

Christian Servanthood 2

Week 3 - Introduction to Pastoral Counseling

Introduction

You have just found out that one of the workers in your home church has started to date a non-Christian. What's the difference between that and marrying one? How should you approach it? Why is she doing this?

That guy would have incredible impact on the Lord's work if he wasn't so sold out to his career! How should we approach this?

I can't believe she actually won't talk to her husband for hours, sometimes days when she is upset with him. This is a theme in her relationships. I wonder how we can help?

That guy's temper problem has everyone walking on eggshells around him. He knows it is wrong, why doesn't he just stop it? He must not be truly repentant.

These are commonplace scenarios in the life of a Christian worker. It is a tremendous source of fulfillment to be used by God to help others work through issues and change from the inside out. But it can also be quite frightening to have a level of responsibility that impacts people's marriage, personal lives, work situations, etc. Maybe we should just leave this to the professional...

All Christian workers should be able to do pastoral counseling!

This is in sharp contrast to the secular professional model that has captured the evangelical church (the new clergy/priesthood) which almost entirely refers counseling needs to professionals.

This abdication also allows non-Christian thinking to seep into the church (see 3 secular models discussion below).

Have we succumbed to this in Xenos to the extent that most counseling is referred out to Xenos staff counselors or other Christian counselors?

Are there other reasons perhaps you have steered clear of this?

EG. feel inadequately equipped; don't have time (other ministry responsibilities – teacher: exhort we must make time); haven't experienced the same problem so don't know how to handle this.

We aren't adequate but God is and has provided the resources for us to be used by him to help people grow.

The biblical basis for this thesis – all Christian workers should be able to do pastoral counseling:

1. The New Testament words for counseling are addressed to *all* Christians. The words below provide some sense of what Christian pastoral counseling involves--namely, personal and practical application of God's Word to individuals. They are listed in a continuum from the least confrontive to the most confrontive.

Parakaleo (107 times in New Testament): encourage, comfort, exhort

See 1 Thessalonians 5:11 and Hebrews 10:25 for this as an important ministry all Christians.

Didasko: (97 times in New Testament) teach, instruct (formally or informally)

See Colossians 3:16 for this as an important ministry all Christians.

Noutheteo (11 times in New Testament): admonish; counsel

See Romans 15:14 and Colossians 3:16 for this as an important ministry all Christians.

Elencho (17 times in New Testament): reprove, expose, convict, refute

See 2 Timothy 4:2 for this as an important ministry all Christian workers.

Epitimao: (33 times in New Testament) rebuke, warn, tell sternly

See 2 Timothy 4:2 for this as an important ministry all Christian workers.

2. The main goal of New Testament counseling is sanctification, which all Christian workers should be facilitating (especially within fellowship and discipleship relationships). Unfortunately many view "counseling" only as a special arrangement, in a formal setting, as well as by a professional. In essence, when we disciple, we are offering counsel.

See Galatians 6:1, where Paul calls on all "spiritual" Christians to restore Christians from sin to usefulness in the church.

See 1 Timothy 1:5, where Paul says that the goal of all Christian workers' ministry is "love from a pure heart, a good conscience and a sincere faith"--synonyms for spiritual maturity.

See Colossians 1:28, where Paul cites himself as an example to be followed by other Christians. The goal of such counseling is to present every person complete/mature in Christ.

See Paul's example again in 1 Thessalonians 2:8-10, where he says the goal is for them to walk in a manner worthy of God's kingdom.

3. The main context for New Testament counseling is Christian community, in which all Christians should be active participants (CONTRA: professional, individualistic model).

See Ephesians 4:15,16, which calls on all Christians to speak the truth in love in the context of Body-life so we can grow to maturity.

See also notes on [normative involvement in the Body of Christ](#) from Christian Principles class.

NOTE: There is a place for specially gifted pastoral counseling and professional counseling (mental illness or more severe damage). But:

It should be the exception, not the norm.

Gifted pastoral counselors should work hard to equip other Christian workers (including others gifted in this area) in counseling, rather than just do it all themselves.

