him may never touch him physically.
 - a) Therefore, his feelings are linked to thinking and wanting.
 - b) Changing thinking and wanting is God's way to please Him and is His way to change feelings.
 - c) One can change his thinking through biblical means (Psalm 119:9-11; Romans 8:28-29) and honor God or through non-biblical means such as cognitive behavioral or mindfulness therapy that only honors self.

3. Help him realize that the situation is the context or the stage on which God is working in the person's life to bring about victory in his life.
4. Unless the person changes his thinking about God – He deserves to be honored – and changes his thinking about himself - that he is not a victim to that which is outside of him - he will continue to be controlled by feelings – he will give in and give up.
5. Actions or inactivity flow from bad feelings which are connected to thinking and wanting.

B. A change in thinking and wanting is crucial for victory.

1. The issue here is self-counsel: what does he say to himself?
2. What truth or untruth does he speak to himself, and on what basis?
3. What have been the results?
4. Learning to counsel oneself God's way for His glory will free the person so that he is not a victim to his feelings!
5. A person thinks and wants in their heart and in the brain (the body) as a whole person.
6. Biblical change must occur in each place. Paul writes in Romans 6:6 of the superiority of inner-man/heart change such that the body is no longer a slave to sin. Therefore, the body and the inner man (heart) can be re-programmed to honor God.

VII. The How of Change

A. Determine if the person is a believer.

1. If he is, then determine his major goal: is it relief or pleasing God? What are the reasons for either?

2. The two – relief and pleasing God - may occur together by pleasing God but pleasing God does not guarantee relief. The person may use pleasing God to get relief!
3. Remind him that God will not be used to simply get relief and for the removal of bad feelings.
4. Remind him that God has set him free in Christ and there is no reason that he should not conduct himself as a free person.
5. Help him define freedom God's way. Romans 6:16–21 teaches that the believer is no longer a slave to self, sin, and Satan and to living by and for feelings.
6. This freedom was blood-bought by Christ. It does reverse the curse of sin in terms of power and penalty but not the practice of sin.
 - a) Bad feelings will still come BUT he knows how to handle them: their origin and his response.
 - b) There is no certainty that bad feelings will be removed.
 - c) If his goal is to please God, which he can always do, he can and will find contentment in that fact alone (1 Corinthians 10:13; Philippians 4:13).
 - (1) Getting relief will be much less important.
 - (2) Life is simplified which is a blessing itself!
7. Have him confess sin especially the sin of failing to assume responsibilities because of feelings.
8. Help him change his view of God and His providence (life) including the views that:
 - a) God has done him wrong in giving me this person or situation.

- b) God owes him – the cross and the Holy Spirit are not enough.
- B. He is to change thinking and wanting daily. He does so by:
1. Hiding the word in his heart and guarding his heart (Psalm 119:9-11; Proverbs 4:23)
 2. Reading, reciting, memorizing, mediating upon, verbalizing, and actualizing (putting into practice) biblical truth daily that applies to him in his situation whether the times are hard or good. He rejoices as he does.
 3. Put on the fruits of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).
 - a) Specifically put on self-control which is literally control of self by disciplining self: the whole person: heart (inner man) and the brain – the body.
 - b) Too much or too little of anything – inactivity or over-activity – may not honor God.
 - c) Moderation is a key: Romans 6:16; 1 Corinthians 10:23; 1 Peter 2:16; 2 Peter 2:19.
- C. Biblically address any sin that may have triggered bad feelings.
1. The sin may be his.
 2. The sin may be someone else's against him that he has failed to handle biblically.
- D. Address his thinking and wanting about God, self, and life. Have him be specific and honest.
1. Ask: what has God not given him that he thinks he deserves?
 2. Ask: what is his view of God, self, and others?

3. Have him read Romans 8:28-29; Psalm 42:5, 11; 43:1 and counsel self in the situation and discuss it with his pastor or good friend.
 4. Biblical truth sets a person free, but biblical truth is meant to be applied. Bad feelings cannot be the reason for a person to fail to live as a child of God.
- E. Get busy fulfilling godly responsibilities.
1. Make a list of his responsibilities beginning with the most pressing and important and those that he has neglected.
 2. Get to work doing them for two basic reasons: to please God and those depending on him.
 3. Have the person keep at it no matter how he feels.
 4. Have him rejoice, and you with him, at the progress because he has pleased God.
- F. At the end of each day and even as the person is being responsible, offer a prayer of gratitude for God's faithfulness and grace – for God's provision in Christ and the Holy Spirit.

