

Counseling Youth: Gospel Hope for Teenage Hearts

**Lighthouse Community Church
January 26-27, 2024
Torrance, CA**

Conference Schedule

Friday, January 26

6:30 PM Doors Open
7:00 PM Session 1
8:10 PM Break
8:30 PM Session 2

Saturday, January 27

8:00 AM Doors Open - Optional Fellowship (coffee and light breakfast provided)
9:00 AM Session 3
10:00 AM Break
10:30 AM Session 4 & Q&A

Q&A Question Submission Link

We will be doing a Q&A with Dan Nah during session 4 on Saturday afternoon. Please submit your questions by Friday evening using the QR code or website URL below or in the box at the check-in table. Due to time limitations, not all questions/topics may be addressed.



tinyurl.com/counselingyouth

Counseling Youth: Gospel Hope for Teenage Hearts
Session 1: Who is a Teenager?

I. What is Counseling?

- **Counseling** – conversational ministry which takes the Word of God and applies it to the issues of life.

“Counseling is helping **real people** with **real problems** using the Bible.” (Brad Bigney)

Key Truth: **Everyone** is a counselor.

Romans 15:14 – I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to **instruct one another**.

Deuteronomy 6:4-7 – “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

- **Biblical Counseling** – the type of counseling that is founded upon the conviction that the Scriptures are sufficient for life and godliness.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 – All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Hebrews 4:12 - For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Psalms 19:7-9 - The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether.

Top Ten Reasons Why Teenagers Go to Therapy (Adolescent Counseling Services):

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Depression | 6. School and Social-Related Issues |
| 2. Anxiety Disorders | 7. Legal Problems |
| 3. Behavior Problems | 8. Low Self-Esteem |
| 4. Substance Abuse Issues | 9. Trauma |
| 5. Stress | 10. Grief |

Galatians 5:22 – But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Ezra 7:10 – For Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the LORD, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel.

Matthew 7:5 – You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

II. Who is a Teenager?

“Jimmy was sixteen. He sat in the chair next to me, quite composed, in fact bored. His parents thought he ought to talk to someone, but he wasn't much interested in talking to me. Eventually we got past the monosyllable, awkward silence phase. As Jimmy opened up a big, he told story after story about how he'd been mistreated by his family, mistreated by classmates, mistreated by teachers, mistreated by God, mistreated by the whole . . . universe. He gave a detailed recitation of all the injustice, unfairness, betrayal, disappointment, offense, and plain old stupidity committed against him. He had a rap sheet on the whole world.

Jimmy played his parts to perfection: crime victim and aggrieved plaintiff, prosecuting attorney and hanging judge, unanimous jury, outraged public, and ever-so-willing executioner. Most of his stories seemed plausible, in fact. But none of the offenses sounded particularly outrageous. They were the things that could happen to everyone. A few stories sounded a bit exaggerated, or even made up, but most of it sounded pretty factual. Two things struck me about Jimmy. First, Jimmy spoke in an unvarying monotone. His apparent emotions were flat line. He sounded like he was reading from a telemarketing script or reciting the directions on how to assemble a piece of IKEA furniture. His dull litany of grievances as scarier than outright anger. At one point I asked him, ‘are you angry?’. . . Jimmy seemed taken aback for a moment. Then he recovered his cool and said matter of factly, ‘Nah, I don't get angry. . . I get even.’ This anger was chilly. . . It was more ‘premeditated, cold-blooded murder’ than ‘crime of passion.’ He was not going to waste emotions on the vermin and trash that he had to deal with in life. . .

As a Christian, can I truly understand Jimmy? Am I able to understand him in a truly Christian way? Is it then possible for me to wisely counsel Jimmy? . . . In the context of my pastoral care, could Jimmy actually blossom? Could Jimmy be to live a life worth living? Could he become a friend worth having, a student worth teaching, a worker worth hiring? Could he someday develop into a man worth marrying and a father worth honoring? . . . **Do I, a Christian worker, even have the right to try to counsel Jimmy?”**
(David Powlison, “Only a Teenager”, *Journal of Biblical Counseling*)

DSM V – “Oppositional Defiant Disorder” (Secular View):

A pattern of angry/irritable mood, argumentative/defiant behavior, or vindictiveness lasting at least 6 months as evidenced by at least four symptoms from any of the following categories, and exhibited during interaction with at least one individual who is not a sibling.

1. Often loses temper.
2. Is often touchy or easily annoyed.
3. Is often angry and resentful.
4. Often argues with authority figures or, for children and adolescents, with adults.
5. Often actively defies or refuses to comply with requests from authority figures or with rules.
6. Often deliberately annoys others.
7. Often blames others for his or her mistakes or misbehavior.
8. Has been spiteful or vindictive at least twice within the past 6 months.

II. Who is a Teenager? (continued)

A. A **person** who is made in the **image and likeness of God**.

Genesis 1:27 – So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Genesis 5:1-2 – This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, **he made him in the likeness of God**. Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created.

Genesis 9:6-7 – “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, **for God made man in his own image**. And you, be fruitful and multiply, increase greatly on the earth and multiply in it.”

James 3:8-10 – but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse **people who are made in the likeness of God**. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so.

Two words:

- **Image** (*Tselem*) – from the root “to carve”. Could be used to describe a carved likeness of a person.
- **Likeness** (*Demuth*) – The idea of similarity. “An image which is like us.” (Hoekema).

Mark 12:15-17 – Jesus said this: “Bring me a denarius and let me look at it.” And they brought one. And he said to them, “Whose **likeness** and inscription is this?” They said to him, “Caesar’s.” Jesus said to them, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.”

John Calvin – “deformed, vitiated, mutilated, maimed, disease-ridden, disfigured. . . **[but not destroyed!]**”

“The fact that man is in the image of God means that man is like God and represents God.” (Wayne Grudem)

- **Application: Interpersonal ministry is marked by an attitude of respect.**

“A troubled person is a person to love, not a problem to fix. And people often change slowly and struggle deeply.” (David Powlison)

“I don’t counsel sins. I counsel people.” (Robert Jones)

Ineffective Strategies in Ministering to the Heart:

1. Give quick and easy answers
 2. Have a self-righteous attitude
 3. Demonstrate emotional detachment
 4. Be cynical
 5. Use intimidation and threats
 6. Hurl accusations
 7. Be manipulative
- A teenager is made to live for God and His God’s glory.