Other Christian friends should usually be involved in this by accompanying them to the counseling session. Wouldn't the counselor get a much more objective picture of what's going on? Wouldn't the counselor be freed from having to be the person's support system to do what he/she is supposed to do – give expert insight and direction?

Wouldn't the counselee(s) get more support and accountability from their friends? The very fact that this suggestion seems bizarre to many Christians (both counselees and counselors) shows how much we have capitulated to this secular model.

Summary

Who does this? All Christians

The goal? Sanctification

The content? The Word

The context? Community & discipleship

The resources? Prayer, conferral, etc.

Will each of us see this as a key element of ministry? Are we willing to get in there and contra-culturally dig in there with people about their problems? It IS our business if we are workers for Jesus Christ who calls on us to help bring his guidance into these relationships? Are we encouragers but unwilling to address problems? Do we address problems but in essence just call on them to change – “stop doing...” “start doing...” – not offering direction for the person to tap into God's transforming power? Do we believe we must have all the answers before we broach an issue? We will never have all the answers, but God does. He calls on us to invest on this level.

This is where some of our deepest friendships and greatest sense of fulfillment comes from.

If we're going to do this, we need a framework (not a recipe) for pastoral counseling that is rooted in sound New Testament theology of sanctification. Unless we have this, we probably

won't develop very well in this area--and we will be conformed by default to the secular frameworks . . .

Discussion of Counseling Models Assignment [\[1\]](#)

Dynamic Model

Basic Tenets

What was the basic presupposition about human nature? Why do people do what they do?

“According to the *Dynamic Model*, people are controlled by internal processes...of which they are unaware. The roots of these...and the source of their current strength are found in the past, in the person’s childhood.” (Lawrence Crabb, “Understanding People” [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1987], p. 83.)

Humans are merely organisms and the goal of counseling is to heal the damage done by these past traumas.

Sigmund Freud’s Psychoanalytic approach popularized this perspective and viewed emotional problems as a sickness. They originate from deeper subconscious factors.

Based on that understanding of the nature of problems, what is required (according to this view) for healing?

Requires drawing out or understanding the subconscious factors and resolving internal conflict.

Comparison with biblical view of man

Pro’s

This view illustrates that aspect of human nature that results in us having a hard time doing even what we know is right. This corresponds well with Paul’s discussion of the “flesh” from Romans 7:15 – “That which I am doing I don’t understand...”

This view has a category for mental illness, physiological and organic causes which also corresponds with the biblical perspective that these exist.

The Dynamic counselor would probably agree with Crabb’s view that man is capable of evaluative thinking (because their counsel depends on the impact of the client remembering the past and mentally processing new information [counsel]).

The Dynamic counselor would also probably be fine with Crabb’s assertion that the Bible supports man’s design including “emotional experiencing.”

Crabb defines one aspect of human nature as “deep longings” (p. 94) which he partly describes as “too deep to be dismissed as an emotional reaction...something within mankind is capable of

longing for satisfaction in the deepest parts of the personality.” This could correspond to the sub-conscious factors affecting behavior emotions, and attitudes.

Crabb implies dynamics almost too deep for cognitive evaluation that drive humans.

The past does affect the present and the future if not resolved

As the above point implies, much of what we do is in the subconscious, or a result of “reacting without realizing” (like automatic responses that seem to imply we are not at fault), however there are differences à

Con’s

The Dynamic model says that our actions and problems are a result of innate and natural aspects of our design. In other words, there is no such thing as moral responsibility. Man is only a victim of unseen forces and antecedent causes. The Bible says that the Fall of man, an immoral choice, was the cause of our sin nature and is still influencing us (Romans 5:12-14; 6:6).

Because we merely do what we are “programmed” to do, the Dynamic model assigns no moral judgment to the behavior, thinking, attitudes, or emotions of humans. The Bible however is clear that humans are moral beings responsible for their actions (Romans 3:23; 6:23).