NOTES:

Sixth Topic:

Specific Life Problems: Fear: Sinful and godly fear:
what they are and what is victory?

Introduction: There is so much talk these days about fear. It is common to hear of and encounter fearful people. A fearful person may be labeled as having a “panic attack, a “stress disorder,” and or phobia. The question to be answered for believers is this: what does God say about fear in His Word?

I. General Thoughts:

- A. Your definition and understanding depends on your source of information.
- B. Fear has been called an emotion, a physiological reaction (“stress response”), a “psychological” reaction, and a “protective” mechanism.
- C. These labels represent reasons for the culture’s approach to the fearful person and the term fear.
- D. Does God Word have answers? YES!

II. Biblical Truth

- A. God knew fear would be an issue for fallen man.
 - 1. The word fear does not appear in the Bible until after Adam sinned (Genesis 3:7-10).
 - 2. The word is used in the Old and New Testament about 400 -700 times as a noun and a verb.
 - 3. The Bible gives direction regarding fear estimated to occur about 80-160 times.
- B. Fear is often defined as dread, worry, and distress.
 - 1. While denied or not considered, it is and expresses a reaction to God’s providence (to the people, situations that people call *life*) – that God has brought into a person’s life.

2. The term *life* when used in this way suggests that *life* is a thing that has its own origin and course. The term whether realized or not seeks to eliminate God and His control.
3. Rather biblically, *life* has no life of its own! God is the Author and Controller of life – people and actions (Acts 17:24-29; Romans 1:18-23).

C. Fundamentally fear is a response to God.

1. This point is vital because it points to the spiritual nature of fear.
2. Every person is a theologian because he lives in God's world as a created, dependent being with thoughts and beliefs about God.
3. Moreover every person is a worshipper: he worships something and someone.

D. Therefore: theology is involved in properly understanding fear. To try to eliminate theology is another attempt to eliminate God and the theological nature of life and in this case fear. Every person lives out of his theology as a good or bad theologian.

1. Fear is spiritual – it is related to God even if that fact is denied.
2. Fear is rational – it involves a person's thinking and his thoughts.
3. Fear is relational: it involves relationships: to God and others.
4. Fear is desire-oriented – it involved a person's wanting and or not wanting a certain result.

E. There is hope for the fearful person!

III. Specifics regarding fear

- A. Fear is an inner-man activity. It flows from the heart of man (Proverbs 4:23)
- B. Yes, there are bodily sensations and physiological changes that are felt by the person and maybe observed by others.
 - 1. These include nerve and brain activity.
 - 2. Symptoms and signs occur and are experienced and felt.
 - 3. A sign is something measured by another person using an instrument (an example is using a thermometer to measure for a fever, but it will not measure feverishness –a symptom and a feeling)
 - 4. A symptom is only felt in the body by the person.
- C. In reality, the word fear defines a way of thinking and wanting in response to what a person does not want but believes will occur or it may be a reaction to not getting what a person wants.
 - 1. As a result of wants, a person thinks and feels such that thoughts and desires drive feelings. The person feels fearful because he is!
 - 2. As a result a person wants and feels such that wants/ desires drive feelings and actions or inactions.
 - 3. As a result of feelings, a person does something (it may be avoiding people and places) or he may not act as he should (he ignores various responsibilities or isolates himself).
- D. Fear has a subject, an object, and motivation.
 - 1. Subject of fear:
 - a) If the subject of fear is the person himself, it is sinful fear.

- b) If the subject of fear is divorced from a relationship with God, the fear is sinful.
 - c) If the subject of fear is God and pleasing Him, the fear is godly.
2. Object of fear:
- a) The object of fear is defined as that which is “out there” – a person, a condition, or a situation - and what “it” represents to the person.
 - b) It may be a person and or a circumstance past, present, and or future. It may involve a person’s responsibility related to another person or circumstance.
3. Motivation for a fearful response:
- a) When we speak of fear’s motivation, we must remember that the term fear describes a specific way of thinking about God, self, and life.
 - b) The motivation of fear may be for self-protection which may result from good stewardship with respect to potential danger: do not drive too fast or get too close to the edge. God blesses good stewardship as part of fear and the Bible would call this an aspect of fear of the Lord – godly fear.
 - c) The desire for protection may also result from guilt and take the form of escape, avoidance, and what I call the *fig-leaf function of life* which is an expression of sinful fear (Proverbs 28:1; Genesis 3:7-10). The person attempts to hide from God.