1 Corinthians 10:31 - So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Counseling Youth: Gospel Hope for Teenage Hearts
Session 2: Who is a Counselor?

I. Introduction

“The most helpful thing to remember is that your teenager is more like you than unlike you. . . Too often, we have this view that teenagers are a separate class of people, as though they’re aliens who’ve dropped from the sky. But there are very few struggles in the life of my teenager that I don’t recognize in the life of my own heart as well.” (Paul Tripp, “What is ‘Success’ in Parenting Teens?”)

“Jesus presents the proper order: You must start with you. . . Whose sins bother you more – your sins or the other person’s?” (Robert Jones, Pursuing Peace)

II. Who is a Counselor?

1. A **Steward** of **God’s Word**.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 - All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

2 Peter 1:3 - His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,

“God transforms people’s lives as people bring his Word to others. . . The changes God produces in his people are directly connected to the ministry of the Word.” (Paul Tripp, Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands)

“Open the door and let the lion out; he will take care of himself. . . The way to meet infidelity is to spread the Bible. The answer to every objection against the Bible is the Bible.” (C.H. Spurgeon)

Joshua 1:8 - This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

Ezra 7:10 – For Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the LORD, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel.

Psalms 119:97-100 – Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day. Your commandment makes me wiser than my enemies, for it is ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers, for your testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the aged, for I keep your precepts.

1 Peter 2:1-3 – So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation – if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

“Oh, that you and I might get into the very heart of the Word of God, and get that Word into ourselves! . . . it is blessed to eat into the very soul of the Bible until, at last, you come to talk in Scriptural language, and your very style is fashioned upon Scripture models, and, what is better still, your spirit is flavored with the words of the Lord.” (C.H. Spurgeon)

2. A **person** whose heart has been **prepared** for ministry.

Proverbs 4:23 – Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.

Matthew 12:33-34 - Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit. You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

Hebrews 4:12 – For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

1 Peter 1:22 – Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere love, love one another earnestly from a **pure heart**,

1 Peter 3:8 - Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind.

1 Peter 1:6-7 - In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

“But our children, perhaps, do not give us most anxiety when they are infants, nor when we have them at school, when we can put them to bed and give them a good-night’s kiss and feel that all is safe; the heavy care comes afterwards – afterwards when they have broken through our control, when they are running alone, and on their own account, when they are away from our home, when they are out of the reach of our rebuke, and do not now feel as once they did the power of our authority, and hardly of our love. It is then to many parents that the time of severe trial begins, and, doubtless, many a grey head has been brought with sorrow to the grave by having to cry, ‘I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.’ Many a father and many a mother die, murdered, not with knife or poison, but by unkind words and cruel deeds of their own children. Many and many a grave may well be watered by the tears of sons and daughters, because they prematurely filled those graves by their ungrateful conduct.” (C.H. Spurgeon, “An Anxious Enquiry for a Beloved Son”)

2 Samuel 18:33 - “O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!”

“Our children may plunge into the worst of sins, but they are our children still. They may scoff at our God; they may tear our heart to pieces with their wickedness; we cannot take complacency in them, but at the same time we cannot unchild them, nor erase their image from our hearts. We do earnestly remember them still, and shall do so as long as these hearts of our shall beat within our bosoms. . .If David says, ‘Is the young man Absalom safe?’ we have none of us had a son that has acted one half so badly as Absalom;” (C.H. Spurgeon)

- A counselor must cultivate a **quiet heart**.

Isaiah 30:15 – in quietness and in trust shall be your strength.”

1 Peter 3:4 – but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God’s sight is very precious.

Psalm 131:1-3 – O LORD, my heart is not lifted up; my eyes are not raised too high; I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvelous for me. But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child is my soul within me. O Israel, hope in the LORD from this time forth and forevermore.

Psalm 71:19 - You. . . have done great things, O God, who is like you?

Psalm 86:10 - For you are great and do wondrous things; you alone are God.

1 Chronicles 16:24 - Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples!

“Self,
my heart is proud (I’m absorbed in myself),
and my eyes are haughty (I look down on other people),
and I chase after things too great and too difficult for me.
So of course I’m noisy and restless inside,
it comes naturally,
like a hungry infant fussing on his mother’s lap,
like a hungry infant, I’m restless with my demands and worries.
I scatter my hopes onto anything and everybody all the time.”

(Anti-psalm, “Peace, be still”: Learning Psalm 131 by Heart” by David Powlison)

Psalm 127:1-3 - A Song of Ascents. Of Solomon. Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain. It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep. Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward.

- A counselor must cultivate a **trusting heart**.

Proverbs 3:5-6 – Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

Psalm 125:1 – Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever.

“Trust is not a passive state of mind. It is a vigorous act of the soul by which we choose to lay hold on the promises of God and cling to them despite the adversity that at times seeks to overwhelm us. . . God’s plan and His ways of working out His plan are frequently beyond our ability to fathom and understand. We must learn to trust when we don’t understand.” (Jerry Bridges, Trusting God)

- A counselor must cultivate a **humble heart**.

Key Idea: A humble heart acknowledges the **limited sphere** of influence a parent has over an adult child.

What Influences Determine How a Child Turns Out?

Parental Training
Biblical Teaching
Discipleship in the Church
A Child's Conscience
A Child's Educational Influences
The Desires of the Child's Heart
The Ministry of the Holy Spirit

- **Determinism** – “Good shaping influences will automatically produce good children” (Tedd Tripp)

A humble heart seeks to influence not control.

“In the final analysis, you must entrust your children to God. How they turn out will depend on more than what you have done in providing shaping influences. It will depend on the nature of their Godward commitment.” (Tedd Tripp, *Shepherding a Child's Heart*)

“**Sometimes I engage in conversational overkill with my teens** because I've trying to do God's job. When we do this we make our kids very angry. We exasperate them and push them into bitterness. I once had a father in my office who firmly grasped his son's face with his hand and said, 'If it's the last thing I ever do, I'm going to make you respect me!' . . . This frustrated father tried to do what only God could do. That will never produce respect. It stimulates the very rebellion you try to get rid of. This father declared war on his son.” (Paul Tripp, “What is ‘Success’ in Parenting Teens?”)

John 16:12 - “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.

