

COUNSELLING

1. INTRODUCTION:

- The need in the church for deep-level healing and deliverance are more than ever before.
- The subject of inner healing is confusing for many within the Christian community.
- For those that believe they are born into Christianity it is most of the time not something that they linked up with the church.
- For most of the others that believe in a rebirth experience, also believe after rebirth you are free from everything.
- The times we are living in are loaded with untold complex personal problems, spiritual, psychological and social.
- The task to assist persons today cannot be left completely in the hands of psychiatrists and psychologists, although we would express great appreciation for the great work they are doing.
- According to Scripture we need to minister to the total person.
- It is thus not surprising that, during the past few years, we have begun to hear more about Christian counseling.
- There is much that the counselor can learn from the secular auxiliary sciences, yet the Holy Scriptures remain the most important source of knowledge.
- God is the author of the Bible, and HE is the Creator.
- No-one understands man in his totality better than God.
- There are mainly two aspects concerning the science of psychology which have been neglected and even totally ignored when dealing with people and their problems.
- The first is the sin factor and the second is the importance of the Holy Spirit in counseling.
- We cannot ignore the reality of sin and the role it plays in personal problems, and the necessity that forgiveness and deliverance play.
- True Christian Counseling only takes place when the Holy Spirit works through the counselor.

1.1. What is counseling?

- Many people have a misconception concerning counseling, confusing it with encouragement.
- Encouragement – means to encourage, inspire by discussion, by the Word and through prayer.
- No change or solution is demanded here and no attempt is made to lie aside, or to put off, old and wrong habits and to put on, or take up, a new way of living.
- Counseling – means to find God's solution to a problem, which often includes a new and changed way of living.
- The Webster dictionary says: counsel is to **give advice**.
- There is something innately attractive about being a counselor.

- Apparently, many people see counseling as a glamorous activity that involves giving advice, healing broken relationships, and helping people solve problems.
- Counseling can be gratifying work, but it doesn't take long for most of us to discover that this also can be emotionally draining, difficult work.
- Counseling involves intensive concentration and sometimes brings pain when we see so many people hurting.
- When these people fail to improve, as often happens, it is easy to blame ourselves.
- We try harder and wonder what went wrong.
- As more and more needy people come for help, there is a tendency to keep increasing our counseling loads, pushing ourselves closer to the limits of our endurance.
- Recent books have added confusion by attacking the counseling professions and emotional sermons, some on national television; have misled many believers into thinking that counseling is never needed.
- Sometimes counseling doesn't help.
- Even well-trained, experienced counselors, who keep abreast of the professional literature and apply the best-proven techniques, find that counselees do not always improve.
- At times, in the beginning of some counseling, it can look that individuals even get worse; it is hardly surprising, therefore that some people give up and conclude that counseling is really a waste of time.
- Counseling attempts to provide encouragement and guidance for those who are facing losses, decisions or disappointments
- Counseling can stimulate personality growth and development; help people cope more effectively with the problems of living, with inner conflict, and with crippling emotions; assist individuals, family members, and married couples to resolve interpersonal tensions or relate effectively to one another; and assist persons whose life patterns are self-defeating and causing unhappiness.
- The Christian counselor seeks to bring people into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and to help them find forgiveness and relief from the crippling effects of sin and guilt.
- Ultimately, the Christians hope to help others become disciples of Christ and disciples of others.

1.2. Why do you want to counsel?

- Some Christian counselors, especially pastors, have been thrust into this work by people who have come spontaneously seeking help for their problems.
- Other counselors have taken special training and encouraged people to come for help, based on the valid assumption that counseling can be one of the most effective ways to minister to the needy.
- The Bible commands mutual caring and this surely involves counseling.
- In Isaiah 9:6,7 we read: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His Name shall be called WONDERFUL COUNSELLOR, The mighty Go, the everlasting Father, the prince of peace, of the increase of His government and peace shall be no end..."
- Today we not only have to deal with unemployment, financial loss, insecurity and fear which all inevitably lead to depression and suicide, but also marriages which are disintegrating, molestation, homosexuality which are on the increase even in Christian circles.

- Alcohol and drug abuse as well as satanism¹ and occultism increase daily.
- We hear sermons, speeches and songs about peace, while the majority of people have no idea of what true peace means.
- Our aim should be to equip ourselves to be able to lead men and women, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to find peace with God, which will lead to peace within themselves and also peace with their fellowmen.
- Our ministry should be a ministry of peace, bringing peace to hurting, rejected and emotionally sick people.
- Through counseling many hurting people can be brought to complete healing, deliverance, peace and joy which can alone be found in Christ.
- Paul writes in Romans 15:14 “And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another”.
- Paul says here that good qualities and comprehensive knowledge are qualifications needed to help each other.

1.2. What are these good qualities?

- His or her interest in what the candidate is saying will be reflected in the eyes and facial expression.

2. AIM:

- To demonstrate the ability to manage a counseling session
- Explain the basics of counseling therapy by using insights from pastoral theology and basic psychology.

3. ASSIGNMENT OF COUNSELING:

3.1. Marriage counseling:

- In Genesis 1:1 we read: In the beginning God created...and each time He created He was pleased and God saw that it was good.
- After He had created man, (GEN.2:18) God said: It is NOT GOOD that man should be alone, so He created woman to be a helper meet (suitable, adapted, complementary) for him.
- God knew that man was incomplete without the woman; therefore He provided what the man needed to be complete.
- Solomon says in Prov.18:22 “Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtained favor of the Lord”.
- Much can be said concerning this but what is important, is that God knew the necessity of man to have a relationship with someone on this earth.
- Their relationship with each other, however, was not sufficient to meet the deepest needs of their personalities.
- They needed a relationship with the living God himself and this relationship was perfect until sin (disobedience) brought separation between God and man.