IV. Fear can be godly or ungodly.

- A. Both focus on *life* - God’s providence - from either the person’s standpoint or from God’s.

- B. Both involve lordship and control issues: who do I trust love, worship, and give allegiance and devotion to when tempted to be fearful?
- C. Both reflect what a person wants or does not want to happen.
1. Sinful fear focuses on SELF: what I want and may not get or what I do not want but may get.
 2. Godly fear focuses on GOD: what God wants and honoring Him irrespective of the circumstances and results of my decision. For example, godly fear moves a person to be responsible and loving when the person wants to and hopes to avoid people and circumstances for any number of reasons.
 3. Sinful fear focuses on feelings which become the primary motive for doing or not doing. The person described above chooses to stay in bed or in his room or in his home rather than engaging in loving activity.
 - a) Self is center stage.
 - b) Taking care of self by getting or avoiding is the person's main motivation.
 - c) Other people are viewed as a burden or a threat.
 - d) Responsibilities are viewed as a burden and even a threat.
 4. Godly fear focuses on pleasing God by relying on His grace and Word through the Holy Spirit. Godly actions will follow which includes loving God and neighbor and even enemy.
- D. The person who demonstrates sinful or godly fear looks at life – the circumstances - and evaluates them. He makes a choice.

1. The person with sinful fear looks primarily at the circumstances first for the purpose of protecting self rather than at the God of them and His purpose for and in them.
 2. The person with godly fear looks at the God of the circumstances with the motivation to please Him due to all that God in Christ by the Holy Spirit has done for him and others.
- E. Thinking and wanting resides in a person's heart and in his brain (the outer man – body).
1. As a result, the person reports various feelings some of which are physiologically related such as sweating or a fast heart rate.
 2. The heart (inner man) is linked to the body/brain so that bodily responses (such as skin feeling sweaty, fast breathing and fast heart rate) occur throughout the whole person and feelings follow.
 3. Fearful people are “feelers.” The feelings are real but from God's view they are not the prime issue. Rather, thinking and wanting are.
 4. The person feels fearful because he is!
- V. Sinful fear is ungodly because the person is focused on self and away from God and others.
- A. It makes a statement about God's love (1 John 4:18: There is no fear in love. but perfect love casts fear. For fear has to do with punishment and whoever fears has not been perfected I love).
1. Fear is ungodly when the person fails to acknowledge and accept God's love of him and Christ's cost of going to hell on the cross: 1 John 4:18–19.

- a) The God who bled and died in his place certainly will care for him.
 - b) The person thinks lightly of God's love and the cost to Christ.
 - c) The sinful fearful person thinks pleasing God is not worth the effort of being responsible.
2. Fear is ungodly when the person fears God's judgment and he does not accept God's judgment of Christ as his substitute (Romans 8:1; 2 Corinthians 5:21) and as an act of divine love.
 3. Fear is ungodly when the person trusts himself or someone or something else other than God's good control: Psalm 56:3-4.
 4. Fear is ungodly when the person functions on the false assumption that he must do something more than simply trust and obey a good God. He denies the simple necessity and privilege of faithful obedience and obedient faithfulness (Psalm 56:3-4; John 14:1-3; 1 John 3:1-3; 5:3-4).
 5. Fear is sinful when the person fails to accept and act on his God-given responsibilities.
 6. Fear is sinful when loyalty, affection, and allegiance in any situation is on self rather than on pleasing God.
- B. Sinful fear is the opposite of and counter to:
1. Fear of the Lord (Proverbs 1:7)
 2. Love of God and others (Matthew 22:37-40)
 3. Trust (Psalm 56:3-4; John 14:1-3).

VI. Godly fear is fear of the Lord and is the answer to “fear not” and “when I am afraid, I will trust in you.”

A. At the center of fear is control.

1. Control is the issue: God’s or the person’s?
2. Therefore, the issue of control is spiritual, theological, and personal.