3. An Instrument in the Redeemer's Hands.

"We must not offer people a *system* of redemption, a set of insights and principles. We offer people a *Redeemer*. In his power, we find the hope and help we need to defeat the most powerful enemies. Hope lies in the grace of the Redeemer, the only real means of lasting change." (Paul Tripp, Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands)

Ephesians 1:20-21 - he raised him the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

- Jill's story – Putting Your Past In Its Place (Steve Viars)

Gospel Themes:

Crushed humans, a crushed Savior and care of souls
Ernie Baker

“It is Good Friday and I am reflecting on my Savior (whom I love dearly) and also on this past week. All week I have been struck by the brokenness of my fellow humans and my own weakness. Who our Savior is in relation to humans has never been more real. His ministry is THE need of humans. A broken servant Savior relates to the shattered condition of humans.

My soul feels drained as I recuperate after having conversations throughout the week related to suicide (threats and an actual suicide), multiple broken marriages, sexual struggles (including pedophilia, adultery, premarital sex, same sex attraction, and cross dressing) along with substance abuse and its devastating impact on relationships. I have heard guilt, shame, anger, confusion, desperation, and exasperation. All of these feelings have been coupled with reckless, abusive words and actions. Tears are such a common occurrence that I joke with people that we buy stock in tissue companies.

As I have endeavored to minister to souls using the Scriptures, I have reminded my fellow sufferers that Jesus, . . . Was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief (Isaiah 53:3). He can relate to their pain so learn to lament and take needs to Him (Hebrews 4:15-16).

I have ministered hope that He came to ‘set captives free’ and ‘bind up the brokenhearted’ (Isaiah 61:1). These are not empty promises, devoid of power though. He actually has the power to do something about their situation as demonstrated by His supernatural power over nature, over diseases, over demons and even death! . . . But, and this sings with beauty for counseling, if He can resurrect the dead can’t He raise a dead marriage! . . .

Andrew Peterson captures our Savior’s relation to the human condition well.

*‘Come broken and weary, Come battered and bruised. My Jesus makes all things new....
Come lost and abandoned, Come blown by the wind. He’ll bring you back home again....
Come frozen with pain come burning with guilt my Jesus he loves you still. He loves you still.
The world was good the world is fallen. The world will be redeemed. O hold on to the promise.
The stories are true that Jesus makes all things new’*

What do you need to do? See His beauty and turn from your way, confess your need of Someone who paid for your sin, become a follower of Him and see that He is the one who says, ‘Come unto me all you who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest for your souls’ (Matthew 11:28-30). He can relate and has done something about your brokenness. Turn to a wonderful merciful Savior.

On this Good Friday, I am awed by our Savior’s relevance to the human condition.”

“It is said that Christ is a river of water, because there is such a fullness in him, so plentiful a provision for the satisfaction of the needy and longing soul. . . Christ is like a river, in that he has a sufficiency not only for one thirsty soul, but by supplying him the fountain is not lessened; there is not the less afforded to those who come afterwards. . . Christ is an ever-flowing fountain; he is continually supplying his people, and the fountain is not spent. They who live upon Christ, may have fresh supplies from him to all eternity; they have an increase of blessedness that is new, and new still, and which never will come to an end.”
(Jonathan Edwards)

Counseling Youth: Gospel Hope for Teenage Hearts Session 3: How do we Counsel?

I. Introduction

Proverbs 18:21 – Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits.

“When God calls you to do a task, you must attain to the highest level that you can in pursuing it -- for His Name's sake. That is true of counseling as well as any other calling. If God has called you to the ministry of counseling, you are not free to be mediocre. To please Him you must excel. Moreover, as in every area in which others' lives are at stake, you cannot sluff off what you do as ‘just another thing’ among many. **You must give yourself to the work. What you do has eternal consequences!**” (Jay Adams, Committed to Craftsmanship)

Proverbs 22:29 – Do you see a man skillful in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before obscure men.

1 Corinthians 15:10 - But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.

“Teenagers’ lives are full of complexity. Strong forces compete for their attention. They often feel insecure. They worry about their appearance. They spend a lot of time fixing their hair and clothes. They change their clothes three or four times before going out. They practice in front of the mirror: ‘Is this my good smile?’ ‘Is this my good side?’ ‘Will people like me?’ ‘Will I have lots of friends?’

Teenagers are unstable in the world of ideas. They are bombarded on all sides. They don’t know what to think or why. Sometimes they test ideas by saying outrageous things at the dinner table. They look to parents to show them why those things are wrong. Sometimes parents get caught off-guard by those outrageous comments and they overreact in response.

Teens are unstable emotionally. One minute they feel wonderfully happy. The next minute they feel like the world has come to an end again for the third time that day. Their lives are emotional roller coasters. Solid ground is hard to find.

Teens face adult temptations and adult problems: a suicidal friend, sexual desires and opportunities, access to drugs and alcohol, awareness that a friend is being abused, or remembering their own experiences of predation or molestation. But teens face these problems for the first time in their lives.

Teens are apprehensive about the future. How will they get from today to future usefulness in life? What will I do? Who will be my friends? Will I find someone to love? Will someone love me?

We need to interact with our teenagers with a great deal of wisdom. We need to use a careful hand. We need to communicate. . . **In the years from infancy to adulthood, your authority diminishes, but your influence should increase.**” (Tedd Tripp, “Communicate with Teens”, Journal of Biblical Counseling)

Proverbs 12:18 - There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

Galatians 6:1 – Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep a watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.

Proverbs 25:25 – With patience a ruler may be persuaded, and a soft tongue will break a bone.

Proverbs 16:24 - Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body.

II. Key Element #1: Involvement

- The ministry of showing Christ-like compassion.

Involvement can be defined as the ministry of expressing Christ-like love and compassion so that a relationship can be built marked by trust and openness.

Colossians 3:12 - Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. . .

Acts 20:31 – Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears.

v.36-38 – And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. And there was much weeping on the part of all; they embraced Paul and kissed him, being sorrowful most of all because of the word he had spoken, that they would not see his face again. And they accompanied him to the ship.

1 Thessalonians 2:7-8 – But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.

Proverbs 25:15 – With patience a ruler may be persuaded, and a soft tongue will break a bone.

2 Timothy 2:24-26 - And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.

“Building a Christ-like relationship with the disciple/counselee where you put yourself (a fellow sinner and sufferer) in a position to help them know and love God and love others (full of grace and full of truth).” (Stuart Scott)

“Accepting the counselees as persons important to God, and coming alongside in concern and love to see their problems in order to help them find biblical solutions and change for God’s glory and the counselee’s benefit.” (Randy Patten and Mark Dutton)

- **Practical Application: Involvement requires entering a person’s world.**

John 1:14 - And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,

Hebrews 2:17 - a merciful and faithful high priest. . .