Related to this is the issue of “choice”. Crabb points out that one element of human nature is that we can “actively choose.” Yet Dynamic counselors would say that there are no real choices between right and wrong because there are no moral absolutes. Also, our actions are largely a product of our experiences in the past and our physiology, both of which are unchangeable. The Bible asserts humans must choose against their sin nature, even if there are internal dynamics that make that choice more difficult (Romans 6:13).

The Dynamic model would state that we are unchangeable in “essence.” Although therapy will help adjusting to these innate traits, those traits cannot be changed. The Bible contradicts that saying that we are given a completely new Identity when we become Christians, the identity of Christ himself (Romans 6:6). That change in “essence” provides the basis for our ability to choose to present ourselves to sin (act according to our sin nature) or to righteousness (Romans 6:13).

Relational Model

Basic Tenets

What was the basic presupposition about human nature? Why do people do what they do?

Bottom line: we were designed to love and be loved (Crabb, p. 83). “Our deepest parts cry out for intimacy and meaningful involvement with others.”

The basic problem with people is that they have been damaged by bad relationships. “Human problems...are...defensive attempts to handle the pain of fear and tension in significant relationships.”

Our defensive reactions lead to further damage to relationships which result in our becoming more defensive to preclude further damage – a self-perpetuating cycle.

Based on that understanding of the nature of problems, what is required (according to this view) for healing?

The therapist tries to restore the client’s trust in relationships, beginning with their own. The therapist works to establish the client’s trust in him to begin some “momentum” of trust that will also provide a safe environment to try out non-defensive ways to relate. This is most reflected in the Rogerian approach to counseling.

Clients need to be open and honest to themselves about relationships and must give up manipulative techniques to protect themselves (getting positive attention or avoiding hurt).

This presumes the therapist can provide a trusting relationship.

Comparison with biblical view of man

Pro’s

Corresponds well with part of our God-given design being “relational”.

We are designed to relate with God and with one another (part of our identity in Christ is as a member of the body of Christ).

Crabb’s description of our design including “deep longings” corresponds well here as does our ability to “emotionally experience” (which would help our understanding of relational damage)

The relational model’s description of human’s longing for health corresponds well with the Holy Spirit’s activity within the Christian and non-Christian (convicting – Jn. 16:8).

The therapist’s non-judgmental view of the client is excellent and reflects one aspect of biblical grace.

The listening skills of this method are essential to relationships.

How we view ourselves does effect our behavior and attitudes.

The passages on our new identity, and appropriating it, cause us to look to our relationship with God to fulfill our needs, not one another. This corresponds well with the relational model’s evaluation of in part where our damage comes from (messed-up relationships).

Con’s

The relational model's solution – a trusting relationship with another human – is faulty because it presupposes the therapist, or any other fallen human being, is capable of not ever letting another person down in a relationship! The therapist becomes "God".

The client cannot "self-heal" just because the environment is right (Proverbs 16:25).

How we view ourselves cannot be changed exclusively by a relationship, only by God.

There is little or no moral guidance, denying the aspect of our design that includes our moral will.

In the relational model, there is no REAL or ultimate "protection" for the inevitable hurtful moments in relationships when you or someone else has violated any aspect of godly relating.

The Moral Model

Basic Tenets

What was the basic presupposition about human nature? Why do people do what they do?

Totally opposite from the Dynamic model.

According to this view, the basic problem with people is that they are stubborn. IE. their problems arise from, and only from choices they willfully make.

People are totally responsible for what they do.

Our emotions cannot be used as an excuse for our actions. In fact, our emotions often follow our actions or thinking (to the good or bad).

Based on that understanding of the nature of problems, what is required (according to this view) for healing?

Keep the focus on chosen patterns of behavior. (Crabb, p. 82)

Identify irresponsible behaviors.

"Strip away the many excuses for continued irresponsibility." (Ibid)

Exhort appropriate change.

They typically utilize homework assignments – bible study, prayer, respond this way not that way.

Comparison with biblical view of man

Pro's

We are biblically called on to play a role in controlling our behavior. The Bible is replete with imperatives. God wouldn't ask us to do something if he didn't want us to do it or felt we had no conscious role to play in complying with it. Even one fruit of the Spirit is "self-control" (Gal. 5:23).