¹ Note that words that include the name of satan are not capitalized. I choose not to acknowledge him even to the point of violating grammatical rules.

- Not only was Adam and Eve's close relationship with God broken, but sin also affected their relationship with each other.
- Adam turned against Eve and Eve turned against Adam (GEN.3:12, 16).
- Ever since that day, human relationships have been tainted with disappointment and discouragement.
- Yet, within each person is the longing to once again be united, firstly to God and secondly to each other.
- There is security in a healthy relationship and the foundation of a good relationship is TRUTH.
- Unless the relationship in a marriage is based on truth, the relationship cannot last.
- Truth sets us free; speaking the truth makes us free since we are no longer in bondage, having to hide our weaknesses and failures.
- Since there are a wide variety of marriage problems, it is necessary for a counselor to be aware of certain truths:
 1. Christ has to be the central figure in a marriage. My first step would be to make sure both of them are reborn, if not:
 2. To explain to them the whole concept of it so that they can make their own free choice. It is because of wrong choices that problems start in the first place.
 3. Explain also the importance to have a personal relationship with God. It is only out of that relationship that one can have a good relationship with one another. It must be the foundation of any marriage.
 4. What stand in the way of a personal relationship with God? Sin! It doesn't matter if a person is reborn or not, most of the time when problems start, they know to pray. Then nothing happen, and they become even more bitter, because the Word of the Lord says He don't listen to the prayers of sinners. "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear" (ISAIAH.59:1-2). People want to use God like a spare wheel, not a steering wheel. "Hear, My children, the instruction of a father, and give attention to know understanding; for I give you good doctrine: Do not forsake My law. Let your heart retain My words, keep My commands, and live. Get wisdom! Get understanding! Do not forget, nor turn away from the words of My mouth. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom" (PROVERBS.4:1, 2, 4, and 7). Where do we get wisdom? From GOD. "My son, pay attention to My wisdom; lend your ear to My understanding, that you may preserve discretion, and your lips may keep knowledge" (PROVERBS.5:1-2).
 5. They must look at the wrong things, see sin, and repent of it, so that the legal right can be taken away. Both the couple and the counselor must realize that it can take time and patience before all the problems can be resolved. Counseling and deliverance (that work hand in hand) is not a quick-fix, it must be a lifestyle. Old habits and ways have to be put off and new ones taken up and this takes hard work. I will as counselor start working and walking with them, to help them with the process, difficulties and disappointments.
 6. Should the couple have already begun with legal proceedings for divorce, my advice would be to 'shelve' this for at least three months while they proceed to sort out their problems with guidance and prayer.
 7. It is necessary for the candidate to understand him/herself and his or her reactions a person cannot understand another person until you learned to understand your own reactions, attitudes, your shortcomings and yourself as a whole. It is the task of the counselor to help each person evaluate him/her, motives, feelings and where the

problems originate from. You must get the root cause of the problems. Look into the situation and ask the Holy Spirit to open it.

8. The couple should be encouraged to acknowledge each others' weaknesses and strengths, but also their own.
9. I would have sessions with them separately and also sessions where they are together. See that they understand all the Biblical principles regarding responsibilities in marriage.

No two people can effectively walk together, live together or take decisions together without in-depth communication "Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?" (AMOS.3:3). The unity of a married couple is to a great extent

10. Determined by the quality of their communication. A lot of marriages that fails are as result of lack of communications.
11. The first requirement for in-depth communication is mutual openheartedness and honesty. It is impossible to really get to know each other unless you are willing to open your hearts to each other and to reveal who you really are.
12. The art of listening, i.e. to listen with your eyes and ears, should be acquired. A good counselor should be able to assist the couple in this. Each partner should ask themselves whether his/her attitude is right for an in-depth conversation.
13. Get the couple to realize their biggest responsibility is not to change the other person, but to change themselves.

3.2. Drug abuse:

- The Bible condemns drunkenness and alcohol abuse but makes no specific references to drug abuse, eating disorders, workaholics, or most other addictions that concern us today.
- Nevertheless, biblical principles such as the following can apply to the issue of addiction.
- Don't be mastered by anything. It is possible to become enslaved even by actions that are permissible and not bad themselves.
- Instating his determination not to be mastered by anything, Paul mentions food and sex.
- The Bible instructs us to be law-abiding citizens. It is wrong, therefore, to buy, sell, condone, possess, or use any drug illegally.
- Don't assume that drugs or other addictions resolve problems and reduce tensions.
- Stress is one of the major causes of addiction.
- When pressures build some people use alcohol or other drugs to hide the stress and give a feeling of euphoria and a sense that all is well.
- Others get involved in work, hobbies, or recreational pursuits that distract them from stress.
- Temporarily these behaviors may help a person avoid responsibility stress management, but ultimately the stresses cry for attention and the developing addictions no longer provide relief.
- Instead the addictions create additional stress.
- People may try to escape from their problems through drugs, work, sexual fantasy, hyperactivity, compulsive eating, or other addictive behavior, but all of this fails to acknowledge the scriptural directive to bring our burdens to Christ where we can face them squarely and deal with them directly.

- Several years ago a controversial book, written by a seminary professor, argued that psychedelic drugs can offer a superior route to discovering truth and entering into a meaningful religious experience.
- This conclusion denies the fact that we come to God only by way of Jesus Christ, and that we are to come with clear minds rather than brains that are drugged by addictive substances.