Hebrews 4:15 - For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

“As Christ entered our world and spent thirty-three years getting to know our experiences, we must take the time to enter the world of our teenager. . . That means spending as much time asking good questions and listening as it does speaking. . . **Take time to enter the world of your teenager.**” (Paul Tripp, Age of Opportunity)

Distinction:

- 1) The **Objective** Problem a Counselee is Facing
- 2) The **Subjective** Experience of that Problem

“**An entry gate is a particular person’s *experience* of the situation, problem, or relationship.** To recognize an entry gate you do not ask, ‘What are the problems in this person’s life?’ Instead you ask, ‘What is this person struggling with *in the midst* of the situation?’ Or, ‘What has this person in its grip right now?’ **The entry gate is not what *you* think the person is struggling with; it is the struggle the person confesses.**” (Paul Tripp, Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands)

Entry Gate Questions:

- What are you struggling with most right now?
- What are you afraid of right now?
- What questions do you wish you could ask God?
- What part of the situation is getting to you the most?
- What regrets do you struggle with?

“When someone leaves a car for repair, the mechanic pulls out the shop manual, puts the car through various diagnostic tests, then repairs the problem according to the manual. Some counselors, I fear, treat people this way. They are interested only in finding out what the problem is and what the book says to do about it. Then they immediately try to fix the problem with little regard to their relationship with the counselee. This approach to counseling is faulty because it regards the counselee as a mechanism, while the biblical counselor is trying to help a whole person. . . counselors cannot allow themselves to become exclusively problem-oriented. Rather, they need to be person-oriented; then the treatment of problems that flows from that emphasis will be set in the proper context.” (Wayne Mack)

III. Key Element #2: Inventory

The Discipline of Inventory – The ministry of active, intentional listening to a counselee’s thoughts, emotions and feelings so as to minister to that person with knowledge and understanding.

Proverbs 18:13 – If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame.

Proverbs 20:5 – The purpose in a man’s heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out.

Matthew 12:34 – For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

“Beginning counselors talk too much.” (Robert Jones)

“If I have only an hour with someone, I will spend the first 55 minutes asking questions and finding out what is troubling their heart and mind, and in the last 5 minutes I will share something of the truth.” (Francis Schaeffer)

“The first service that one owes to others in the fellowship consists in listening to them. . . It is God’s love for us that he not only gives us His Word but also lends us His ear. . . But Christians have forgotten that the ministry of listening has been committed to them by Him who is Himself the great listener and whose work they should share. We should listen with the ears of God that we may speak the Word of God.” (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*)

“Image-bearers cannot be dissected or studied. They can only be loved and known.” (Bob Kellerman)

Proverbs 10:19 – When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent.

- **Key Point: God is our model and motivation for godly listening.**

Psalm 40:1 – I waited patiently for the LORD; he inclined to me and heard my cry.

“The fact that our Triune God is a good listener should powerfully motivate us to improve in this area. The three persons of the Trinity listen carefully to each other and, amazingly, to us!” (Wayne Mack)

The Skill of Asking Good Questions

Genesis 3:9 –But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?”

Genesis 16:7-8 – The angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur. And he said, “Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?”

Jonah 4:4 – And the LORD said, “Do you do well to be angry?”

“**Questions aimed straight for the heart of the matter are of the most effective and productive kind in biblical counseling.** . . . Asking the kind of questions that elicit heart level responses is hard work! . . . It takes work to come up with good questions that will cause the counselee to think. . .” (Julie Ganschow, Questions on the Heart Level)

How to Ask Good Questions:

- 1) **Ask**, don’t assume.

“Listening is active, not passive, and it is definitely a skill. It bears no resemblance at all to the ‘listening’ that merely involves waiting until it is your turn to talk. Your listening needs to be a big deal all by itself. It needs to get your teen’s attention. Listening to angry teens must be big, thoughtful, and purposeful. . .

In your initial conversation with an angry teen, your job is not to fix, bring salvation, interrogate, or dictate. Your job is to listen big that you might learn how to draw out that which is deep within.” (Rick Horne, Get Outta My Face!)

Body Language with a Teen (Horne):

- R – Relax**
- E – Enjoy**
- S – Sit at an Angle**
- O – Open Stance**
- L – Lean Forward**
- V – Voice Modulation**
- E – Eye Contact**

- 2) Learn to ask **open** ended questions instead of closed-ended questions.
- 3) Learn to utilize both **extensive** questions as well as **intensive** questions

| Extensive Questions | Intensive Questions |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Ask a little about a lot | Ask a lot about a little |
| Scan a person’s entire life | Probe one aspect of the person’s life |

IV. Key Element #3: Inspiration

- **True life change cannot happen apart from biblical hope.**

Romans 15:4 – For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

v.13 – May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

- If sin is the problem, then we have hope to offer.

Philippians 1:3-5 - I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.

2 Timothy 1:3-5 - I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.

1 Corinthians 1:4-9 - I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge— even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you— so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

- **Biblical hope anticipates good in the future**

“Life-Change Sandwich”:

- Indicatives – What God has done in the PAST
- Imperatives – What believers are to do in the PRESENT
- Promises – What God will do in the FUTURE

Overview of the Promises of God (Dr. Robert Somerville):

- He will work all things together for good (Romans 8:28-29)
- He will provide the way of victory in every temptation or trial that you face (1 Corinthians 10:13-14)
- He will never leave us for forsake us (Hebrews 13:5)
- He will always be our helper (Hebrews 13:6)
- He will forgive our sin (1 John 1:9)
- He will not call our sins to his mind against us (Hebrews 10:17)
- He will guide us (Proverbs 3:5-6)
- He will complete His work in us (Philippians 1:6)
- He will hear our prayers (John 16:24, Psalm 34:15)
- He will discipline us (Proverbs 3:11-12, Hebrews 12:5-8)
- He will strengthen us (Philippians 4:13)
- He will not withhold any good thing from us (Psalm 34:10, Romans 8:31-32)
- He will keep us from harm (Psalm 121:7-8)
- He will provide us what we need (Philippians 4:19)
- He will use trials to strengthen us (James 1:2-4)
- He will welcome us into glory (1 Thessalonians 4:15-18)

“God gave hope to Adam. . . God raised all the issues connected with Adam’s sin, including its punishment, but he also revealed he would send the Lord Jesus Christ to destroy the Serpent and his work (Genesis 3:15). . . Christ confronted Peter, not passing over a single aspect of his sinful denial, but also including words of restoration and a commission to future service. The consistent theme nearly all of the prophets was judgment, but they also proclaimed a message of hope.” (Jay Adams)

Counseling Teens: Gospel Hope for Teenage Hearts
Session 4: Hope for Weary Parents

I. Introduction

Jeremiah 17:7-8 – “Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose trust is the LORD. He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit.”