Crabb's element of personhood – "evaluative thinking" and "active choosing" correspond with this.

The body of Christ is called to admonish one another as a key element in "loving one another" (Romans 15:14). This certainly is drawing attention to imperatives.

Emotions are impacted by our actions (Genesis 4:6,7; John 13:17).

Con's

Therapists who hold this view generally discount deeper background causes (Jeremiah 17:9).

This model deals primarily with external behaviors. Issues like manpleasing, insecurity, bitterness, anxiety are not dealt with directly.

Little attention is given to motives, for which we are also morally culpable (Matthew 6:23; James 4:2; 1 Corinthians 4:5).

Crabb's description of our "deep longings" as being one part of personhood mitigates against the moral model's view of conscious choice being the only dynamic impacting our behavior.

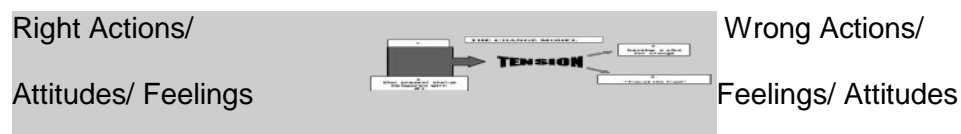
Our sinful strategies which often were survival mechanisms before we knew the Lord are now the greatest obstacles to walking in him.

Imperatives can be applied legalistically.

Connected with the previous point, Romans 6 states that our new identity and choosing to appropriate that will be the lynch-pin to true change – internally and externally. Contrast this to the experience of Paul in Romans 7.

Leaves little room for physiological (organic) problems that require medical treatment (autism, schizophrenia, some forms of depression, etc.)

The Moral model is the most common sub-biblical model found in Christian counseling. Let's look further to see why we must distance ourselves from it.



LEGALISTIC APPROACH: This may get results with some problems (e.g., occasional shop-lifting), but it won't touch deeper sinful habits. Instead, it usually leads either to discouragement or dishonesty (with others and/or self).

EXAMPLES:

1. The newly wed wife feels lonely and rejected when her husband goes out with the guys for an evening. She doesn't like it when she yells at him, cries, and uses other seemingly uncontrollable methods to manipulate him to stay – but she can't seem to help it. Besides, they are married now, shouldn't he stop going out with the guys?

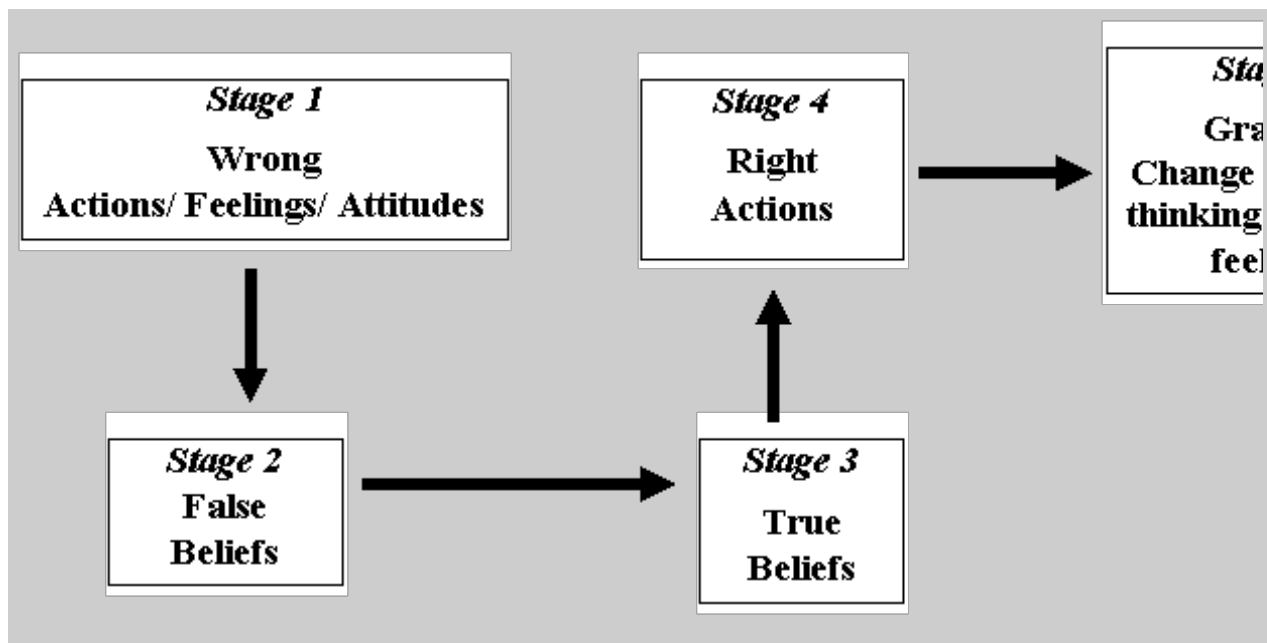
The moral model (legalistic) advice: "You know it's wrong. Why do you keep doing it? Try being more loving and less controlling. You can't tell him not to ever go because nothing in the Bible prohibits him from doing that but there is plenty against what you are doing. Try to get out with the girls once in a while to balance things out."