B. Foundational to godly fear is:

1. Proper knowledge of God: who He is and what He is doing.
2. Trust in Him and His Word:
 - a) God makes and keeps promises in Christ by the Holy Spirit.
 - b) The cross and the resurrection confirm these truths.
3. Love of God is shown by loving God, neighbor, and enemies in unpleasant circumstances knowing that you have been loved out of hell and for God’s service.

C. Godly fear is the constant and dominating awareness of the presence, plan, purpose, promises, power, and provisions of God that motivates a person to trust and obey.

1. It is the reality of the ever-present God knowing that He has something to say about every thought, desire, and actions of every person.
2. There are no private thoughts, desires, or actions.
3. It is the reality that the person lives before the very face of God aware that God is no passive or innocent bystander.
4. Fear of the Lord describes in human terms the awareness by the person that the God of the

universe is his God and that he lovingly responds to Him.

- D. Out of godly fear the person acknowledges, accepts, and acts on the basis of knowing God and His control is for His glory and benefit of the believer as given in Genesis 50:15–21 and Romans 8:28–29.
1. The person focuses on how to please God in the situation.
 2. He relies on biblical truth and enabling grace to think, desire, and do.
 3. He is responsible which is motivated by the desire to please God.
- E. The believer out of godly fear knows and acts on three fundamental truths regarding God’s trustworthiness.
1. God is totally sovereign and in control.
 - a) He is the God of His universe and runs it His way by His power and might.
 - b) God in His love wills what is best for Him and for believers.
 - c) He brings about what He has willed in eternity past.
 - d) His power is controlled and directed toward bringing about what He wills for His glory and the good of the believer.
 2. God is infinite in wisdom:
 - a) He knows as only God knows.
 - b) He knows what is best for Him and the believer.
 3. God is perfect in love:
 - a) He wills what is best.

- b) In love, He always desires and wills what is best for His good purposes and His end.
4. Therefore, God is completely trustworthy:
 - a) He is deserving of and rightfully demands the believer's faithful obedience and obedient faithfulness.
 - b) The believer is to joyfully give to Him loyalty, allegiance, and trust – daily as duty, privilege, and blessing following the example and pattern of Christ. Self takes a backseat!

VII. God's answer to sinful fear and victory:

A. Become God-focused and other-focused in thought, desire, and action (Matthew 22:37-40).

1. Daily, remember that the situation that you or any believer finds himself is part of God's control.
2. The situation is not the key. It is your response in and to it which is a response to God
3. Your response is to follow Christ's pattern of trustful love and loving trust of the Father based on Christ's knowledge of Himself, of the Father, of the Holy Spirit, and of and the believer (Romans 8:35-39).

B. Repentance is a must.

1. The word means a change in thinking that results in changes in thoughts, desires, and actions.
2. Repent of sinful fear at that moment but also the pattern of sinful fear.
3. Record (write out) the times that it is easy to be fearful.
4. Develop and use a *faith-in-action* plan: Psalm 119:9-11. Include Psalm 56:3-5; John 14:1-3; 1

John 4:7-12, 18-19; Romans 8:28-29. Study it hourly.

5. Armed with and applying the above biblical truth you will love and trust God rather than self:
 - a) Write out on an index card the following passages: Proverbs 3:5-8; Psalm 34:8-11; 56:3-4; John 14:1-3; 1 John 4:18-19).
 - b) Read, recite, memorize, and meditate on the passages and then verbalize and actualize (put into practice) the truths in the situation when tempted.

C. Address the issue of guilt: Proverbs 28:1

1. Is there unrepentant sin?
2. Is there sin that has been repented but the person believes his feelings so that he functions as “I don’t feel forgiven” -and not according to the Word of God?
3. Read and respond to Romans 8:1; 1 John 1:9 remembering that the Word of God trumps feelings and sinful fear!

D. Develop a proper view of fear of the Lord

1. Focus on God’s power and control, knowledge, and love.
2. Answer: is God worthy of being trusted? Write out your reasons.
3. Are you worthy of being trusted? Write out your reasons. Compare your answers.
4. Be willing to trust God because He is God: look at the cross and the Resurrection.