Observations:

- **Heat** represents the circumstances, the troubles, the trials, whatever is happening in the circumstances external to the counselee.
- Difference between secular psychology and biblical counseling: BC holds that these “heat” issues are there according to the sovereignty of God.
- **Heat** is used by God to draw out the purposes of the **heart**.
- Biblical Sanctification - bearing of fruit in times of “heat”.
- **Biblical Promise:** parents of teenagers can bear “good fruit” in the midst of the pressures and the struggles of the parenting task.

II. Identifying the Heart Issues of Parents with Teenagers

A. Guilt

- Parents may be experiencing *guilty feelings* in middle age over their failures and inadequacies in raising their children.
- **Subjective guilt** (the feelings of guilt) must be rooted in **objective guilt** (the fact of guilt) in order to be properly dealt with.
- **Christ** has made provision to deal with our **objective** guilt through His work on the cross (1 Peter 2:24)

B. Regret

Jeremiah 31:34 – For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

“... God’s promise of forgiveness is a welcome to new life. It is an invitation to leave regrets behind and to get up and live again. . . He lifts your burden of guilt and regret and welcome you to plant and harvest once again.” (Paul Tripp, Lost in the Middle)

C. Disappointment

- Parents can live vicariously through their children because their own ambitions have been unfulfilled or unrealized. (e.g. A parent who trains his child to be a football star)

- When a child does not live up to those ideals, the parent can see the child as a disappointment.
- A parent must see that **each child is made in the image and likeness of God** (Gen 1:27), and is uniquely created to reflect God's glory (Psalm 139:13-14).

D. Envy

- Parents can envy the success or the accomplishments of children in other families (Proverbs 14:30).
- Ironically, some parents can envy the success of *their own children*: some children can succeed too well in the endeavor that is close to the heart of a parent.

E. Anger

- Parents can become **sinfully angry** when their ungodly passions and desires are not met (James 4:1-2)

F. Control

- Parents can seek to control their children's behavior through behavior modification techniques - guilt and reward.

“Webster’s dictionary defines the verb *manipulate* as “to control or play upon by artful, unfair, or insidious means.” For a Christian, manipulation is using **unbiblical means of controlling or influencing others.**” (Lou Priolo, Manipulation)

III. Biblical Reasons Why Parents Can Have Hope

“Always give hope. . . Never minimize the severity of problems; instead always maximize Christ and His power to solve problems. . . Always approach seemingly hopeless situations with emphatic disagreement. . . Disagree when the counselee says ‘It’s hopeless.’ Say, ‘It is difficult, but not too difficult for God.’” (Jay Adams, *Preaching with Purpose*)

“Biblical change cannot take place without hope. . . People who have faced the same problem for a long time need hope. People who have sincerely tried to solve their problems and failed need hope. People who have compounded their initial problems with other unbiblical responses need hope. People whose problems have been wrongly described need hope, and people whose hopes have been dashed repeatedly need hope. . . The role of hope in the process of sanctification should never be underestimated.” (Wayne Mack, How to Counsel Biblically)

A. We can have hope because God is **faithful** from *generation to generation*.

Lamentations 3:22-23 – The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; **great** is your faithfulness.

Psalm 36:5 – Your steadfast love, O LORD, extends to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds.

- God’s faithfulness is His unchanging devotion to do what He has said and fulfill **all** of the promises made in His Word.

“In all His relations with His people God is faithful. He may be safely relied upon. No one ever yet really trusted Him in vain. We find this precious truth expressed almost everywhere in the Scriptures. . . This is the basis of our confidence in Him. . . This quality is essential to His being, without it He would not be God.” (A.W. Pink)

- God’s faithfulness is described in relation to **each generation** of redemptive history.

Psalm 89:1 – I will sing of the steadfast love of the LORD, forever; with my mouth I will make known your faithfulness to all **generations**.

Psalm 119:90 – Your faithfulness endures to all **generations**; you have established the earth, and it stands fast.

Deuteronomy 7:9 – Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a **thousand generations**.

- The biblical record: the story of God’s faithfulness

Abraham – Isaac – Jacob – Joseph – Moses – Joshua, Judges, monarchy of Israel, exile and restoration, intertestamental period, the coming of Messiah, Day of Pentecost, 200 years of church history, the Reformation

Matthew 1:1 – The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

v.17 – So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations.

- God was faithful through some wicked generations! (Psalm 78:8)
- God’s faithfulness is seen in the lives of individual **saints**.

B. Parents can have hope because of the **wisdom** of God in ordaining *every circumstance* for our lives.

Romans 11:33 – Oh the depth of the riches and **wisdom** and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

Daniel 2:20-22 – Daniel answered and said: “Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong **wisdom** and might. He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding; he reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him.

Isaiah 40:28 – Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.

- The wisdom of God means that God chooses the best **ends** and the best **means** to achieve those ends.¹

¹ Adapted from Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology.

Psalms 16:6 - The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.

“The perfect wisdom of our God
Revealed in all the universe:
All things created by His hand
And held together at His command.
He knows the mysteries of the seas,
The secrets of the stars are His;
He guides the planets on their way
And turns the earth through another day. . .

O grant me wisdom from above,
To pray for peace and cling to love,
And teach me humbly to receive
The sun and rain of Your sovereignty.
Each strand of sorrow has a place
Within this tapestry of grace;
So through the trials I choose to say:
‘Your perfect will in Your perfect way.’” (Stuart Townend and Keith Getty)

Romans 11:33-36 – Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! “For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?” “Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?” For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

C. Parents can have hope because of the **sufficiency of Christ’s sacrifice** to pay for all of our sins.

“For every look at yourself, take ten looks at Christ. He is altogether lovely. Such infinite majesty, . . . Bask in his beams. . . Let your soul be filled with a heart-ravishing sense of the sweetness and excellency of Christ and all that is in Him. Let the Holy Spirit fill every chamber of your heart, and so there will be no room for folly, or the world, or Satan, or the flesh.” (Robert Murray McCheyne)

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 – For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,

Romans 5:6-8 – For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person – though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die – but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Galatians 6:14 – But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

1 Corinthians 2:2 – For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

- **Propitiation** – Christ fully **satisfied** the wrath of God on the cross.