2. The man knows that losing his temper, yelling, even breaking things at times isn't right. He admits that although the people involved in provoking him are irritating, it still isn't right to lose his temper.

The legalistic advice: "Why do you keep doing it if you know it's wrong? You haven't really repented or you wouldn't keep doing it. Try being more encouraging in the relationship. When she starts doing that, just walk away, count to ten and pray for strength to not lose your temper."

QUALIFICATION: Sometimes we need to use the legalistic approach because of the seriousness of the situation: CALL THE POLICE ON PHYSICAL ABUSER; SUPPRESS HURTFUL WORDS ("BLOODY TONGUE FROM BITING IT RATHER THAN SPEAKING"); CHECK INTO SUBSTANCE ABUSE CLINIC TO DRY OUT; etc. But even then, long-term change will require something deeper . . .

Biblical Model



This model is anchored in key biblical presuppositions concerning sanctification. See Colossians 3:1-14 for these points.

Transformation (including behavioral and emotional change) is affected by God as our minds are renewed by God's Word (Colossians 3:2; see also Romans 12:1; Ephesians 4:17-24).

The foundational area of mental renewal is faith appropriation of God's grace--especially our new identity (Colossians 3:1-4; see also Romans 8:4-8).

Faith appropriation of God's grace involves choosing to believe that what God says about us is true, depending on his power to change us, and taking Spirit-led steps that are consistent with our new identity (see Col. 3:5-13).

The lifestyle of a transformed person is a lifestyle of self-giving love (Colossians 3:14).

STAGE 1 - Wrong Actions/Feelings/Attitudes: The wrong behaviors, distressing feelings, etc. (especially when they are habitual and/or chronic) are usually symptomatic of wrong thinking/believing lies (stage 2) -- either ignorance of or failure to appropriate foundational spiritual truths about God's grace. However, it is necessary that the person, under grace, admit that they are in sin and God provides an answer for change. Excusing their behavior due to the circumstances they might have provoked it will be an impediment to the process. Only the light of God's grace and word and your encouraging their prayerful reflection on them will break this defensiveness. Sum up each of our roles i.e. counselor and counselee. Include bullet points.

STAGE 2 - False Beliefs: Because wrong actions, etc. are usually symptoms of wrong beliefs, we must first check for wrong thinking to get at the root issue(s). This usually involves some form of idolatry or fear--lies about who God is and how God views/relates to you (

Romans 6:6). Identifying these involves questioning, careful listening, and prayerful reflection by both the counselor and the counselee. The chart from the Christian Principles class on "[New Identity](#)" can be very helpful in associating symptoms with wrong beliefs if it is not applied rigidly or as some formula.