E. Learn to love. Put on love as you grow and learn to love God and others.

1. Love of God: giving yourself to God so that you never grow tired of enjoying and worshipping Him (Philippians 3:7-11). Write out how that will look in your life.
2. Love of others: love may be defined as giving to meet a need no matter the situation with the right motive. Write out how that will look in your life.
3. Matthew 22:37-70 and 1 John 4:8-12: love God and love neighbor.
4. Write reasons why God deserves to be loved by you and how you will do it. Do it no matter your feelings.
5. Write out reasons why your neighbor and even your enemy should be loved and how you will do it in specific terms and begin to do them one at a time (Matthew 5:43-48; Romans 5:6-10; 12:17-21).

F. Learn to trust God: John 14:1-3.

1. Daily practice longing for and enjoying God's presence. How will that look in your life? Psalm 34:8; 1 Peter 2:1-3
2. Learn to rely on God's provisions to accomplish His purpose. These include a relationship with Jesus Christ, the indwelling Holy Spirit, the Bible, saving and enabling grace, and the Church.
3. Remember you are not a victim to and of God's control, but you are His child (Romans 8:35-39). What is your response and give reasons?

NOTES:

Seventh Topic:

Specific Life Problems: Anger: sinful or godly

I. Introduction

- A. Every person has at least two problems: he sins because he is a sinner.
- B. Some sins are well known such as sinful anger, sinful fear, worry, and depression.
- C. God's Word has answers for people with so-called "life problems."
- D. Actually "life problems" are a person's response to people, situations, and events that occur due to God's control.
 1. The issue for the believer is properly responding to sinning and being sinned against which are the two most common reasons for sinful and non-sinful anger.
 2. However we must be careful not to think that bad things happen only to bad people and good things happen only to good people. The cross is the prime example of being sinned against without sinning initially or in response (see the book of Job; Luke 13:1-5; John 9:1-3).
- E. Three fundamental truths must be remembered:
 1. Man lives from and out of his heart (Prov. 4:23). He is to guard, protect, and watch over it. If not, it is easy for anyone including the believer to sin.
 2. The believer guards his heart by knowing and applying biblical truth to himself regularly (Ps. 119:9-11).
 3. The situations (events or circumstances) in life are NOT the problem even though they may be very

burdensome. Rather, they are the setting in which the person demonstrates what is in his heart.

4. The fact that a person is sinned against does not cause him to sin in return; rather, it is the setting for a person to show love for God, biblical truth, and others.

II. Anger is a common reaction and response even among Christians.

- A. What is anger? Anger is a judging activity, a reaction against somebody who breaks a standard; anger involves thoughts and desires that may or may be shown by action.
- B. Anger is the expression of the God-given capacity to judge – everyone judges and is judged.
- C. There is a difference in getting angry and being an angry person.
- D. Anger is something a person does. An angry person is an expression of what a person is. The angry person displays anger in thoughts, desires, and actions in various situations, in various ways, and in varying degrees.
- E. The issue of control is at the center of anger, both righteous and sinful anger.

III. God and Satan are models for anger.

- A. God is the angriest Being. He is the just Judge of all the earth (Genesis 18:25)
- B. God's anger is a holy, God-pleasing, God-protecting anger highlighting His glory – the cross is the supreme reflection of that fact (Romans 3:21-26; 2 Corinthians 5:21).
- C. God is justly angry at our sinning including sinful anger.
 1. In love, God's anger as the just Judge and which every sinner deserves, was placed on and directed at Jesus who bore its fullness.

2. In love, God's anger works to disarm the power of sin in the believer.
3. In love, God's anger is delivering the believer from the misery of being sinned against (2 Thessalonians 1:5-10).

D. Satan is the next angriest being.

E. Satan's anger is unholy, self-pleasing, and attacks God and competes with God to glorify himself.

1. He works for himself against God and the person.
2. His anger and its display are for self to self against God.
3. Satan's anger and its display only adds to man's misery.

IV. Anger may be known only to the angry person or it may be witnessed by others.

A. It can be sinful or righteous.

B. How can one tell?

V. There are several features of anger that must be examined.

A. They include:

1. The trigger: what sets the person off and makes it easy for him to be angry?
2. The content: what is the reason for the person's anger?
3. The purpose and motivation of the anger: what does the person hope to gain?
4. The expression: how does the person show anger?
5. The duration of being angry: how long is the person angry?