Romans 3:23-25 – for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the **redemption** that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a **propitiation** by his blood, to be received by faith.

1 John 2:2 – He is the **propitiation** for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

1 John 4:10 – In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the **propitiation** for our sins.

Hebrews 2:17 – Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to **make propitiation** for the sins of the people.

Romans 8:1 – There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

John 19:30 – When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, “It is finished,” and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

J Gresham Machen imagines the dialogue in this way:

“‘Man,’ says the law of God, ‘have you obeyed my commands?’

‘No,’ says the sinner saved by grace. ‘I have disobeyed them. . . [I] have sinned in thought, word and deed.’

‘Well, then, sinner,’ says the law of God, ‘have you paid the penalty which I pronounced upon disobedience?’

‘No,’ says the sinner, ‘I have not paid the penalty myself; but Christ has paid it for me . . . Hence, so far as the penalty is concerned, I am clear.’

‘Well, then, sinner,’ says the law of God, ‘how about the conditions which God has pronounced for the attainment of . . . blessedness? Have you stood the test? Have you merited eternal life by perfect obedience [to the law of God]?’

‘No,’ says the sinner, ‘I have not merited eternal life by my own perfect obedience. . . But although I have not merited eternal life by any obedience of my own, Christ has merited it for me by His perfect obedience.

I have no righteousness of my own, but clad in Christ’s perfect righteousness, imputed to me and received by faith alone, I can glory in the fact that . . . there awaits me the glorious reward which Christ thus earned for me.”

“All the holy attributes of God once arrayed against us in wrath give way to all the holy attributes of God now arrayed for us in mercy. And God can’t be changed from a God of wrath to a God of mercy unless He is placated, propitiated and satisfied. God wants to take the flaming sword of justice raised over our heads to strike us and melt it into a shield raised to protect us. And He can do that because there is a sacrifice that satisfied God, that paid the full penalty for sin.” (John MacArthur)

D. Parents can have hope because of the **ministry of the Holy Spirit** to change our lives and the lives of our children.

2 Corinthians 3:18 - And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

Zechariah 4:6 – Then he said to me, “This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: not by might, nor by power, but **by my Spirit**, says the LORD of hosts.

Ezekiel 36:27 – And **I will put my Spirit within you**, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

John 14:16-17 – And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

“*Paraclete* (*parakletos* in Greek) means ‘Comforter, Counselor, Helper, Advocate, Strengtheners, Supporter.’ Jesus, the original Paraclete, continues his ministry to mankind through the work of the second Paraclete. . . the Holy Spirit is said to hear, speak, witness, convince, glorify Christ, lead, guide, teach, command, forbid, desire, give speech, give help, and intercede for Christians with inarticulate groans, himself crying to God in their prayers. . . he is ‘another’ Paraclete. . . continuing Jesus’s own ministry – and only a person, one like Jesus, could do that.” (J.I. Packer, Keep in Step with the Spirit)

“**rather than asking about the role of the Holy Spirit in counseling, we should be asking about the counselor’s role in the Holy Spirit’s counseling!** . . . biblical counseling is not merely a dialogue between the counselor and a counselee. Rather, it is a dialogue in which the counselor participates in the Spirit’s work already underway with the counselee. The Spirit is actively engaged in counseling, working directly on the counselor and the counselee, and through each to help the other.” (“The Ministry of the Holy Spirit” by Justin Holcomb and Mike Wilkerson, in Christ Centered Biblical Counseling)

- The hardest heart is no match for the **power of the Holy Spirit**.

John 3:6-8 – That which is born of flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. **So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.**

E. Parents can have hope because when we are faithful, **God is glorified**.

1 Corinthians 10:31 – So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Observations:

1. Parents glorify God when they **walk** with God in a relationship marked by *faith* and *obedience*.
2. Parents glorify God when they submit their parenting to the authoritative teaching of God’s **Word**.
3. Parents glorify God when they are **faithful** in their responsibility before Him.

1 Corinthians 4:2 – Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.

- We are called to trust God with the results.

Question: Can a godly parent raise rebellious children?²

Answer: Consider the only perfect parent who ever lived.

² Summarized from Dr. Robert Jones, Marriage and Family Course notes, Southern Baptist Theology Seminar.

Isaiah 1:2 – Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the LORD has spoken: “Children have I reared and brought up, but they have rebelled against me.

Objection: What about Proverbs 22:6?

“Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.” (Prov 22:6)

Answer: Proverbs present wise maxims– “generalizations about the way life usually is rather than promises about the way it will have to be all the time.” (John Piper) The verse is meant to be understood as an encouragement to faithful parenting, not as an unconditional promise for a certain result.

Four biblical counseling principles for parents about their child: (Robert Jones)

- 1) You are not responsible for your child’s spiritual condition
- 2) Your child’s spiritual condition is an issue between him and God.
- 3) You are responsible to God for your parenting activity
- 4) Your parental godliness or ungodliness will influence your child.

Lamentations 3:19-26 - Remember my affliction and my wanderings, the wormwood and the gall! My soul continually remembers it and is bowed down within me. **But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope:** The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. “The LORD is my portion,” says my soul, “therefore I will hope in him.” The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.

Counseling Youth: Gospel Hope for Teenage Hearts
Addendum: Common Counseling Issues

I. Overview of Common Counseling Issues

A. Suffering

“Often the biggest problem for any sufferer is not ‘the problem.’ It is the spiritual challenge the problem presents: “How are you doing in the midst of what you are going through? What are you learning? Will you learn to live well and wisely within pain, limitation, weakness and loss? Will suffering define you? Will faith and love grow, or will you shrivel up? These are life-and-death issues - more important than ‘the problem’ in the final analysis.” (David Powlison)

- Dealing with trials and suffering is a **theological matter**.

James 1:2-4 - Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

- People have questions related to God when they are suffering (Psalm 13:1)
- Learn to “warm up” the doctrine of God's sovereignty with the truth of His wisdom and His love.