STAGE 3 - True Beliefs: Next, we want to help the counselee replace these lies with God's truth. If the counselee is ignorant, this will involve basic biblical instruction. If he is biblically informed in this area, it will involve reminder. It will also involve the counselee's willingness to prayerfully monitor his own thought-life and aggressively reject these lies and affirm before God the truth in this area (Rom. 6:6,11). This stage really exemplifies a grace-empowered approach to helping someone through a sin issue. The light of God's view of them often sheds the scales of deception. It enables them to view their sin with humility but focus on a forward view of walking in the Spirit and applying their new identity in practical ways (next stage).

STAGE 4 - Right Actions: Knowing and believing God's view of them will not be enough. For truth to transform our lives, we need to not only know it and affirm its truthfulness--we also need to act in faith on it in concrete situations (Romans 6:13). Prayerfully help the counselee to identify such steps. They will usually involve both resistance and replacement.

"Resistance" means choosing not to take an action that based on a lie in this area.

"Replacement" means choosing to take an action that is based on truth in this same area.

"Replacement" especially involves practicing Christian love (see "Love Therapy" for more detail on this).

STAGE 5 - Gradual change in habits, thinking, attitude, feelings: Over time, we should see a gradual cessation of both the harmful behaviors and painful feelings, and a corresponding increase of healthy behavior and emotions.

Noting this gradual change will be important on at least a couple of fronts:

The counselee will have setbacks in the very area they have experienced growth. The devil will try to accuse them that "You are no different. You'll never change!" You will point out that is not the case; there have been fewer and less severe incidences of _____ (the problem).

In the case of a setback, the counselor might get discouraged and even be tempted to resort to a more legalistic approach. Taking a few prayerful moments to get the bigger picture of progress will help you express God's encouragement and admonition in the proper proportion.

Other considerations when using this model

1. This model provides a practical, but not rigid, framework for the counselor/discipler as well as the person who needs counsel. It is logical that when helping others with their sanctification (counseling them) we will want to serve as a facilitator guiding them through this process as needed, but never approach this as a formula to just plug into.

We should not try to just "tell" them what we think regarding each stage. Rather we want to draw them out and help them form their own conclusions (and convictions) based on the biblical perspective. Asking questions of the counselee at each stage is the best way to help them pursue God's perspective. Studying passages and materials on identity, etc. will be important, as well as your instruction.

Although this model accurately reflects the appropriation of our new identity as Paul describes in Romans 6, there are too many variables the person is bringing with them to be rigid.

How mature in the Lord are they? Do they already clearly understand the need to, how to, and what specific identity issues to appropriate? Perhaps they are struggling only with practical issues of "presenting" themselves (Stage 4). You will be able to move quickly through earlier stages, though not skipping them.

Is the behavioral problem dangerous to them or someone else? We might have to implement some form of protection before taking the time to work through underlying issues.

2. As a counselor, we should know *our* own tendencies.

When advising others, do we tend to leap from Wrong Action directly to Right Action? Think through the importance of helping the person be convinced of *why* they should do what they should do (stage 3). Spend time in prayer and thought on how you will listen carefully.

Or do we shy away from calling for action? Helping the person see their faulty beliefs and what God says is true might come naturally to you. Yet you tend to be afraid of their reaction when it comes time to say, “and what will it look like to act in faith in this area (stage 4)?”

3. Conferring with other mature Christians before or during the process of counseling can be very helpful. Their wisdom and experience can be brought to bear on the issue and your objectivity can be honed. (See Gary DeLashmutt and Dennis McCallum’s paper on [Conferral and Confidentiality in the body of Christ.](#))

These points are important to consider, yet we want to maintain our conviction that through the appropriation of their new identity in Christ, the counselee has the resources to be sanctified on the deepest of levels, as well as the most obvious behaviors. Other models, deeper understanding of the past, temperaments, etc. are helpful, but the real change happens here.

Examples to illustrate the model (note: the “answer” after each *question* is just one possible reason chosen just for illustration-sake).