B. You must determine whether the anger is sinful or godly.

1. Sinful anger: the angry person reacts solely against another person and offenses for his sake. The offenses may be personal dislikes. They may be associated with the belief that the angry person believes his rights have been denied.
 - a) The focus of the angry person is on his control and rights. It is self-centered.
 - b) It has as its goal hurting or even destroying the other person.
 - c) It is competing with God because the sinfully angry person does not like how He is running His world.
 - d) It creates more problems which hurt relationships between God, the person, and others.
2. Godly anger:
 - a) It focuses on God and His honor and glory, what He wants and says in His Word, and on pleasing Him. It is God-centered.
 - b) It expresses itself in godly ways with the goal of preserving God's glory and solving problems and building relationships. It has God and the other's interests in view.
 - c) Godly anger acts against the person who sinned in a God-honoring way because the person knows that all sin is an attack on God and a violation of His standard. Moreover, sinful anger is not in the best interest of the sinning person and the one sinned against.

VI. Once you determine that the person's anger is sinful, either in how it starts, how it continues, how long it continues, and how it is expressed, the person must repent.

A. He repents to God and the other person.

B. Of what does he repent?

1. The act itself
2. The heart from which it flowed
3. The pattern of sinful anger
4. The excuses for sinful anger

VII. Biblical principles:

- A. The heart of anger is the heart: Proverbs 4:23; Romans 12:17-21; James 1:19-20; 3:13-4:12
- B. To get victory, there must be a change in one's view of God and how He runs His world.
- C. Moreover, there must be a change in his view of himself: it is not his world and he cannot run it as he wants. He is not God but a forgiven sinner.
- D. He must learn and apply the truth that he is not God and that pleasing God is best for him and the one who received the anger.
- E. Love of God leads to love of neighbor and even one's enemies (Matthew 22:37-40; 5:43-48).
- F, Unless the person changes his view of God and himself, he will continue to try to control through sinful anger.
- G. The person is to be angry but sin not (Ephesians 4:26).
 1. This is impossible unless he changes his view of God and self.
 2. He begins by trusting and resting in the fact that this is God's world and He runs it His way for His glory. The believer becomes increasingly aware that God works for His glory and the good of His children.
 3. The believer becomes increasingly aware when it is easy for him to display sinful anger.

4. He keeps focused on God's control which testifies to God's presence, purpose, promises, plan, power, and provisions to get victory.
 - a) If God is trustworthy, He can be trusted and obeyed. Anger may be proper, but it must be properly motivated and expressed.
 - b) Pleasing God is best for everyone involved.
 - c) Rather than attempting to harm and destroy the other person – the object of his judgment and resultant wrath, he pleases God by loving his enemies (Matthew 5:43-48); returning good for evil (Romans 12:17-21); and speaking truth in love (Ephesian 4:15, 24-26).
5. He commits to memory Romans 8:28-29 and applies it to every situation in which it is easy for him to be sinfully angry.
6. He reads Matthew 18:21-35 and Luke 7:36-50 and remembers his own debt, God the Just Judge, God the Lover, and God the Debt-Payer. Jesus paid it all!

VIII. Conclusion:

- A. Being angry God's way for His glory to achieve His purpose is Christlike and pleases God.
- B. Resting in the knowledge of God's good control is a major tool to be angry God's way.
- C. Sinful anger attacks God and His control. It is an expression of competition with God.
- D. Sinful anger dishonors God. It harms the cause of Christ; and it is often sin-engendering for other people.
- E. Be angry God's way for His glory and enjoy God's wisdom!

NOTES:

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- *A Biblical Approach to Receiving Medical Care*
- *God's Wisdom for Troubled Times*
- *What To Do When Your Body Fails You*
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- *When Your Body Betrays You*
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- *Endurance: What it is, How It Looks in the Believer's Life*
- *Depression Through A Biblical Lens: A Whole-Person Approach.*
- *How to be a God-Pleasing Patient*
- *The Book of Job: God's Sovereignty and Job's Suffering,*
Suspensions, and Success, soon to be released
- *Hope: Out of the Maze: A Covenantal View of Hope,*
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