Psalm 147:5 – Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure.

God's good purpose in suffering:

1. **To make the believer more like Jesus Christ.**

Romans 8:29 – For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

2. **To purify the believer's heart**

1 Peter 1:7 – so that the tested genuineness of your faith – more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire – may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

3. **Some of God's purpose is unknown – we are called to trust when we don't understand.**

Isaiah 55:8-9 – For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD.

- Learn to use the language of lament.

“Lament is a complex language of complaint, protest, and appeal directed to God. At times, lament may be subdued in tone as a poet wrestles with trouble; at other times, lament may be as loud and vigorous as any praise song. . . diverse laments share one commonality: deep faith in God in the midst of pain.” (Glenn Pemberton)

B. Anger

- Oftentimes not seen in a counselee's exploding with rage, but with the "slow burn", simmering type of anger.
- Clamming up, giving the cold shoulder, withdrawal – ("passive aggressive") - these can be a way of expressing anger.
- The quietest personalities can have the angriest hearts.
- Watch for: anger at God, anger at self. You oftentimes hear the language of justifying anger "He/she made me so angry!"
- Related to many other sins because it is a deed of the flesh. "fits of anger" (Gal 5:20)
- Sometimes people excuse their anger because of their culture or personality.
- The bottom line is that you are not like Christ if you are sinfully angry.

God has hope and help for angry people.

Ephesians 4:31-32 – Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.

- Learn to deal with the heart issues

James 4:1 – What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?

"There is a war going on within our hearts, a war for control. . . I want something, but because of you I cannot get it, so I will quarrel and fight!" (Paul Tripp, War of Words)

- What do you want right now more than the glory of God?

"James does NOT say, 'You are fighting because the other person is a blockhead; because your hormones are raging; because a demon of anger took up residence; because humans have an aggression gene hardwired in by our evolutionary history; because your father used to react in the same way; because core needs are not being met; because you woke up on the wrong side of the bed and had a bad day at work.' Instead, James says, you fight because of 'your desires that battle within you. You want something but don't get it.' The biblical analysis is straight forward and cuts to the core. You fight for one reason: because you don't get what you want." (David Powlison, "Getting to the Heart of the Conflict")

- Change is possible through the work of the Spirit and the work of Christ.

Galatians 5:22-23- But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

C. Worry, Anxiety and Fear

- Treat this as a Triad: **Worry, Anxiety and Fear (WAF)**. The three seem to be used somewhat interchangeably in the Scriptures. In real life, it is difficult to see one issue divorced from the others.
- Many different presentations.

Specific Phobias
Social Anxiety Disorder (Social Phobia)
Panic Disorder
Panic Attack (Specifier)
Generalized Anxiety Disorder
Obsessive-Compulsive Disorders
Hoarding disorder

- Dealing biblically with fear is one of the most practical issues in Christian living.

Genesis 15:1 – After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: “Fear not, Abram, I am your shield, your reward shall be very great.”

Exodus 14:13 – And Moses said to the people, “Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again.

- Number of biblical figures who were afflicted by fear: Abraham, Moses, Saul, David, Peter.
- Fear can give rise to the following behaviors: laziness, depression, indecision, control, anger, overprotection, superstitions, overwork, perfectionism.
- Fear is related to a person’s walk with God (not your “personality type”).

Proverbs 1:7 – The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.

- Our fears are related to our thoughts and desires.

“Any time you love or want something deeply, you will notice fear and anxieties because you might not get them.” (Welch, Running Scared, p. 28)

“Fear and desire are two sides of a single coin. . . If I want money, I fear poverty. If I long to be accepted, I’m terrified of rejection. If I fear pain or hardship, I crave comfort or pleasure. If I crave preeminence, I fear being inferior to others. . .” (David Powlison, “The Sufficiency of Scripture to Diagnose and Cure Souls”)

- The Christian has abundant reasons not to fear.

Psalms 27:1 – The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

D. Depression

- A very common problem in society today.

Marks of Depression (DSM-IV):

1. Depressed mood most of the day
2. Markedly diminished interest or pleasure in all, or almost all, activities most of the day.
3. Significant weight loss when not dieting or weight gain.
4. Insomnia or hypersomnia nearly every day
5. Feeling physically restless or slowed to an extent that is observable to others.

“Depression. . . involves a complete absence: absence of affect, absence of feeling, absence of response, absence of interest. The pain you feel in the course of a major clinical depression is an attempt on nature’s part. . . to fill up the empty space. But for all intents and purposes, the deeply depressed are just the walking, waking dead.” (quoted from Elizabeth Wurtzel, Prozac Nation)

Secular approaches to treating depression:

- Meditation, yoga
 - Antidepressant medications
 - Electroconvulsive shock treatment (ECT)
 - Sleep therapy, including sleep deprivation
 - Light therapy for “seasonal affective disorder” (SAD)
- Depression affects Christians too

“I am the subject of depressions of spirit so fearful that I hope none of you every get to such extremes of wretchedness as I go to. . . Personally I know that there is nothing on earth that the human frame can suffer to be compared with despondency and prostration of mind.” (C.H. Spurgeon)

1 Kings 19:4-6 – But he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he asked that he might die, saying, “It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers.” And he lay down and slept under a broom tree.

- Distinguish depression from normal grieving.

"the intensity and duration of our sadness corresponds to the size and duration of the loss." (Charles Hodges)

"Think of sadness primarily, usually coupled with hopelessness and suffering as the basic descriptors of the depressed person." (Robert Jones)

- Depression is suffering. Show compassion and mercy.
- Depression has both physical and spiritual factors.
- Investigate possible spiritual factors
 - A ruling, inordinate desire (craving, demand, idol) – perhaps even for a good object.
 - The disappointment or expected disappointment of that ruling desire

E. Suicide (adapted from Robert Jones, Marriage and Family Counseling course syllabus, Southern Seminary)

1. Is suicide sinful? Yes

- An act of disobedience – self-murder violates God’s command to not murder
- An act of unbelief – denial of God, escape from pressures your way (not God’s way)
- An act of self-centeredness – not loving God and neighbor

2. But this does not mean that:

- There are no extenuating circumstances that make it understandable
- The act of suicide is the only or the primary sin involved
- Those who do not contemplate or commit suicide are morally superior or less sinful
- It is a sin that makes a person lose their salvation or indicates that he is not or was not a Christian

3. Do those who commit suicide go to hell?

Not necessarily. The Bible teaches that the sole criterion for entrance into heaven or hell is the presence or absence of a saving relationship with Jesus, not some single sin, however serious.