Dishonesty About Sin and Problems

Why do I lie to others (actively or passively) about my problems, sins, failures, etc.? Because this protects me from rejection by others and the embarrassment of exposure.

What does it mean when I do this? It means that I believe that people's acceptance is necessary for my acceptance and security.

What is actually true? God accepts me in spite of my current failure--and that his acceptance is enough for me (Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 2:13,14). I must prayerfully choose to believe this (“consider” Romans 6:11).

How should I respond (present myself) to the truth? Confess my current failure to the very person whose opinion you value so greatly and whose rejection you are so afraid of. Prayerfully study passages on the importance of confession, etc.

Sexual Impurity

Why am I enslaved to sexually immoral relationships? It may be because I believe this is the only way I can have intimacy with another person, selfish, ignorance, how I was raised etc.

What is actually true? I am an adopted children of God and looking to him only for security will help free me up to love others for their sake, not for what I get out of it (Ephesians 1:5). Agree

with God that my sexual immorality is damaging my ability to have intimacy, and that he can teach me how to build healthy close romantic relationships.

How should I respond? Perhaps it means terminating the sexual immorality and avoiding the situations that tempt me. Perhaps it means terminating the present relationship. Perhaps it means agreeing to avoid romantic relationships for the time being so I can learn how to build healthy non-romantic relationships.

Sinful Anger

Why do I get angry and lose my temper? Perhaps I have a strong sense of pride in my abilities and accomplishments and feel that the critique I receive is unwarranted.

What does it mean when I do this? Everyone has an inner drive to be significant. Wrongfully, I am looking to my performance and accomplishments as the source. Therefore, any critique of what I have done, or haven't (but the person believes I should have), must be defended!

What is actually true? I am already significant because of how God has created me apart from good works (Ephesians 1:9,10; 2:10); he loves me regardless of performance "faults".

How should I respond? I should decide that I must believe what God says is true about me, not what my feelings are telling me (which is a lie). If my bad reactions are immediate and seemingly uncontrollable, I will present myself to God daily (multiply) in prayer asking that he supernaturally gives me a "pause" a "gap" between the provocation and my response so that I can mentally process what is actually true about myself. I should consider learning to make my first responses questions, not defenses. Asking more about why the person believes what they do can help. If I feel I am on the verge of "losing it" I should learn to tell the person that, and ask to be excused for a few minutes (1/2 hour?) to go away and process what is being said. I should cultivate an attitude that I want critique – that my performance isn't perfect in any venue and I should expect critique (whether righteously given or not). I should study the biblical view of "righteous anger" so that I never use "I'm right and they are wrong" as an excuse to lose my temper.

Conclusion

It might be overwhelming to contemplate counseling someone when there are so many apparently complicated factors to consider. Indeed, the development of the wisdom and skills to be effective is a lifelong process, not the result of passing the Servanthood 2 course. It is good to remember that the Holy Spirit is more committed than you are to helping others and will help you if you are dependent on him. Remembering key elements from tonight will be important:

"Counseling" most often happens in the context of a discipling relationship as we get together with them in the usual venue (breakfasts, lunches, etc.). It isn't necessarily a special meeting for a certain purpose. In essence it is helping another Christian's pursuit of sanctification.

All Christian workers are called to help one another grow and therefore should do pastoral counseling.

“Counseling” isn’t necessarily reactive to severe problems. In fact, most often it is responsive to weaknesses in character or ministry that the Lord has prioritized.

“Counseling” is helping the person live out their new identity in Christ in his power, but can’t be applied rigidly.

Do you have a vision for God powerfully using you to be his tool in helping others mature? Look around this room. If we live out a 2 Timothy 2:2 model, how will the cause of Christ be advanced – even around the world! His power, his wisdom lived out by how we model it and by how we disciple others.

Assignment Due Next Week

Study for next week’s quiz. Note memory verses and “key point to know for the exam” sections.

Memory Verses

None this week

Key Points to Know for Exam

1. Be able to argue the case that all Christians should be able to do pastoral counseling.
2. Be able to diagram and briefly explain each of the 5 stages of the biblical counseling model described in class.