The notion that suicide brings eternal condemnation apparently arose because the person who commits suicide cannot confess or repent. But this notion wrongly assumes that unconfessed or unrepented sin condemns a person. If we take seriously the severity of God’s Law and the depth of our remaining sin, then no believer ever dies without unconfessed or unrepentant sin.

4. Why do people commit suicide? We don’t know. While various theories might fit individual cases, there is no single, universally agreed-upon answer. The cause or causes are varied and complex. Here are some: Don’t think of causes (way too simplistic), think of contributing factors.

Counseling Those Who Contemplate Suicide (Powlison, I Just Want to Die)

1. Enter the person’s world, love him, and accept him.
2. Seek to understand the person and his situation. Every suicidal person operates with an “inner logic,” however biblically distorted that logic may be. “Help me understand. Why are you thinking this way?”
3. Bring the hope of Jesus Christ and his multi-faceted (many problems the gospel can touch all of them) saving provisions. Minister the Gospel! This includes exposing the lies and the sinful desires the person is living by.
4. Enlist others to help watch, care, and minister.
5. Take seriously the person’s threats. If necessary, alert key people and contact civil authorities.
6. Remember that suicide is the person’s choice. You are not responsible for his choice.
7. Consider a compassionate approach: “(Help me understand how) Tell me why your life is so miserable that you would see this wrong action as the only way of escape.” Or, “How did you ever get to the point that your life is so horrible that you would contemplate doing a sinful act?”
8. Sympathetic disagreement - remember that the person whose life is so miserable that he thinks that he needs to end it probably does need to end that life and find in Jesus a new, rich, abundant life! We can agree with this diagnosis (“this life you are living does need to end”) but disagree with his remedy (“but I have a way to end that life that is a million times better than your way”).

F. Food/Diet

“Your eating is a mirror upon your heart. Like other everyday activities – the way you view and use money, the way you drive your car, the way you talk – eating reveals either your faith or your idolatry, either godliness or ungodliness. The Bible addresses the more severe ‘eating disorders’; it also addresses everyone else’s eating.” (Elyse Fitzpatrick, “Disorderly Eating. . .for the Rest of Us”)

“[There is] No biblical command to be thin.” (Elyse Fitzpatrick)

- The Bible speaks much to the subject of eating.

1 Corinthians 10:31 – So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

- **The Sin of Over-Eating (Gluttony)** – The excessive love for and use of food.

Proverbs 23:20-21 – Be not among drunkards or among gluttonous eaters of meat, for the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, and slumber will clothe them with rags.

“Perhaps you don’t believe that overeating is a sin. . . Often even the Christian perspective views overeating as a diet problem rather than a sin problem. On the other hand, you may know that overeating is a sin, but it does not seem serious because it is often treated as one of those ‘little sins’ that are acceptable in the church.” (Shannon McCoy, Help! I’m a Slave to Food)

- **The Sin of Under-Eating (Anorexia)**

“Anorexia is the practice of intentional, voluntary self-starvation. Often there are intermittent periods of bingeing and purging (the bulimia pattern). Medical doctors say anorexia is indicated by a person’s refusal to maintain at least 85% of normal body weight. . . Anorexia is most common among females 12-18 years old, hence my use of female pronouns.” (Elyse Fitzpatrick, “Helping Anorexics”)

Root causes:

1. An unbiblical view of external appearance.

“Our culture today has influenced many women to see themselves solely in the context of how they look. We are continuously bombarded by image after image of seemingly perfect women with perfect teeth, perfect hair, perfect figures. . . We believe the lie that outward perfection (which, by the way is an impossible goal) is the key to inner peace and joy.” (Fitzpatrick, “Obsessed With Being Thin?”)

Proverbs 31:30 – Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.

2. An extra-biblical standard of righteousness

Colossians 2:20-23 – If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations – “Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch” (referring to things that all perish as they are used) – according to human precepts and teachings?

Principles:

- The use of food is an opportunity to serve others.
- My brother is more important than my diet.

G. Life-Dominating Sins (“Addictions”)

“Addiction. . . is voluntary slavery. Addicts make choices. They are in control. They are committed to their way of managing life. Yet, they are also enslaved and out of control. . . Scripture’s most essential insight into addictions is that addictions are about God. Addictive substances become ‘a refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.’ (Ps. 46:1). . . The Godward nature of addiction is neatly packaged into the biblical account of idolatry. Here you find wayward human desire and much more.” (Ed Welch, “Addictions and Idolatry”)

- A life-dominating sin is any sin that has a **functional rule** over a believer’s life in a way that even **negative consequences are ignored** leading to further involvement in that sin.

Typical “Life-dominating sins (addictions)”:

- Drunkenness
- Substance abuse (tobacco, painkillers, illegal drugs)
- Pornography
- Sexual immorality
- Gambling
- Eating disorders (anorexia and bulimia)
- Food (gluttony) and/or exercise
- Video Games, Technology (smart phones, social media);
- Entertainment (media, TV, “binge-watching”)
- Shopping/hoarding
- Control / Perfectionism
- Self-Harm/Cutting

“Any activity, substance, object, or behavior that has become the major focus of a person’s life to the exclusion of other activities, or that has begun to harm the individual or others physically, mentally, or socially is considered an addictive behavior.” (Elyse Fitzpatrick, “Addicted to Shiny Things”)

“Alcohol is the ‘paradigmatic’ addiction in Scripture. It serves as the main example of addiction that informs our theology of all others.” (Keith Palmer, “Basic Counseling Principles, Procedures & Strategies for Counseling Addictions”)

Ephesians 5:18 – And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit,

Proverbs 23:20-21 – Be not among drunkards or among gluttonous eaters of meat, for the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, and slumber will clothe them with rags.

- The source of drunkenness is the desires of the heart.

Mark 7:20-23 – And he said, “What comes out of a person is what defiles him. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”

“Ultimately the love of pleasure is idolatry: Seeking in substances the satisfaction which can only be found in the LORD. . . The same applications could be made to people who seek satisfaction in food (gluttony), material things (greed). . .” (Jim Newheiser, “Wisdom from Proverbs about Substance Abuse”)